

FINAL

**FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 12, 2010**

Chaired by: Phil McLean

Meeting Date and Location: January 12, 2010, Ohio Department of Public Safety, 1970 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43223

Committee Members Present: Bob Babb, Terry Gill, Mark Mankins, Richard Sacco, Jim Steele, Dudley Wright

Committee Members Absent: Mark Lundy

Staff Present: Aleta Dodson, John Kennington, Rachel Moore, Doug Orahood, Richard Rucker

Guests: Jeff Cotner, Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSOFI); Charlie Dixon, Columbus Division of Fire; Thomas Eisel, Sylvania Township Fire Department; Scott Henry, Xenia Township Fire Department; Jim Holcomb, EMS Board/Violet Township Fire; Ted Huffman, Cuyahoga Community College; Bill Mallory, Madison Township Fire/EMS Board; Daryl Meyers, Xenia Township Fire Department; John Peters, Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors/Ohio Rural Fire Council; Scott Walker, State Fire Marshal Office/Ohio Fire Academy; Steven Wallis, Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors/Ohio Fire Rural Council

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2009 FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR (FFSI) TRAINING COMMITTEE MINUTES

ACTION: Motion to approve the November 10, 2009, FFSI committee minutes. Steele first. Sacco second. None opposed. Motion approved.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Tom Eisel addressed the committee requesting reinstatement for his FF II, FSI and FI certifications without having to take the test. His cards expired November 16, 2009, but he did not know they had expired until the end of November. Since he is also a paramedic he expected to receive notification in advance of his fire card expiring, which did not occur. Members discussed circumstances of his situation. Prior to his card expiring, e-mail reminders were sent from August to November 2009 to the e-mail address Mr. Eisel provided the Division. However, this was his work e-mail, and since he retired in July, 2009, he never received them. Mr. McLean said since he renewed his fire certification in January, 2009, he would have received his new cards showing the expiration dates. Mr. Eisel said he did receive them. Mr. McLean said this issue will be voted on during the certification portion of the meeting.

Mr. Huffman of Cuyahoga Community College updated the committee on the status of a hybrid Fire Inspector course they are developing and want to address the Board in March for approval to run a beta program. Mr. McLean suggested he speak with the Ohio Fire Officials Association

(OFOA) regarding the concept of the course before putting too much time into developing the course as they have been essential in giving guidance on inspection courses.

Mr. Cotner of the Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI) reported the Volunteer course is ready to roll out. The Fire Academy finished another course January 6, 2010 and Mr. Wallis reported that out of twelve students, ten tested and passed. Mr. Steele wanted to know what the feedback was from the pilot classes and Mr. Orahood should have the evaluations at the next meeting. Mr. Orahood distributed a draft of the volunteer course curriculum for review and plans to post online by the end of January. The Rural Fire Council (RFC) and the Ohio Society of Fire Safety Inspectors (OSFSI) will hold meetings in the four corners of the state to update instructors on the 36-hour course updates. They also agreed to reference page numbers for each specific textbook on the course curriculum. Mr. Mankins suggested if members want a reference to a specific textbook, they should contact their respective organization instead of the Division. Mr. Orahood said there will be one test everyone will use which references all three textbooks and plans to have online in the next week or two. The new instructor guide and objectives check off sheet will also be placed online. Chartered institutions will be notified of this change and what the effective date is through the EMS Listservs and website. The goal is to have the new volunteer course and test in place in April 2010. A question was asked about when students have to complete the NIMS 100 and 700 courses. Mr. Orahood said they need completed prior to testing. When a student is approved to take the test, the program director is attesting that the student has completed all requirements and is eligible for certification.

Mr. McLean asked Mr. Orahood if he has received any feedback from Mr. Calco on fire audits or other problems and Mr. Orahood said he has not.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT, Richard Rucker

The Division hosted a training session on the 16 Life Safety Initiatives. Approximately fifty-five people attended including Cathy Collins-Taylor, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. She was very impressed with the program and asked if there was a flag that ODPS could fly during national fire week. Mr. Rucker and Mr. Orahood will look into obtaining one.

The Division is in the process of establishing an EMS awards program to honor all levels of EMTs, medical directors, and agencies to coincide with National EMS week in May. Correspondence will be sent out statewide for nominations for those awards. Mr. Rucker wanted to know if the committee members would be interested in having a fire award in October. Mr. McLean asked if this was something that had been going on in the EMS side and Mr. Rucker said no, but the Department of Public Safety (DPS) has been doing an informal award during EMS week. Last year the recipients were three firefighters who were involved in an explosion near the DPS building. Mr. Rucker said they want to make something more formal that gives stakeholders an opportunity to make nominations. Mr. McLean thinks it is a good idea and recommended committee members take this back to their organizations for feedback.

CERTIFICATION REPORT, John Kennington

Mr. Kennington reported since HB 401 was put in place, the Division issued 15,811 renewal and 4,828 initial fire certifications in 2009. Of the 40,463 EMT and Firefighters processed in 2009, less than 1% experienced difficulties. He said multiple emails are sent ninety days prior to a certification's expiration. Last month, reminders were sent to 1,487 certificate holders and only

one person did not renew. Mr. Kennington is now receiving a report identifying individuals who are set to expire but have not yet renewed and staff are calling when time allows. Mr. McLean pointed out there was a grace period for a year during the introduction to transition to this process; people had 13 months to renew. When EMS and fire certifications are on one card, this problem will be eliminated. Mr. Kennington said EMS online renewals are at 95% and it is difficult to justify mailing reminder letters to everyone for the 5% who don't renew. Mr. McLean said each committee member needs to ensure they are explaining to the fire community the thought that went into the rules and they were not designed to take someone's card. Individuals only have to retake a test and do minimal training to get their card reinstated.

Mr. Kennington had multiple requests for exemptions during the certification period to present. Two requests for military exemption were requested, but Mr. Kennington had conflicting deployment dates and the committee requested he get clarification before they make a decision.

An exemption request for an individual deployed overseas since 2008 was received. Their Level II firefighter card expired during that time and Mr. Kennington recommends their card be reinstated.

ACTION: Motion to recommend to the Executive Director to reinstate the individual's Firefighter II card due to active military service. Steele first. Mankins second. None opposed. Motion passed.

A request for exemption from the January 24, 2009 certification deadline due to active military service was received. The individual was deployed overseas in March 2008 and returned July 2008. At that time, they began training for their next deployment in September 2008 and did not return until October 2009. Mr. Kennington does not believe the individual was in the states at the time of the certification deadline

ACTION: Motion to recommend to the Executive Director to approve exemption due to active military service during the certification period and reinstate their card. Steele first. Mankins second. None opposed. Motion passed.

Mr. Kennington received a request for exemption from the continuing education requirement due to medical hardship. This individual met the January 24, 2009 certification deadline, but it expired April 13, 2009. The individual has been on disability since 2009 and was approved to return to work September 15, 2009 and that is when they discovered their certification had expired. Mr. Steele asked how many e-mails were sent prior to the expiration date and Mr. Kennington said either four or five. Mr. Gill said the individual apparently understood the process because they certified before the January 24, 2009 deadline.

ACTION: Motion to recommend to the Executive Director to deny exemption from continuing education requirement due to medical hardship during the certification period. Wright first. Steele second. None opposed. Motion passed.

Mr. Kennington said Mr. Eisel is in attendance and would like to request an exemption as discussed earlier today. Mr. Kennington said according to rule 4765-20-05, Notification to Executive Director of Change of Personal Information is required to be sent to the Division

within 30 days of the change. Mr. Steele said with all due respect to Mr. Eisel's service, the rule compels the committee to deny the request. Mr. McLean thanked Mr. Eisel for wanting to continue his fire service and wanted him to understand that the rules written were worked on by the committee members at this table. It is unfortunate about the e-mail situation that occurred, but they have to uphold the rules. He encouraged Mr. Eisel take the test in order to reinstate.

ACTION: Motion to recommend to the Executive Director to deny exemption from continuing education requirement due to medical hardship during the certification period. Steele first. Babb second. None opposed. Motion passed.

Mr. Kennington said he is now providing summary information sheets for EMS exemption requests to the Board and will begin doing the same for this committee.

Mr. Kennington said the Senate and House passed House Bill 1 (HB1) which gives the Division authority to set a common expiration date for all certifications, combining fire and EMS, based on the individual's birthdate. Division staff is working on writing rules for this process. This will impact EMTs because Firefighter cards already expire on their birthdates. In every instance but one, the fire certification renewal date will take precedence. The only exception is when an existing EMT becomes a firefighter, then the expiration date will be based on the EMS certification expiration date. Mr. Kennington said within 90 days of the effective date, the goal is to combine all certifications, either lengthening or shortening the EMS cycle and pro rating the continuing education hours. Mr. McLean has full confidence this process will work, but does not want to see people fall through the cracks like the 150 individuals that this committee has dealt with during the fire certification process. Mr. Kennington said the Division will be benevolent when auditing the continuing education hours for this process. The new cards will include a letter explaining the changes, meetings will be held around the state, and the process will be publicized. Once the rules are approved, the process should be in place at the end of 2010. Mr. Kennington said certification forms are being revised to include a line for secondary emails, which could have prevented Mr. Eisel's situation.

FIRE COORDINATOR REPORT, Doug Orahood

Mr. Orahood distributed drafts of the fire rules that need changed. Rules 4765-19, 20, and 21 will be rescinded, which were used for the initial renewal required January 24, 2009, rule 4765-22 will be the new issuance of fire certifications, and 4765-20-23 is the new rule discussing the merging of fire and EMS certifications. These are drafts for inside this room only. Mr. McLean said he would prefer an e-mail or letter giving an explanation of the one card setup and Mr. Orahood will send one out. Mr. Steele asked if anyone on this committee was notified that this was being written by the EMS Board. Mr. Kennington apologized that this committee was not notified, but the Education committee worked on this because it does not really affect firefighters. Only 4,000 of the 20,000 firefighters will be impacted. He said Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Bates were involved in the HB 1 draft and Mr. Gill was in attendance at that meeting. Mr. Kennington said if the committee wants, he can make sure someone from this committee is at the meetings. Mr. Holcomb said anyone can attend the Education committee meeting and the next one is at 9:30 on January 21 where they will be discussing the one card rules. Mr. Steele said his only concern is receiving this document today and expecting it be approved today. That is not real effective communication. Mr. Holcomb said this was presented on the EMS side in early December. Mr. Orahood said a lot of this rush is a result of the Board meeting every other

month. Mr. Steele said this committee spoke about the need to meet every month to no avail as such a timeline impedes Ohio's fire service. From what he understands, that is the decision the Governor makes. Mr. Holcomb said the one card expiration date was to be in place by July 1, but had to be pushed back for notification purposes and apologized that this was not presented to you, but the rules have to go through the JCARR filing process, which requires everything be done by August.

A lengthy discussion regarding the proposed changes took place. Rule 4765-20-22(b) is confusing as to whose CE is being waived and needs reworded since 27,000 firefighters will be interpreting this. The only two exceptions to the expiration date are when someone goes from a volunteer to FF II mid-cycle and when an EMT becomes a firefighter. If a certificate holder lapses and renews again, they could cycle back into the rule multiple times, but should eliminate people reinstating.

Mr. Orahod distributed copies of the fire and investigation reports. The fire report now has a monthly list showing the number of certified firefighters by county. In 2009, 4,600 initial firefighter applications were approved and Ohio currently has 52,000 certified firefighters.

Two "train the trainer" classes on the 16 Life Saving Initiatives will be held April 12, 2010 in the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) auditorium at 1980 W. Broad Street.

Mr. Orahod will attend the Board of Regents meeting tomorrow to discuss the 12 fire science degree community colleges. They will look at the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) Program model as there is not much consistency in fire programs around the state. The Board of Regents has funding and authority over community colleges, which is why they are taking the lead on this project.

Members discussed the continued work to imbed the Life Safety Initiatives into the FF I and II courses. There was a discussion regarding tying the initiatives in with the proposed Pro Board skill sheets. Mr. McLean did not want future Pro Board affiliation to delay work on the life safety initiatives. Members discussed if the life saving initiatives are tied in with the Pro Board course objectives and skill sheets there would be a cost and whether additional hours are needed to include the initiatives into the courses. The point was made that when Wyoming imbedded the initiatives, their course hours did not increase. No action was taken.

Mr. Orahod met with programmers to develop the March 1 firefighter certificate audit process.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Phil McLean

Mr. Steele gave an update on the 1403 project and believes it does not warrant a separate certification but thinks it should be a stand alone class. The group scheduled to meet Tuesday, February 9 at 10 AM to continue working on the project.

The Ohio Fire Alliance meeting was cancelled last week and has not been rescheduled.

Mr. McLean completed the committee's year end report for the EMS Board. He said the new Board chair, Jim Davis, requested the committee create a list of goals for 2010.

Nominations were taken for Chair and Vice-Chair of the FFSI committee for 2010.

ACTION: Motion to nominate Phil McLean as the FFSI Chairman. Sacco first. Mankins second. None opposed. McLean abstained. Motion approved.

ACTION: Motion to nominate James Steele as the FFSI Vice-Chairman. McLean first. Sacco second. None opposed. Steele abstained. Motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. McLean met with the new chair of the EMS Board Jim Davis who requested 2010 goals from the FFSI committee. Mr. Orahod will include those in the State's Board report.

Mr. Orahod completed a draft of the Pro Board self-study course and said the DPS Director requested Pro Board certification be on a fast track.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. McLean asked if a charter is not teaching the minimum fire courses required, how they are audited. Mr. Orahod said he thinks one course needs taught during each cycle period and will research rule 4765-11-05 regarding minimum program requirements for charters.

Mr. Peters asked if an FF II wants to be an instructor, do they need five years experience. Mr. Orahod said they can teach up to their level of certification.

Mr. Orahod reported that the new EMS Board chair is Jim Davis and the Vice Chair is Mark Resanovich.

Mr. McLean said the next committee meeting is January 12, 2010. Mr. Orahod said the committee would continue meeting every other month in 2010 and Mr. McLean said the schedule makes it difficult to conduct business.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn. Steele first. Sacco second. None opposed. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM.