

# "A Historical Review of the Evolution of IAFF Local #43, Portland, Oregon"

Source: - Local 43 Meeting Minutes

Compiled by Don Porth

The following are various meeting notes from books containing the meeting records for Local 43. There is much more than what is listed here. The notes listed below were chosen because they were typical of key events that were occurring or the unusual and unique. In most cases, the notes only included motions, seconds, and whether the motion carried or was defeated. The discussion was not noted.

## **1917-1918 Meeting Minutes Book**

September 10, 1917

*Note - The members were gathering to prepare the organization for application and acceptance into the newly forming International Association of FireFighters (IAFF).*

- "Meeting called at Forester Hall, 129 1/2 Fourth Street, for the purpose of organizing a union local affiliated with the American Federation of Labor among the members of the Bureau of Fire in the City of Portland. Meeting held between the hours of 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM." The Union would be known as City Firemen's Union #15776.
- Motion made and carried that dues be fixed at 75 cents.
- Motion made and carried that the officers be President, Vice President, Secretary Treasurer, and Sergeant At Arms.
- Since the American Federation of Labor (AFL) required a board of trustees of at least 3 members, a motion was made and carried that a board of trustees be elected to consist of three members, terms of office to be one, two, and three years and at the expiration of each term, a trustee would then be elected for a three year term.

September 26, 1917

- The slates of officers nominated at prior meeting, and voted on since the last meeting, were announced. A tie vote for Sergeant At Arms required a final vote to be held over until the next meeting.

October 3, 1917

- Newly elected officers who were present were obligated and sworn in by EJ Stack, Secretary-Treasurer of the Oregon State Federation of Labor.
- Regarding the tie vote for Sergeant At Arms, since the labor manual did not call for a Sergeant At Arms but did call for a Guide and Guardian, a motion was made and carried to appoint the two men who tied as Guide and Guardian.

- Motion made and carried that an inquiry be made relative to money and property collected for the Two-Platoon Committee be held in trust by this union.
- Motion made and carried that Engineers and Assistant Engineers of the Fire Bureau be eligible for membership in this Union.
- Motion made and carried that a committee be appointed by the President to work with the Chief and Commissioner Bigelow. The Committee would work in cooperation with a committee from the stationary engineers to make demands for better working conditions for the engineers on the fire boats, and to discuss salary raises for the Fire Bureau.

October 19, 1917

- Motion made and carried that a committee be appointed to draft a constitution and bylaws and that the President be given authority to appoint said committee after, and out of meetings.
- Motion made and carried that a committee of four be appointed to take up the regulation of house patrol for the purpose of establishing a uniform watch throughout the Fire Bureau. An additional motion was made and passed that this same committee take up the question of seniority of vacations.
- Motion made and carried that the Hibernia Bank be chosen and that all vouchers be signed by both the Treasurer and President.
- Motion made and carried that a trustee obtains, from the Secretary of the Laundry Workers Union, a fair list and forward it to the delegates (union representatives at each fire station).

November 16, 1917

- Motion made and carried that Engineers, Assistant Engineers, and Marine Engineers and Assistant Marine Engineers, who have cards in good standing with their respective local and are employed in the Bureau of Fire, be admitted to honorary membership in this union.

December 10, 1917

- The Committee meeting with Chief Dowell regarding the watch schedule had suggested the following watch periods: 6:00 AM to 12:00 PM, 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM, 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM, 10:00 PM to 2:00 AM, and 2:00 AM to 6:00 AM.
- A ballot was administered which read: Shall "City Firemen's Union #15776 of Portland, Oregon affiliate with both the Central Labor Council and the Oregon State Federation of Labor? The results were Yes-165. No-10.

December 26, 1917

- Meetings now held at Alisky Hall at SW 3rd and Morrison

January 11, 2018

- The delegate to attend the national Convention in Washington was LM Riley. He was certified and given credentials.

- Motion made and carried that men appointed in the Fire Bureau be accepted as members of the union before their probation has expired.

January 22, 1918

- The "eight hour law" and the decision of the Oregon State Supreme Court discussion regarding the classification of firemen under the draft law and the hearing of the same state law, would classify firemen as officers and not as laborers. Motion made and carried that no further action be taken on this until correspondence from Tacoma and Seattle on this same subject has been received.

February 8, 1918

- Motion made and carried that the Two-Platoon committee of six members be appointed with authority to cooperate with not more than two other persons, either members of this organization or otherwise, who may be added to the Committee to further the movement. The Committee shall have full authority to act.

February 20, 1918

- Motion made and carried that ballots be sent out for referendum vote to decide whether the Two-Platoon bill, or a bill providing a continuous system of 24 hours on and 24 hours off, should be adopted.
- Motion made and carried that a committee of three be appointed to find ways and means to establish a relief fund for members of this union.
- Hearing from the Oregon State Supreme Court decision on the eight hour law, the Secretary read the quotation from Volume 6, page 4994 of Words and Phrases giving definition of the term "officers" as defined in Revised Statutes of Missouri, 1899, Article 533. "The term 'officers,' whenever used in the articles relating to cities of the first and third classes, shall include all persons holding any situations under the city government or its departments with an annual salary for a definite term of office."

March 12, 1918

- A referendum vote, regarding preference toward a two platoon system or continuous 24 hours on and 24 hours off shift, had tainted election results and was thrown out by the union membership. To avoid dividing the membership and risking the loss of members and a defeat of the referendum by citizens in the November election, a resolution was passed that recalled the tainted referendum in favor of the union asking the Fire Bureau to accept the following salary schedule and to leave the decision on the work schedule to the referendum vote of the citizens.
  - Hoseman - first year \$115 - second year \$125
  - Assistant Engineer - first year \$120 - second year \$130
  - Engineer - first year \$135 - second year \$145
  - Lieutenant - first year \$135 - second year \$145

- Captain - first year \$150 - second year \$160
- The date of the increase in salary to take effect on the date of the actual expiration of the first year of service.
- Motion made and carried that the secretary be paid a monthly salary of \$25.00.

March 16, 1918

- Communication from the Secretary of the AFL that on March 9, 1918 (letter dated) giving official notice of this Local being transferred to the International Association of FireFighters (filed).
- Ballots for referendum vote were tallied. The Two-Platoon system prevailed over the 24 hours on, 24 hours off continuous schedule.
- Ballots for the resolution adopting the pay schedule were tallied. It too prevailed and will be drafted into a petition to the city.
- Ballots on payment to the Secretary were tallied. It prevailed.
- LM Riley gave a verbal report of the International Convention stating that officers had been elected and installed and that he had been elected 9th vice president with no salary. The constitution and bylaws were adopted by which all Firemen's Unions will hereafter be governed instead of by the AFL. The next convention will be at Colorado Springs, CO. A full and detailed report will be forwarded by the International.

March 26, 1918

- Advice was offered to members by Karl Gunster for discussion and consideration. The six cent fare with street car men should be discontinued as it is causing hard feelings between our members and members of the street car union. The bad feelings will be much regretted if we lose the support of that organization when we have a bill or measure to be voted on. The sentiment of the meeting was that our fight was for the Two-Platoon system while their fight is concerned with the six cent fare. They are not nosing into our affairs and our members should keep off theirs.

April 9, 1918

- The Secretary reported having attended the Central Labor Council on April 4, when the Firemen's Two-Platoon bill was endorsed and a special committee was appointed to cooperate with the Two-Platoon Committee. The Two-Platoon committee reported progress in the matter of placing a bill on the ballot and the salary measures would be discussed with the Commissioner later.

May 3, 1918

- Members of the Two-Platoon Committee continued having interviews with Commissioner Bigelow after the election regarding more time off and salaries. Mr. Bigelow was emphatic that more time off could not be granted. The following letter was drafted in this regard:

*Portland, Ore May 3, 1918*

*To the Mayor and Commissioner of the City of Portland.*

*Gentlemen; We, the undersigned members of the Fire Bureau respectfully request that an investigating committee, composed of the representatives of civic and other bodies of the City of Portland, be appointed to immediately investigate conditions existing in the Fire Bureau today, which conditions were responsible for the confusion to the voters of this City of the Two Platoon System by your body at the recent election. We feel that if due to the Commissioner of Portland and the public that we call your attention to the fact that there is a desire on the part of most of the firemen of the city to cease their employment and seek employment elsewhere under much more favorable conditions, if they are compelled to continue to work under the existing conditions. We fully appreciate our responsibility to the public and as loyal citizens, realize that if the above situation should develop, Portland would be wholly unprotected in an emergency, should it arise, owing to the fact that new men in the department, because of their inexperience, would be unable to cope with any disastrous conflagration should it occur. We feel that the question as presented by you at the recent election, i.e. The Two Platoon System, was not fully understood by the voters of this City, else they would have voted favorable to it. We urge immediate action in connection with the consideration of this resolution for the reason that the working month of the firemen expires May 31 and to prevent many additional resignations of the highly trained men in the Bureau on that date. We trust your Commissioner will act favorably upon this resolution, thus requesting the several civic bodies of the city to appoint representatives to investigate the situation. The firemen of the city are prepared to furnish all proof and data that the investigating committee might require and we feel confident that if this matter is fully investigated, a favorable report will result, which we trust your honorable body will act upon.*

*Respectfully yours, Members of the Bureau of Fire.*

- *Ballot read: Charter Amendment Submitted to the Voters by the Council - Act to amend the Charter of Portland by adding a new section to be designated as Section 122a authorizing the reorganization of the Bureau of Fire into two equal platoons, providing for not more than fourteen hours night service or more than ten hours day service, subject to call at all hours in case of great unusual danger of conflagration, requiring liberal housing conditions for firemen and authorizing an additional annual tax levy not exceeding four-tenths of one mill for such purpose.*

**WILL THE CHARTER BE SO AMENDED? YES/NO**

- The May 18, 1918 edition of the "Oregon Voter Publication" offered the following passage regarding the election and the Two-Platoon system:

*The two-platoon system is in far more favor than it was a year ago, so much so that we wonder why we listened to the frantic assaults made upon it by fire officials and insurance underwriters all over the United States, men who today are either silent or say that after all the two-platoon*

*system is just the thing. The next time these fire officials, insurance underwriters, and outraged property-owners come to us with a tale of woe about how vicious the two-platoon system is and how its adoptions means conflagration and destruction, we will take their strictures with several grains of salt. Frankly, they make us tired. If the two-platoon system was inherently vicious a year ago why is it all right now? Even so, we feel that even if it is conceded by its former opponents that the two-platoon system has merits, we cannot see but what it can be provided so far as war emergency is concerned by the city council from present revenues plus the one mill war emergency tax without amending the charter and adding in perpetuity a four-mill tax. Neither can we see any excuse for voting the extra four-mill tax at this time on top of the other taxes merely to indulge in the luxury of a fad that was unfashionable a year ago and seems to be stylish this Spring. What taxes will be necessary to take care of next Springs styles? The city council has full power and sufficient revenue to handle the situation with the aid of the war emergency tax; if it is too cowardly to handle it on its merits its cowardice is no reason for the people voting a permanent four-mill tax increase in a charter amendment merely to give the council courage.*

July 18, 1918

- Motion made and defeated that a referendum be taken for the purpose of determining how many men are willing to resign if not granted the Two-Platoon system on or before September 1st, 1918.
- A letter was sent to City Council which read:

*Portland, Ore July 30, 1918*

*To the Mayor and Commissioner of the City of Portland*

*Gentlemen; Some time ago a petition was filed with your honorable body requesting that an investigation of the conditions existing in the Fire Bureau be made. As no action has been taken to date on the above petition, the city Firemen's Union Local 43, International Association of FireFighters now respectfully petitions your body to enact an ordinance establishing the two-platoon system in the Bureau of Fire and we respectfully offer the attached draft of such an ordinance which after careful consideration by our organization, meets with the approval of our entire membership of over 200 members. We feel confident that if the above ordinance is enacted, it will serve to prevent further desertions of old and experienced men and will also serve to induce many of the experienced firemen who have found employment elsewhere to return to the ranks. We therefore submit that an emergency exists and the above ordinance should be enacted on or before the first of September, 1918, to re-establish and keep our fire department in an efficient condition.*

September 23, 1918

- Motion made and carried that Local 43 fine each member \$5 for neglect of himself or wife who do not register and vote at the coming November election (if entitled).

- Motion made and carried that members be fined \$0.50 for not attending one of the two consecutive union meetings without a reasonable excuse.

November 1, 1918

- While not noted in meeting minutes, President Alfred Horn would die from influenza on this date. An epidemic of influenza swept the nation during 1918-19. Horn had completed his law degree and passed his bar exam in 1917 prior to becoming Union President. He accomplished this during his employment as a Portland Firefighter.

*The Two-Platoon System would be passed by Portland voters on November 6, 1918. Hiring occurred November 1, 1919.*

### **1920-1924 Meeting Minutes Book**

May 26, 1921

- A committee was appointed to look after graves of firemen at Lone Fir Cemetery and that they do as seems best in the way of writing a letter or decorating a grave in any manner they see fit. Committee members appointed were CS Townsend, William Heath, Peter Kumpf.

June 6, 1921

- Motion made and passed that "Brothers refrain from mentioning anything that takes place in the Local at their fire stations or outside of the hall."
- Motion made and passed that \$100 be given from the relief fund to Local 3 in Pueblo, Colorado.

June 15, 1921

- Union President Karl Gunster dies in the line of duty.
  - Karl Gunster, Lieutenant of Engine 22, was on duty as his crew responded to the May Apartments at SW 14<sup>th</sup> and Taylor. The fire, which would cause \$75,000 in damage, began in the basement tool room and traveled up the dumb waiter to the top of the building, involving all four stories. The investigation revealed the likely cause was spontaneous combustion of oily rags. So rapid was the spread that arriving crews had to place ladders to rescue occupants from upstairs windows. Gunster had entered the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to try and locate the seat of the fire when he was overcome by smoke. He was found lying on the floor by P.E. Clifford, an Engine 3 firefighter. He fought the effects of the smoke as well but managed to drag Gunster to a window where fellow firefighters could assist. In all, four other firefighters and three civilians were injured in the fire. Gunster was 41 years old and had served Portland since December 22, 1913. He was survived by his Wife. In 1927, a fireboat would be named in his honor and he would be included on the Campbell Memorial and the Oregon State Firefighter's Memorial for line of duty deaths.

June 24, 1921

- Gunster's death is acknowledged in the meeting.
- A Committee is appointed to form a new "Beneficiary Association" and contact Seattle Local 28 to learn how they manage theirs. Committee members appointed were AJ Dooney and Peter Kumpf.

July 6, 1921

- Edward Boatright has been chosen as interim President for deceased Karl Gunster.

Through July and August 1921 - The "Mutual Beneficiary Association" is being formed, using temporary language from the Police Relief Fund. AJ Dooney chairs the effort. It goes into effect on September 15, 1921, with no dues to be collected until October 1, 1921. Cost to members would be \$1.25 per month. Benefit paid to members, when in need, would be \$15 per week.

November 29, 1921

- Meetings have been moved to the Labor Temple, 4th floor, Room C at the corner of SW 4th and Jefferson. This building was newly built and owned and occupied by various unions in Portland.

December 12, 1921

- Union leaders would write a letter to the mayor and commissioners to try and prevent pay cuts to firefighters.

February 7, 1922

- A committee was appointed to look after the "Fireman's Plot" at Lone Fir Cemetery. Committee members appointed were William Heath and H. Hefner.

May 8, 1922

- Discussion at the meeting of working with the Police on a proposed new pension plan.

May 29, 1922

- Funds were authorized to purchase flowers and flags for Lone Fir Cemetery as well as other area cemeteries (this was likely for Memorial Day, which became a day of decorating cemeteries in 1868 and but would not become a national holiday until 1971).

June 9, 1922

- Motion made and passed that Local 43 should go on record in support of voting for the school bond (the first instance of showing public advocacy on a political issue outside the fire service).

October 23, 1922

- Motion made and passed to pay for coffee at all larger fires, in cooperation with the Chief (John Young).

May 12, 1923

- Motion made and passed that the Recording Secretary write a letter to Engine 7, in a courteous and friendly manner, asking them if it was possible to readjust differences and really consider patronizing the Liberty Laundry rather than the Seab Laundries.

June 9, 1923

- Motion made and passed to appoint a committee to interview Chief Holden in regard to repair of watch rooms and other grievances.

June 11, 1923 (in the minutes of the Fireman's Beneficiary Association)

- Motion made and carried to expend \$25.00 per hear for care of the "Fireman's Plot" of the Lone Fir Cemetery.

December 6, 1923

- Committee was appointed to see what may be done for the "Fireman's Plot" at Lone Fir Cemetery.

April 5, 1924

- Local 43 writes a letter to the Civil Service Board opposing bans on the age limit of 35 years (this may have been the upper age limit for employment in the Fire Bureau).

April 5, 1924

- Motion made and passed to have a picture of the late Karl Gunster finished (\$7.00) and hung in the Local 43 "Hall of Fame." (Ironically, the motion for this was made by past Local 43 President Peter Kumpf, who would become a line of duty death on December 5, 1940 and be listed on the Oregon State Firefighter's Memorial).

July 10, 1924

- Motion made and passed to call all fire stations and get the names of all who are not in the local and open the charter for a period of time to allow them to join for the cost of \$1.00, with an additional \$1.00 to join the Firemen's Beneficiary Association.

August 1925

- The Entertainment Committee under the Firemen's Beneficiary Association approved payment on the following for annual picnic expenses:

Change for the picnic	\$255
Dance Orchestra	\$120
A. Taylor - Publicity for Picnic	\$25
Lewis & Clark Cigar Company	\$23.50
DH Brown - Cigarettes and Gum	\$35.40
Zellerback Paper Company - Napkins and Plates	\$3.35
Honeyman Hardware Company - Baseballs	\$5.00
Oregon Sign Company - 2 Banners	\$4.50
Jones Market - Hamburgers and Wieners	\$24.30
Printing and Placing 300 Window Cards	\$30.00
Meier & Frank Company - Merchandise (in 1939, Aaron Frank would conceive, build, and purchase the Stevens Disaster Car and donate it to the Portland Fire Department)	\$6.68
Bake Rite Bakery - Bread and Rolls	\$24.30
Honeyman Hardware and Electric Company - Iron	\$4.50
Fernwood Dairy - Milk and Cream	\$18.70
Printing Tickets, Cards, and Programs	\$42.50
G-Oberg for Sab (?)	\$10.00
Swift and Company - Hams	\$20.61
Swift and Company - Hams and Bacon	\$56.92
Pioneer Soda Works	\$68.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$523.36</b>

By July, 1929, the total assets in the Firemen's Beneficiary Association were \$12,436.82. That is equal to \$177,172.32 in 2017 dollars.

### **1940-1947 Meeting Minutes Book**

September 17, 1940

- Motion made and seconded to cooperate with the fire marshal (Fred Roberts) in fire prevention week.

November 14, 1940

- Stover reports on pension campaign progress. A motion was made and carried to assess members \$6.00 (to be paid at \$2.00 per month) for the pension campaign.
- The board recommended that members volunteer to donate a days' work for members who are at Salem. Any member who does not donate time should pay the man to work at a days' pay of \$6.00, to be collected by the Secretary Treasurer.
- Motion made and carried that Brother Shrunk continue on the Governor's Pension Committee.

December 5, 1940

- Local 43 President in 1922, Peter Kumpf, would succumbed to a heart ailment while on duty at Station 23 (1917 SE 7th Avenue) and was taken to a local hospital. He died a few hours later (no details on what prompted the heart problem were listed). Kumpf was 62 at the time of his death and had served Portland Fire & Rescue since January 2, 1913. He would be honored on the Oregon State Firefighter's Memorial as a line of duty death.

January 8, 1941

- Motion made and carried that the Local 43 Vice President be paid \$10.00 per month.

March 13, 1941

- Motion made and carried that no members be allowed to solicit the public in uniform.

April 9, 1941

- Discussion regarding the Jr. Captain examination (to be recommended to the Civil Service Commission):
  - No credit be given to candidates for education
  - No one be penalized due to age
  - 2 1/2 years of service should be required to be eligible
  - No one be allowed to take a promotional exam until he has served in the lower rank
- Motion made and carried to discontinue decorating apparatus for the Rose Festival.

May 8, 1941

- Motion made and carried that we do not pay any more fills for the public relations committee.

August 7, 1941

- Motion made and carried that a committee be appointed to request of the pension board, that a competent physician make a thorough examination of all members going off duty on occupational disease.

September 11, 1941

- Motion made and carried that Local 43 allows \$12.50 for retirement badges (for retiring members).

Throughout the 1940's, the pension committee reports regularly about their activity and the activity in Salem, at the general meetings, although little detail is offered.

October 9, 1941

- Motion made and carried that Local 43 protest the method used by the Civil Service Board in the entrance examination and using regular members of the department for tests or for guinea pigs.

February 9, 1942

- Motion made and defeated that Local 43 request the Chief break in all members as Engineers, Drivers, and Tillermen.
- Motion made and carried that an assessment of \$25.00 be levied on all members to reimburse the legislative fund.

June 8, 1942

- Motion made and carried to adopt a resolution to hold no more civil service examinations until after the war is over.
- Motion made and carried that the names of all members who have failed to pay their pension assessment be put in the monthly bulletin and if failing to pay in 60 days, be declared delinquent and dropped from the membership of the organization.
- Motion made and defeated that a letter be sent to the commissioners and Chief Grenfell asking that they do not ask deferment from Military service on any members of the Fire Department.

July 7, 1942

- Motion made and carried that the President be authorized to work out some method to organize the fire wardens working in the shipyards (Swan Island).

August 11, 1942

- Motion made and carried that members who failed to pay their legislative assessment be cited to appear before the executive board.

August 12, 1942

- Motion made and carried that all business agents of unions be notified to not allow any firemen to work in their craft unless they are members in good standing in Local 43.
- Motion made and carried that a committee be appointed to ask that the minimum pay of \$165.40 be increased to \$175.40 in six months and full pay be received after one year of service.

November 9, 1942

- Motion made and carried that we immediately protest any more civil service examinations until after the war.

January 13, 1943

- Motion made and carried that \$250 from the legislative fund be used to aid the State Association of Firefighters to pass their pension bill.

April 8, 1943

- Motion made and carried that we levy an assessment of \$25 per month on members, \$15 to be used to purchase retirement badges and \$10 to go toward the purchase of cigarettes for our men in battle.

September 9, 1943

- Motion made and carried that we specify the number of hours based on a 72 hour work week, and that time and one half for overtime be paid in excess of a 72 hour work week.

September 10, 1943

- Motion made and carried that we do not send "Chesterfield" cigarettes to the boys overseas.

November 8, 1943

- Motion made and carried to purchase a suitable pennant for our military members with a gold star for those who have died in the service, and a blue star for those in active military service.

December 13, 1943

- Motion made and carried that the Secretary Treasurer be instructed to write the State Association of Firefighters requesting re-affiliation and to send a check to cover our per capita tax starting July 1, 1943 and that we pay on 310 members.

July 1, 1945

- Motion made and carried that a letter of thanks be sent to the city council and Chief Grenfell in regards to the 2 additional days off (in what time period was not specified).

September 10, 1945

- Motion made and carried that we go on record to support the show to be held for fire prevention week.

September 11, 1945

- Motion made and carried that a committee be appointed to work toward a 48 hour work week.

November 8, 1945

- Motion made and carried that we sponsor an amendment to the city charter to change the entrance age from ages "21-25" to ages "21-29 inclusive."

- Motion made and carried that the executive board request only one piece of apparatus be entered into the Rose Festival parade.

February 13, 1946

- Motion made and carried to instruct our delegates to the civil service section to repudiate the scandalous matter contained in the last issue of the *Civic Employee* and that our protest be made public in that magazine.
- Motion made and defeated that we have someone besides Joe Dume edit the *Civic Employee*.

March 12, 1946

- Motion made and carried that all firefighters be assessed \$5 for three pay days until the sum of \$15 is collected, and amend to assess more if needed, in the 48 hour work week campaign.

May 3, 1946

- Motion made and defeated that the city pay for a phone in each fire station.

May 23, 1946

- Motion made and carried to instruct the committee to establish a 60 hour work week starting July 1, 1946, a 56 hour work week starting July 1, 1947, and a 48 hour work week starting July 1, 1948.
- Motion made and carried that a referendum vote be submitted to members before a measure is placed on the ballot in November.

October 16, 1946

- Motion made and carried that a committee be appointed to get a proper interpretation of the occupational disease clause in the pension law.

January 13, 1947

- Motion made and carried to instruct the three members of the Pension Board to carry the case of Mrs. Vehl to the courts for an interpretation of her pension rights under the occupational disease clause of the pension law.

January 14, 1947

- Motion made and carried that the Executive Board request "cold shots" be given, free, by the city, to all members of the fire department.

March 31, 1947

- 1932 Union President Marion R. Stark would be found on the morning after his shift, dead of a heart attack, in his bed at Station #8 (45 NE Russell Street). He was 63 years of age at the time.

Stark was hired on November 13, 1906. Stark would be recognized on the Oregon State Firefighter Memorial as a line of duty death.

May 14, 1947

- It is requested that the Executive Board ask the papers to lay off scare headlines in cases involving firemen and police and veterans.

June 4, 1947

- VP Leinweber spoke on the Police/Fire Pension setup and of the work and study of the pension reform thus far.

### **1948 Pension Reform**

- On November 2, 1948. A public election was held regarding the Authorization of a special tax for the Fire and Police Disability, Retirement, and Death Benefit Plan. It was passed and became effective July 1, 1949. The same election also asked voters to pass a special tax for Fire Fighting Equipment and Fire Station Construction. The tax would replace 21 pieces of equipment that were 20 to 35 years old and replace Engine Houses 1, 2, 13, 19, 21, and 32. This resulted in the following changes, according to the 1948 Election Booklet from the City of Portland
  - The closure of the station (1948) at 905 SW 4th Avenue (Engine 1). Engine 1 was relocated to 1436 SW Montgomery Street until 1963 when it was discontinued. No station appears to have been built to replace station 1.
  - The closure of the station (1950) at 510 NW 3rd (Engine 2) with Engine 2 being co-located at the Central Fire Station at 55 SW Ash Street (with Engine 21 and Truck 1). A separate engine house for Engine 2 would not be built until 1962.
  - The closure (1955) of the station at 1207 NE Grand Avenue (Engine 13) being replaced by the station at 926 NE Weidler (Engine 13 and Truck 5).
  - The closure of the station (1953) 6049 SE Stark Street (Engine 19) being replaced by the station at 7301 E. Burnside Street (Engine 19, with Truck 6 added in 1963).
  - The closure of the station (1950) at 221 SW 2nd Avenue (Engine 21) being replaced by the Central Fire Station at 55 SW Ash Street (Engine 21 and Truck 1 - Engine 2 would be added to the new station)
  - The closure of the station (1954) at 7214 N Philadelphia Street (Engine 32) being replaced by the station at 7205 N Alta Street (Engine 32, with Truck 9 added in 1960).

It is unclear when the Fire Department would go to a three platoon system but indicators are that it was soon after the new pension system went into effect.

July 1949

- The following is an excerpt from the record book of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund as it was dissolved to form the new Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund on July 12, 1949.

*The following Resolution to dissolve the Policemen's Relief and Pension Board, to be adopted and approved as submitted by the City Attorney's Office, was presented and read:*

*WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund was created by charter amendment which was approved by the voters of the City of Portland, Oregon on June 2, 1913, was subsequently amended and appears in the 1940 charter codification as Section 5-105, and*

*WHEREAS, a new Chapter V of the City Charter was adopted by the voters on November 2, 1948, to become effective July 1, 1949, under which chapter the previous Chapter V was repealed, and*

*WHEREAS, pursuant to said new Chapter V the Board of Trustees of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund was created and said Board was organized, and*

*WHEREAS, the functions of this Board are now at an end, and the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund as it presently exists has been transferred by law to the new Board of Trustees and now becomes part of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund, now therefore,*

*BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund that the Secretary of this Board hereby is directed to transfer and deliver to the Board of Trustees of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund all books, records, and equipment of this Board, and*

*BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund that the Treasurer of this Board hereby is directed to transfer and deliver to the Board of Trustees of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund all of the cash and securities of the Board, and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all of the foregoing is to be distinctly understood as complying with Chapter V of the Charter of the City of Portland, as adopted by the voters, November 2, 1948, and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund hereby declares itself dissolved.*

*Captain Schum made a motion that the Resolution be adopted. The motion was seconded by Officer Panek and carried unanimously.*

- The following communication from Mr. Will Gibson, Secretary of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Board to the Board of Trustees of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund was presented and read:

*July 11, 1949*

*Board of Trustees  
Policemen's Relief and Pension Fund*

*Gentlemen:*

*For many years, members of the Police Bureau have tried to gain an adequate pension system. There have been many heartaches, and many members in the past have been forced to retire on inadequate pensions. Contrawise, members of the Fire Bureau have also had their pension problems, probably, not to the degree obtaining in the Police Bureau. Fortunately, however, members of both bureaus got together and worked out their mutual problem, which resulted in success at the polls on November 2, 1948.*

*While the new pension system leaves some things to be desired, on a whole, it is an excellent pension system. The fact that the new pension system is now in operation is due in no small part to the combined efforts of not only the present pension boards, but also the many, many board members who have labored in the past.*

*The new Board which meets tomorrow, Tuesday, July 12, 1949, will be faced with many practical problems. Fortunately, however, the new board is largely composed of members of both the old boards. These members have had much experience. There is no doubt in my mind that solution, and just ones, will be found, to the end that the new Act will be interpreted for the best interests not only of the members, but also for the people of Portland, who, by their votes, brought into being the new pension system.*

*I wish to thank each and every member of this board for their hearty cooperation and good will.*

*Sincerely,*

*Will Gibson  
Auditor of the City of Portland*

*By unanimous consent the Final Meeting of the Policemen's Relief and Pension Board adjourned at 3:52 O'Clock P.M*

### **Found in archival information**

July 23, 1964

- Sylvester Stevens, Local 43 President from 1942-46, would die in a house fire when the houseboat he and his wife lived in caught fire. The home was on Sauvies.

### **1984-1985 - Offered by Past President Joe Gray**

Key issues of this administration included:

- Seeking wage equity with other similar west coast fire departments. Portland wages were lagging behind.
- Pay for firefighters when called back to duty for greater alarm fires. Prior to this administration, no pay was provided for this response.
- Pay for off duty members who were required to participate on Funeral Platoons. Prior to this administration, no pay was provided for this duty.

### **1986-1997 - Offered by Past President Randy Leonard**

Key issues of this administration included:

- Pension Reform was passed by voters on November 7, 1989. The pension system had remained static for nearly 40 years. Times and circumstances had changed and when Portland contracted fire protection service for Fire District #10 and all Fire District #10 employees became city of Portland employees, a light was shined on the difference between PERS pensions and Portland's pension. Reforms would modify the member contributions, vesting times, widow benefits, and a host of other inequitable provisions in the old system. Fire and Police unions would raise over \$300,000 to pass the ballot measure. It passed with a 56% yes vote from citizens.
- In 1986, the current union office at 4530 SE 67th was purchased. Prior to this date, meetings and business were conducted at various labor halls. The current building began life as Station 31 in 1913. The wooden building was razed in 1927 when a bungalow style building would replace it on the same site. It would remain an active fire station until 1959, when it was closed as part of the "Modernization Program" that relocated and renumbered Portland fire stations across the city.

### **1998-2003 - Offered by Past President Tom Chamberlain**

Key issues of this administration included:

- Gains for retirees were made during this administration as legislation was passed to exempt retirees pension's from taxation.
- Seniority pay for members was established to create pay boosts for longevity of 15, 20, and 25 years of service, each benchmark receiving 2%, which would add to the retirement calculation.
- Chamberlain successfully restructured the union administration to include four vice presidents rather than the previous two.

### **2007-2009 - Offered by Past President Ken Burns**

Key issues of this administration included:

- This was a pivotal time in pension reform when, in 2007, the pension aspect of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement system would be put to rest. From this point forward, all new hires

would be included in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). The past pension system would begin its sunset journey.

- During this same period, all members of the bargaining unit would be recognized as "apparatus operators" and receive compensation for those skills. Portland Fire had always had the expectation of all members possessing the skills necessary to perform this work (most agencies retain a separate classification for such work), yet no compensation had ever been offered.

### **2010-2012 - Offered by Past President Jim Forquer**

Key issues of this administration included:

- During the term of Jim Forquer, it was discovered that the apparatus replacement fund within the Fire Bureau's budget was being used for purposes other than apparatus replacement. Commissioner Randy Leonard, in cooperation with President Forquer, put together a bond plan to take to the citizens of Portland. They were advised against such an approach, being warned of a difficult economy and it being unlikely to garner voter support. They forged ahead anyway and were successful in putting together a \$72,400,000 bond to provide for the replacement of ageing fire and emergency response vehicles, to finance the construction of a fire station, and an emergency response center, and provide funding for a public safety emergency radio system. This was passed on November 2, 2010.

### **2013-2018 - Offered by President Alan Fershweiler**

Key issues of this administration included:

- As President Fershweiler moved through the first half of his second term, he related that work with the IAFF to receive a SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) Grant to fund 26 positions lost in the 2013 budget was a significant accomplishment. The fire bureau administration was initially against this, but were convinced otherwise. Without this grant, stations would have closed and layoffs may have occurred.
- Defense of the "alternate payee/reversion benefit" for retirees and current members. This allowed the member or retiree to regain benefits previously received by an alternate payee, such as an ex-spouse, upon their death. This was a long held benefit that had to be vigorously defended through legal action.
- Achieving service credit for PERS (Public Employee Retirement System) members that re injured on the job. This became a key issue when a member was injured in a gas explosion that leveled a building in Northwest Portland in 2016.

Firefighter Pay has varied greatly over the history of the Fire Bureau, and during the years of Local 43 as well. Some of that history is captured in the table below:

<b>Top FF Pay</b>	<b>Monthly Pay</b>
July 1947	\$250.00
January 1948	\$260.00
January 1949	\$270.00
July 1949	\$275.00
July 1950	\$287.00
January 1951	\$297.00
July 1951	\$313.00
January 1953	\$326.00
July 1953	\$340.00
February 1954	\$354.00
July 1955	\$368.00
July 1956	\$384.00
July 1957	\$432.00
July 1958	\$448.93
July 1959	\$464.53
July 1960	\$500.93
July 1961	\$520.00
July 1962	\$530.40
December 1962	\$540.80
July 1963	\$561.60
July 1964	\$580.67
July 1965	\$601.47
July 1966	\$641.33
January 1967	\$653.47
July 1967	\$695.07
July 1968	\$734.93
July 1969	\$814.67
January 1970	\$877.07
July 1970	\$903.07
July 1971	\$986.27
July 1972	\$1,026.13
January 1973	\$1,057.33
July 1973	\$1,126.67
July 1974	\$1,208.13
July 1975	\$1,365.87
July 1976	\$1,475.07
July 1977	\$1,570.40
July 1978	\$1,691.70
July 1979	\$1,851.20
July 1980	\$2,022.80
July 1981	\$2,204.80
July 1982	\$2,348.67
July 1983	\$2,348.67