

Southern Cape Fire Protection Association NPC
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Minutes of AGM Meeting

Brenton on sea Community Hall, 20 March 2018, 10:00 – 13:00

Opening and Welcome

Mr Len du Plessis current Chairman did the opening and welcoming, also apologised that the meeting only started at 10:15 am.

Amendment/Addition to the Agenda

- Elske Le Roux to give feedback on the Operations 2016 – 2017 - Point 8.
- FPA support to FMU's will be discussed in point 14.1 under additional points.

Approval of previous minutes

The Chairman requested that we do not go point by point through the previous minutes as this will consume time. No objections were raised. This motion was approved by Lorna Watts and Tony Marshall.

Chairman's Report

This AGM meeting is related to the 01 April 2016 – 31 March 2017 Financial year. Mr du Plessis displayed a graph on the projector screen displaying the accumulative membership during this period.

We currently have a total of 68 FMU's.

Current staff resources

- 1 Fire Advisor
- 2 Area Managers
- 1 Extension Officer (other position is vacant)
- 1 Operations Support Officer/Senior Administrative Officer
- 1 Administrative Assistant Officer
- 3 Base Managers

No questions/objections on the Chairman's report.

Financial Report

Mr Francois Slabber displayed the level of financial activity in the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association and indicated that the current financial report is for 2016-2017. The books were audited by PKF Knysna and a clean audit was awarded. The FPA currently have a healthy financial status, keeping in mind that the funds generated is not funds which are technically owned by the FPA but it can be seen as a holding/managing company of these funds. Most of the funds are received to manage other sub-divisions related to firefighting, awareness and prevention, therefor these funds are constantly moving in and out and accountability at the time of the report may reflect healthy financial status due to receiving and managing of these funds.

Mr Slabber indicated that if any member wants access to the audited statements, they should contact the SCFPA office in Knysna.

SCFPA Membership Fees

Mr du Plessis suggested that due to the fact that this AGM Meeting is for previous year's accountability, we should not discuss the increase of membership fees at this meeting. Therefore, the membership fees will remain as it is structured, and a proposal will be circulated at next AGM to propose an increase.

This point was accepted and no objections were raised.

Mr Gerber gave an overview of why membership fees are to be the main income of the FPA and why the increase is necessary to become financially sustainable, the membership fees are the only source of income the FPA can rely on. We are currently one of the FPAs charging the lowest membership fees.

The financial documents are available from our office and Mr Slabber is available to explain the documents if required.

Mr Gerber – The proposal for the increase of membership will be developed to not burden the bigger companies but elevate the smaller landowners to the level where there is a balance between members.

Mr du Plessis - It was decided and approved at the last AGM that membership will increase automatically with the CPI inflation rate of the current year.

Election of Office Bearers – Chairman & Vice Chairman

There is only 6 months left to the next AGM and it is advised that the current Office Bearers remain Status Quo. At the next board of directors meeting, a new chairman and deputy chair will be elected. This motion had no objections.

SCFPA Directors

The SCFPA legally require 9 directors and currently have 4. We need an additional 5 directors.

Mr Gerber asked for additional nominations which will then be circulated to all members to vote on. The new directors will be indicated at the next AGM.

Mr du Plessis indicated that the previous directors resigned due to the Municipal Financial Management Act that indicated that municipalities cannot do any business with companies whose directors are government officials. As the SCFPA will always be involved with district and local municipalities, the directors had to resign. The resignation and the Knysna/Plettenberg Bay fires in June 2017 in no way influenced the resignation. It was two separate events.

Mr Dirk Smit – Eastern Area Manager Report

Mr Smit reported on the difficulty of managing the urban interface zone with regards to wild fire suppression. He also showcased an awareness breakdown of the awareness done to create a higher level of veld fire prevention.

Mr Smit presented on the importance of defensible spaces as well as on the importance of controlled burns. He stated that currently a significant increase in the creation of firebreaks on private landowner's properties is seen, which is very good.

Mr Smit presented on the status of the fire management units (FMUs) within his area of responsibility.

Mr Charl Wade – Western Area Manager Report

Mr Wade presented on the primary objectives and benefits of the FPA as well as the on compliance of landowners to the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (NVFFA). He also gave feedback on awareness, past projects and challenges faced by the association.

Eden Fire Service Report – Freddy Thaver

No report back was provided by Mr Thaver at the meeting.

Mr Thaver indicated that there should be a more formal agreement between the Eden District Fire Brigade and the SCFPA as currently there is nothing in place.

Question from a member of Langvlei Dunes FMU – The contact person in case of fires is not clear as was seen in previous incidents of fires. The Eden District Fire Brigade directed the landowner to the local fire brigade. Who should be called in case of a fire - the District or the local fire department? Mr Thaver indicated that this is due to no integrated plans being in place. The bylaws of the municipality should include the NVFF Act and then the response will be immediate and not prolonged because of the uncertainty of who must respond to the fire.

Mr Thaver – Application has been done to the Minister to provide clearance on the local and district responsibility with regards to veld fires.

Mr Gerber responded to Mr Thaver's statement that in a meeting with Clive Africa from the Eden District Community Services, it was confirmed by him that Eden District fire brigade is responsible for all veld fires in the Eden district.

Working on Fire Report – Felisha Ngwasheng

Ms Ngwasheng gave a presentation on the current status of the Working on Fire vehicles WoF teams, training, recent fatalities and fires and challenges faced.

Operations Support – Elske Le Roux

Elske gave a statistical breakdown of current and new members of the SCFPA. Reason for resigned members in most cases is the transferral of property to new ownership.

Elske did a brief introduction on the new Advanced Fire Information System dashboard of which the SCFPA currently have a licence for. A free version with limited capabilities is available at <https://southernafrica.afis.co.za/>

She also presented on the current GIS projects, one which was made possible by funding received from the Table Mountain Fund. SCFPA member mapping are ongoing.

Knysna/Plettenberg Bay Fires – Paul Gerber

Mr Gerber presented on the progress and development of the June 2017 Knysna/Plettenberg Bay fire and also how the Brenton on Sea controlled burn, done prior to the fire, slowed down the fire and most probably prevented more damage.

Currently, the FPA is appointed by the Garden Route Rebuild Initiative project as the implementing agent for post-fire environmental rehabilitation after the June fires. Application for disaster funding has been made to the Department of Environmental Affairs and we are awaiting the outcome. Up to date, all rehabilitation work has been done with funding received from the Business Fund, WWF, SANParks and Eden District Municipality.

Additional points

Support to FMUs by the SCFPA - A member from the Wilderness FMU stressed that the FMUs required more participation and support from the FPA because they simply do not have the resources available within the FMU.

Mr du Plessis responded that currently we currently do not have enough staff members to service all FMUs on the level of expectation but be sure that more extension officers will be appointed if the funding is approved by national government.

The notice of the next meeting will be circulated.

Meeting closed at 13:38