

NIPSTA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2009

The following Executive Committee members were present:

Chief Joe De Lopez	Winnetka Police Department
Chief Ralph Czerwinski	Skokie Fire Department
Diana Mikula	Village of Arlington Heights
Wayne Globerger	Glenview Fire Department
Tim Wiberg	Village of Lincolnwood
Paul Harlow	Village of Glencoe
Patrick Kreis	Winnetka Police Department
Chief Alan Wax	Highland Park Fire Department

Also present were NIPSTA Executive Director Robert Lahey, Assistant to the NIPSTA Executive Director Phil Zaleski, NIPSTA Program Coordinator Sheila Darcy, and NIPSTA Legal Counsel Michael Jurusik of Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins.

I. Call to Order

NIPSTA President De Lopez called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chief De Lopez commented on an issue included in the Minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on January 6, 2009. He stated that he has made contact with personnel from the City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation in an effort to invite their participation in public works training at NIPSTA.

A motion was then made by Mr. Harlow, and seconded by Mr. Wiberg, to approve the Minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. NIPSTA Attainment Plan

A. Finance and Administration Committee

Committee Chair Harlow reported that 2009 Member renewal notices, with invoices included, were sent in January. In addition, a copy of the FY 2009 NIPSTA Budget was sent to all Members who were not in attendance at the Board of Directors meeting in December 2008.

Mr. Harlow announced that a recent mailing was sent to all NIPSTA Members inviting them to take advantage of the opportunity available for no-cost access to the training props located on the NIPSTA Campus. These assets are available 24 hours everyday in order to accommodate the schedules of any department.

Mr. Harlow stated that NIPSTA has been approved to continue providing homeland security training, which is funded by the Cook County Urban Area Security Initiative, until September 30, 2009. Educational sessions will be scheduled at several venues in the north, west, and south suburbs. Furthermore, NIPSTA legal counsel is in communication with County staff to draft an intergovernmental agreement that commits both parties to a partnership in training. Mr. Jurusik commented that his goal is to have the document approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners prior to it being presented for counter-approval by the NIPSTA Board of Directors. This Agreement will allow the current partnership for homeland security training to continue on an on-going basis, without the currently-required approval by the County Board every three months (there will be a cancellation provision).

Mr. Harlow informed Executive Committee members of an issue related to the schedule of membership dues applicable to NIPSTA Affiliate Members. The amount due from four such organizations increased from \$1,000 in 2008 to \$3,000 in 2009. However, no advance notice of this rate increase was provided to the Members. Therefore, Mr. Harlow suggested that Mr. Lahey be authorized to negotiate with each Member in an effort to phase-in the dues increase over a two-year period. There was consensus support for this proposal from the members of the Executive Committee.

B. Police/Law Enforcement Training Committee

Committee Chair Kreis introduced himself as a member of the committee that he has supported for the past four years. He explained his experience as a 19-year veteran of the Winnetka Police Department. He also noted that the transition to his leadership role has been eased by NIPSTA staff and by his first meeting of the Training Committee in January. During that session, there was discussion of the 25% increase in the number of police training students in 2008. There were also progress reports related to two new curricula being developed by Committee members: police tactical training and driver simulator training. Mr. Zaleski explained that the pilot programs are planned in March, with open enrollment sessions to follow soon thereafter.

Chair Kreis announced that the Illinois POWER Test at NIPSTA is ready for offering in April 2009. This will be preceded by mandatory proctor training on two dates in March. Chair Kreis reported that support for this program has been received from the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC), which is prepared to allow NIPSTA to take the lead role in the quarterly delivery of this service to local police departments, and which will use NIPSTA's POWER test to eventually replace the NWMC's consortium hiring/testing processes.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Harlow, Chair Kreis commented that the pricing of the test was discussed in detail by Committee members. There was a desire to keep the fee as low as possible, while still covering NIPSTA expenses, so that as many departments as possible would be attracted to participate in this new testing process. He noted that the fee could be adjusted later, based upon the early experiences at NIPSTA.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Wiberg, Chair Kreis stated that the department-funded option for the POWER Test would not result in the issuance of a NIPSTA identification card. Chief Czerwinski added that these departments also have the option to offer a fee waiver in the event that a candidate claims financial hardship.

C. Fire/EMS Training Committee

Committee Chairman Czerwinski reported that first-ever NIPSTA Firefighter Academy is successfully underway, with a total of 20 students in attendance from northern and southern suburbs. A host of new training props and facilities are now available on-site to enable all of the course objectives to be accomplished. Off-site training has occurred, as well. In addition to daily quizzes, there are weekly live burn exercises scheduled during the eight-week curriculum. Future plans include frequent progress reports to the participating departments and an open invitation to them to visit the Glenview facilities next month. Chief Czerwinski also announced that a NIPSTA Summer Firefighter Academy is already scheduled and planned to begin in July 2009.

Chief Czerwinski reported that there are ongoing efforts to deliver new programs related to chief officer training and cross-disciplinary leadership training at NIPSTA in 2009. Details will follow at a later date as plans evolve and come to fruition. Additionally, discussions for partnership with the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety, as previously reported, continue.

D. Public Works Training Committee

In the absence of Committee Chair Andy De Monte (Morton Grove Public Works Department), there was no Committee report.

E. Facilities and Grounds Committee

Committee Chairman Globerger reported that a frozen pipe situation inside the NIPSTA Structural Collapse Training Prop has resulted in the need for immediate repairs. Although interior damage is not too extensive, there are issues to be addressed related to the electrical service, indoor heaters, sprinkler system, and prop clean-up. Chief Globerger stated that NIPSTA staff is in discussion with the Academy's insurance carrier in order to discuss options related to making a formal claim.

Chief Globerger announced that NIPSTA is involved in a NIPSTA-initiated statewide effort to assess the condition of the Technical Rescue Training Props that are located in ten locations, including NIPSTA. This effort is aimed at resolving differences in the construction and design of the props. Ultimately, student safety will be improved by such a standardized approach to testing and certifying the props. Until all repairs are complete, no training will be allowed to be scheduled on this prop on the NIPSTA Campus. Chief Globerger suggested that future NIPSTA funds be budgeted to maintain the prop in a safe and serviceable manner for all who use it.

The Committee took a short recess for lunch from 12:21 until 12:33.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Facility Use Request

Mr. Lahey referred to a summary report of a request for NIPSTA facility use by the Village of Mount Prospect Fire Department for its annual Children's Fire Safety Festival. Discussion among Executive Committee members ensued and addressed the following issues:

- the 29-year history of the event;
- planned indoor activities;
- time commitment, if any, required by NIPSTA staff;
- applicable insurance coverage;
- incidental costs to NIPSTA as the event host; and,
- a participatory role for NIPSTA members.

The dialogue resulted in a motion being made by Chief Wax to approve a no-cost use of the NIPSTA facilities, provided that the Village of Mount Prospect: offers appropriate insurance and indemnification to NIPSTA, pays all related janitorial costs for the event; and repairs any damages that may be sustained by the NIPSTA Campus from this event. Ms. Mikula seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

B. NIPSTA Staff Meetings

Mr. Lahey announced that he has been involved in multiple days of meetings with staff members. These are intended to motivate personnel - new and old - at the beginning of a new fiscal year, and to define new roles and responsibilities for all.

C. NIPSTA Public Safety Awareness Day

Mr. Lahey reported that the Public Safety Awareness Day is going to be moved to a date in September 2009. He noted that, in scheduling, staff will be mindful of other regional open houses, religious and other holidays, and potential sporting events that may conflict.

V. President's Report

A. New Member Application

Chief De Lopez presented an application for a new NIPSTA Affiliate Member: North Regional Major Crimes Task Force. A motion was made by Mr. Kreis, and seconded by Mr. Harlow, to approve the membership application and recommend its approval by the NIPSTA Board of Directors. The motion was unanimously approved. President DeLopez thanked the Finance and Administration Committee for their work in addressing the tough issues related to facility use by inter-governmental agencies, and for developing the new Affiliate Membership structure that has resulted in two new Affiliate members early in the year.

VI. Other Business

A. Village of Palatine Membership

Mr. Lahey explained that he has attempted on several occasions during the past month to communicate with the Palatine Village Manager regarding the municipality's reversal of interest in becoming a new NIPSTA Member. The issue was being re-considered at the request of the Village's legal counsel. Ms. Mikula offered to assist by discussing the issue with Palatine's Assistant Village Manager.

B. Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois

Chief De Lopez welcomed Brian Gaughan and Steve Horne, who represented the Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois (AFFI). Chief De Lopez invited them to address the Executive Committee about two issues.

Mr. Gaughan explained that the AFFI is concerned about the employment status of NIPSTA Instructors who are also members of local fire departments. He also raised questions about the insurance coverage afforded these individuals, their classification as independent contractors, and their use of certified training equipment. He suggested that NIPSTA should allow the Instructors to continue to receive payroll and other employee benefits from their municipal employers. In return, NIPSTA would reimburse the municipalities or fire districts for any costs incurred.

Mr. Horne expressed concerns about safety issues on the NIPSTA Campus. These are in response to two recent events: an Instructor who suffered a heart attack and the failure of a safety railing on a training prop. Mr. Horne inquired about who is responsible for safety issues, generally, at NIPSTA.

Chief De Lopez expressed his appreciation to Mr. Gaughan and Mr. Horne for bringing these matters to the attention of the NIPSTA Executive Committee. Chief De Lopez acknowledged that these are issues of mutual interest. He also stated his intention to respond to the AFFI. Mr. Gaughan and Mr. Horne then departed.

Chief De Lopez advised Executive Committee members that he and Mr. Lahey will formulate an appropriate written response to the AFFI representatives.

VII. Next Meeting

Chief De Lopez announced that the next meeting of the NIPSTA Executive Committee is scheduled on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 11:30 a.m.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chief Wax and seconded by Chief Globberger. The motion was unanimously approved at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alan Wax
NIPSTA Secretary