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2021 MPFF ELECTIONS

Elections for office will be held at the MPFF Convention in September for the following positions, nominated candidates are as follows:

- MPFF President (Remainder of four year, 2020 term)
  - Pete Johnson
  - Scott Vadnais

- Central District Vice President (3-year term)
  - Mike Christian
  - Jeremiah Melquist

- Non-Fire District Vice President (3-year term)
  - Jim Meder

- Central District At-Large/Trustee (3-year term)
  - Jodi Halweg
  - Josh Nelson
  - Cody Thornberg

Information sheets submitted by the candidates running for each office will be found on the following pages, and are listed for each position in alphabetical order.
August 19th, 2021

Brothers and sisters,

First and foremost, I want to thank you for all of the conversations and opportunities to meet with you and your members over the last few months. Traveling across the state, meeting via Zoom, and the numerous phone calls have been instrumental in helping me shape a vision for the future of our union -- a vision that focuses on the needs of every local regardless of size or location.

These conversations have also highlighted what we do well and where we can improve. Our members want to continue with a strong Firefighter presence at the Capitol, fighting to make sure that our issues will remain front and center. No one can speak to our issues with the passion, honesty, and effectiveness better than we can and I am committed to spending every minute needed, in person, in St. Paul, or wherever else I need to be to ensure our issues are not pushed aside. Our leaders want to see improved communication between our locals and the MPFF executive board, as well as more training opportunities. These conversations have also identified a need for resources that are specific to you as Firefighters here in Minnesota. These include more refined contract comparables to increase success at the negotiating table, a resource for new locals and new leaders to help with everything from securing their first contract, to mentorship that can help navigate the challenges that our new leaders face.

All of our locals are unique and with that comes differing needs. The best way for the next President of the MPFF to meet the needs of those locals is by listening. For some locals political action may be the most important way the MPFF can help, for others it may be assistance with grievances or arbitration, contract negotiations, or developing a community outreach program. I look forward to continued conversations with all of you to ensure that the MPFF is meeting the needs of your local and our union remains member-driven and member focused.

Representing the members of Duluth, Local 101, was one of the most rewarding things I have ever been a part of. Fighting off budget and staffing cuts, representing our members in a variety of hearings, and negotiating contracts showed me how truly important this work is to protecting and improving the lives of our members. This work is not something that can be done half-hearted. I can assure you that the members of the MPFF will be my number one priority. I look forward to talking with you more and fighting alongside you on behalf of all Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters.

In Solidarity,

Peter Johnson
Candidate for MPFF President

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MPFF Monitor | PAGE 02

Experience

- 14 Years on Local 101’s Executive Board
- 8 Years as Local President
- IAFF Political Training Academy
- Minnesota Political Training Academy
- IAFF Peer Support Certified
- Filed Numerous Grievances and Prevailed in Multiple Arbitrations
- Successfully Represented Members in a BMS Unit Clarification Hearing

Platform

- Continue Strong Firefighter Presence at the State Capitol
  - Protect our pension and collective bargaining rights
  - Lobby for firefighter health and safety issues
  - Reduce the denial of LODD benefits
- Improve and Expand Communication Between Locals and the MPFF
  - Virtual quarterly district meetings
  - Ensure all have their voices heard
  - Connect members to IAFF and MPFF resources
- Expand MPFF Resources
  - Build out the negotiations tool kit
  - Develop New Local/New Leader resource guide
- Improve Union and Fire Training for ALL Locals Regardless of Size or Location
  - Virtual union training focused on issues that are specific to Minnesota
  - Bring back the Minnesota Affiliate Leadership Summit
  - Develop an MPFF Instructed Fire Training Program

So Far...

- Talked With Over 40 Local Presidents
- Met With Over Half of the 48 MPFF Locals
- Hosting Virtual Town Hall and Listening Sessions
- Focused on Member Engagement and Contact
- Building our resources
- Communicating with Members Via Multiple Formats and Platforms

All of our locals have different needs and I will work with each of you to ensure the MPFF is meeting those needs.
Delegates,

I would like to welcome you to the 2021 Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters State Convention. Over the last six months I have truly enjoyed meeting with so many of the members of our great union. Throughout this campaign it has been made clear to me that communication is at the forefront of everyone’s expectations. The members need and deserve open communication, in a timely and consistent manner. Whether the exchange with the MPFF or your local affiliate, communication is a foundational cornerstone in the building of relationships. Thusly, it is through these relationships that we find our strength.

Along with bolstering our communication profile within the MPFF, I look forward to representing us at the capital. Helping our elected officials understand the challenges we face leads to a collaborative understanding of everyone’s needs. This is crucial in securing the rights we currently enjoy and enhancing them as we move forward. I will advocate for our Brothers and Sisters who are battling the effects of cancer and PTSD, and help to guide their employers to better support them. As leaders of local affiliates, you can look forward to additional educational tools being made available to assist you in enhancing your abilities to represent your membership. We will continue to build our Legal Assistance Fund to offer financial aid to affiliates experiencing legal issues. By continuing the funding of our PAC Fund, we will continue to stand with those who support our vision, irrespective of their party affiliation.

Additionally, I’d like to congratulate Pete Johnson on a thoughtful and honorable campaign. The process alone has, and will continue to bring forth the ideas and engagement we need to grow stronger and grow together. To all of our Brothers and Sisters running for open seats, thanks to you as well. This further illustrates how our members are invested in the growth and success of the MPFF.

In closing, if I haven’t had the occasion to meet with you personally, please seek me out during the next two days. I look forward for the opportunity to connect with you personally.

Fraternally,

Scott Vadnais
August 22, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to be your Central district Vice President; I have lots of experience with running and being a part of a local. I have served as a Vice President and currently serve as the President of Brooklyn Park IAFF local 5031. I have been through many contract negotiations including the initial contract for a local. I have been though many of the legal battles a local could face, such as unit clarifications with the BMS to add promotional positions and arbitrations. I have also been heavily involved with Brooklyn Parks fundraising committee and founded the 501c3 BPFIRE foundation on behalf of our local. I think the wide range of experience can really help many of the newer locals and the locals still to come. I would be honored to be elected as your next Central district vice president.

Fraternally,

Mike Christian
Candidate for MPFF Central district Vice President.
Jeremiah K. Melquist

Address removed by Tom Clark | 651.587.7504 | Jeremiah_melquist@hotmail.com

07/12/2021

Tom Clark
Secretary/Treasurer
MPFF
8100 Wayzata Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55426

Dear Tom Clark:

I write today to notify you and the MPFF board of my intent to run for the Central District Vice President position at our annual State Convention September 27-28, 2021.

I have been a Chair Officer as the Treasurer of Saint Paul Firefighters Local 21 for 8 years. I have been the Central District At-Large/Trustee for the last 3 years.

The experience I have gained from L21 grievances, negotiations, and day to day operations has giving me the skills needed to be successful at the State level. My time as the Central District Trustee has allowed me to build relationships within our District to assist in other Locals needs as they arise.

I have stepped in when needed and testified at the State Capitol in front of multiple committees. I will continue to fight to secure better benefits for our members and to protect our rights. I will assist our MPFF board in any manner needed.

Please contact me with any questions/concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah K. Melquist
Brothers and Sisters of the MPFF,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to run for Central District Trustee.

My name is Jodi Halweg and I am currently the Vice President of Maplewood Firefighters Local 4470. This is a position I have had the honor to have been trusted with for the past 16 years. In the 16 years I have represented my local, I have been part of major changes with a department going from a combination to a full career department which as any would know is chaotic when you are trying to fight for your peers and their contractual rights while ensuring the citizens are still served without disruption. I have also been part of many contract negotiations in which some went without a hitch and others very tumultuous as we have battled financially and ethically with the City. Additionally, I have battled on legal issues such as discrimination, equitable duty assignments, grievance, and disciplinary processes. While these areas are not pleasant, they are issues that we have had to face and were successful in fighting. While duties within my local are important to know about, I have also worked cooperatively alongside our administrative staff to understand the department (and city) budget. While this may seem minor, it has helped me to better understand the process of what we as a local have the capabilities to do and what we potentially cannot do. This understanding of the budget will allow me as your (hopeful) Central District Trustee to keep the 10,000-foot view in mind when, as a team, explore, verify, and approve budgetary placement and items.

My goals within the Trustee position for the Central District are centered in exploring the MPFF budget even further with the current (and future) executive board. In addition, I would like to see more accountability for not only the board, but the locals when it comes to time to submit for reimbursements. While this may sound harsh, I would like to provide a means to every individual and local to not have to be concerned about an audit if an expenditure comes into question and there is no proof to show as much of our local representation is on the smaller side. Lastly, I want to work further with our local and state representatives to push a greater bi-partisan support on funding for the departments that we work for.

Attached is my professional resume for viewing. I look forward to having the opportunity to run for this position and if elected, will proudly work to maintain transparency, integrity, and honesty with regards to our finances, budget, and future funding for the MPFF.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jodi Halweg

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Jodi A. Halweg

Accomplishments
- Twenty years in the paramedic clinical preceptor setting.
- First community paramedic for the City of Maplewood. Helped to establish legal guidelines and program inclusion for program and patient implementation.
- Developed the current fire department field training program for new employees and paramedic requirement guidelines.
- Completed research to be published and presented with Regis Hospital Orthopedic Trauma Fellow regarding “10 Years of Fall” in the Maplewood Community.
- Attended a grant funded program through the National Fire Protection Association to implement fall and fire prevention in the senior citizen community.
- Prepared and obtained additional grant funds through the National Fire Protection Association to continue fall and fire prevention in the senior citizen community.
- Assisted in coordinating and speaking during Hill Murray High School’s mock crash involving impaired drivers.
- International Association of Fire Chiefs Scholarship Award recipient.
- Eastern Oregon University Stive and Transfer Scholarship recipient.
- Muscular Dystrophy Association Brick Award recipient.
- United Hospital St. Paul Heart Award recipient.
- 13 consecutive years, and currently serving as union Vice President for Maplewood Firefighters Local 4470.

Professional Experience
Adjunct Fire/EMS Instructor-Century College, White Bear Lake, MN–October 2015–Current
- Conduct hands-on and didactic education for new firefighters and emergency medical students.
- Provide continuing education for established firefighters and contract fire departments.
- Create course development and content.

Firefighter-Paramedic/Community Paramedic-City of Maplewood, Maplewood, MN–May 2005–Present
- Provide fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services to the citizens and visitors of Maplewood.
- Provide incident command during fire, rescue, and medical incidents.
- Conduct business life safety inspections and assist with fire investigations.
- Conduct training and education for current employees, law enforcement, new hires, and community members.
- Provide Community Paramedic Outreach
- Field Training Officer
- Clinical Preceptor

- Supervisor part-time staff during daily operations and also function in the acting captain capacity.
- Represent the department as a member of the city’s wellness committee and racial equity teams.
- Union Vice President

- Provided radio communications and medical directions to regional basic and advanced life support units.
- Coordinate and communicate transportation decision with hospital and pre-hospital staff during high acuity events and mass casualties.
- Conducted basic and advanced instruction to Regions Hospital employees and its contracted affiliates.

Community Service Officer/Paramedic-City of Maplewood, Maplewood, MN 2001-2005
- Provide advanced and basic life support medical care
- Education and training to Maplewood Police and Fire personnel
- Assist law enforcement in non-suspect related crimes
- Managed supply inventory for police and medical supplies
- Provided traffic control and intermittent enforcement

Software Skills
Microsoft Office, Firehouse, Image Trend, Packet Writer, HealthEMS, Tritsch, Firemanager

Education
Fire Service Administration B.S. – Eastern Oregon University, LaGrande, OR (2014)
Paramedic Diploma- Century College, White Bear Lake, MN (2001)
My name is Josh Nelson, and I am running to be your next MPFF Central District At-Large/Trustee. This is a decision that I have not taken lightly; through the encouragement of other Local and State leaders and with the support of my Local, I am asking you for your support and your vote.

I began my full-time fire service career in 2008 with the Fry Fire District in Arizona. Though we were members of IAFF Local 2146, our Local was not recognized by the fire district administration due to Arizona being a Right to Work state. We had no contract to protect us. We suffered from horrible wages and benefits and working conditions were worse. My experience in Arizona helped me understand the importance of having a strong labor contract and legislation that enabled firefighters and other workers to have a place at the table to negotiate wages, benefits, and working conditions.

In 2013, I started with the Richfield Fire Department and became a member of IAFF Local 1215. I was elected to our board as Local Treasurer in early 2015 and held that position until being elected as Local Secretary in 2019. I have been able to help manage our budget and have been able to serve on every negotiation committee since elected. I have also had the opportunity to represent our members during discipline and contract-related issues.

At the beginning of 2020, I was appointed by the MPFF Executive Board in an acting role as Communications Director, with subsequent appointment after interviewing for the convention approved position in December 2020. We have been able to increase the MPFF brand throughout Minnesota and the nation. I am proud of the successful campaign we created and managed that led to Minnesota being one of the first states to provide presumptive workers compensation coverage for COVID-19 to its firefighters. The IAFF recognized this effort in awarding the MPFF First Place during the 2020 Media Awards in the category of “Best Affiliate Public Relations or Political Campaign or Project” for the campaign created in our fight for presumptive coverage for our members. With internal systems in place with social media, the focus is now towards providing better service and communication internally to our members with the MPFF.

I understand the importance of what strong unions mean for our members and their families. If elected to this position, I will continue to build relationships within our organization and with other union and political leaders in the state to help further our mission. I am committed to making sure the MPFF has systems and procedures in place to modernize our serviceability to our members.
Brothers and Sisters of the MPFF,

My name is Cody Thornberg and I am announcing my candidacy for the Central District At-Large/Trustee position within the MPFF. I have been a part of a strong Union family my entire life and aspire to share my enthusiasm for Labor at a larger level than within my current Local.

I’ve been a career firefighter for 8 years, starting my career in Wisconsin. After spending a little over two years in Wisconsin I returned back to the great State of Minnesota and began to plant permanent roots. In 2015 I was hired in Cottage Grove as a full-time firefighter/paramedic. One year later I became President of IAFF Local 2570. Shortly after beginning my presidency I lead our local in joining the MPFF and have been an active participant in MPFF functions ever since. During my tenure in Cottage Grove I was fortunate to utilize numerous resources from the MPFF and the IAFF assisting me in successfully negotiating my first contract as Local President. I am proud to say that we were able to make significant accomplishments with that first contract including a 4% wage increase per year for the three-year contract as well as switch from a police officer 2080-schedule to a 24-hour shift schedule (2912) sought after by the membership.

In 2018 I joined the Roseville Fire Department as a full-time firefighter. While I was new to this department I quickly immersed myself into the Union in any way I could. Thankfully the year I joined Roseville there was also a vacancy on the Executive Board of IAFF Local 5051 in the Shift Representative capacity; I was chosen to serve in this position by my fellow firefighters. While serving under then President Neil Sjostrom I was fortunate to make some lasting connections at the local, state, and national level giving me a broader understanding of Union operations at all levels. Additionally, I was fortunate to be part of L5051’s negotiation team for our most recent contract. At the start of 2021, I officially became President of Local 5051 and look forward to the journey ahead.

I have also been an active participant in IAFF and MPFF educational opportunities and events throughout my tenure in the IAFF and have found great value in these development opportunities.

Being elected to serve as the Central District At-Large/Trustee would allow me to take the next progressive step in my Union career. There is a large amount of change happening around the State, including right here in our very own MPFF. I’d like to be a part of that change, I believe my skills, abilities, and experience will help me to better all Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters. With my strong union background and ability to work well with others, I’m excited to see what we can accomplish together. I’d be proud and honored to serve as the Central District At-Large/Trustee if elected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Fraternally,

Cody T. Thornberg – President | L5051