

FINAL

**FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 10, 2009**

Chaired by: Phil McLean

Meeting Date and Location: March 10, 2009, Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), 1970 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43223

Committee Members Present: Bob Babb, Terry Gill, Mark Lundy, Mark Mankins, Richard Sacco, and Jim Steele

Committee Members Absent: Brent Gates

Staff Present: Aleta Dodson, John Kennington, Tom Macklin, Sue Morris, and Doug Orahood

Guests: Jeff Cotner, Ohio State Fire Safety Instructors(OSFSI); James Holcomb, Violet Township/EMS Board; William Mallory, EMS Board; John Peters, OSFSI/Ohio Fire Rural Council (OFRC); Michael Vedra, Columbus Fire Department; Steven Wallis, OSFSI/ORFC; Scott Walker, Ohio State Fire Marshals Office/Ohio Fire Academy

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

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

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

Four statistical reports created by Sue Morris, Division of EMS Data Research Section, showing firefighter certifications by age and county were reviewed. John Kennington said Ms. Morris also prepares the monthly county reports for the committee and thanked her for the great job she has done. Mr. Orahood will e-mail out the color reports to FFSI committee members.

STAFF REPORTS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT, Richard Rucker

Mr. Orahood reported that Mr. Rucker is at the budget hearings and will not be able to attend today's meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Steve Wallis, Mr. John Peters, and Mr. Jeff Cotner gave an update on the 36-hour Volunteer Firefighter course. The workgroup developed the course to work with the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) book, but will update it later to work with all published textbooks. FFSI committee members reviewed the course items and corresponding hours. A lengthy discussion ensued and concerns raised included time allotted for NIMS, students need to

read the entire chapter not just specific pages related to subject, eliminate two hours for quizzes and tests, and fifteen minutes is not enough time to cover hoses using the five students to one teacher ratio (5:1) required for practical demonstrations. The 5:1 ratio was discussed further and many felt the rule is not spelled out. Mr. Peters said the ratio increases the cost of the course and Mr. McLean said the committee is not concerned about cost.

Mr. Peters said the workgroup's mission is to create a uniform 36-hour course to qualify a firefighter to operate externally at a fire. Rule 4765-11-09(a) says volunteer firefighter curriculum must meet prerequisites as stated in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1403, and the 36-hour course does not do that. Mr. Wallis said the course makes the student useful at scene and it is up to the chief to train them further. Mr. Gill said the goal was to standardize the curriculum for the 36-hour class and this group has done more than asked of them. Mr. McLean and the FFSI members thanked the workgroup for their hard work on this project. He said this class is for the protection and preparation of the firefighter. This course is to be treated as an awareness class only to enter the fire service and will continue to push the Level I firefighter class as the entry level for Ohio.

A discussion was held regarding what benchmarks would be used to determine whether the pilot course is better than the existing one. It was decided that a detailed evaluation sheet for the students is needed, which would become the benchmark for the pilot program. Mr. Mankins suggested a survey for the fire chiefs be completed three to six months later to see how the students of this course are performing in the field. Mr. Orahood and Mr. Macklin will help create the detailed evaluation sheet. Approval was granted to conduct the pilot course.

FIRE COORDINATOR REPORT, Doug Orahood

Mr. Orahood distributed the monthly February 2009 fire report, monthly certification totals, and breakdown of active firefighters by age and levels.

Mr. McLean said with the online training tracking system, the committee will be able to know how much training a department did on SCBA or ladders or other topics. He believes Mel House of the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) might be able to use this information for federal stimulus grants. Mr. McLean will call Mr. House to set up a meeting.

Mr. Kennington reported the Division of EMS fielded approximately 200 calls from individuals who did not meet the firefighter renewal deadline. He has four cases where individuals are requesting a waiver from the committee. Mr. Kennington did not provide the names of the individuals, but gave a brief synopsis:

- Case #1 – individual enrolled in basic military training in October and after completion, went on vacation. Upon return from vacation, the Chief informed the individual they needed to renew their card.
- Case #2 – individual was attending college in Ohio and claims the state did not make enough attempts to contact non-affiliated firefighters about the deadline.
- Case #3 – individual was a member of a volunteer fire department until July when they went to police officer training. The individual returned to the fire department after completing training and their fire chief wants a waiver for them.

- Case #4 – individual was on maternity leave for a year and unaware of they had to renew their card. Their Chief sent three e-mails notifying them, but the individual could not access the email. The individual also said they do not have enough time to study or take the test due to caring for multiple special needs family members.

During discussion, the FFSI members expressed empathy for these individuals, but over 50,000 firefighters renewed in a timely fashion, including those living outside Ohio. Mr. Kennington said as far as non-affiliated firefighters, nearly all the calls he has received are from affiliated firefighters and only around 10 were from non-affiliated individuals. Mr. McLean believes each card holder has a responsibility to ensure they meet requirements necessary to remain certified.

Mr. Orahood said there is an 18-month window for firefighters to rectify missing the deadline:

- Firefighters must successfully pass an examination at their level of certification within six months of expiration (July 24, 2009). All exams require a score of 70% or better within three attempts and can be taken at any chartered fire training facility in Ohio.
- After July 24, 2009, but not longer than eighteen months, firefighters must complete eighteen hours of continuing education as well as successfully passing the examination.
- Firefighters that fail to renew within eighteen months of expiration will be required to repeat the training.

ACTION: Motion to deny waivers for four cases presented who missed the renewal deadline. Babb first. Mankins second. None opposed. Gill abstained - #4. Motion passed.

Mr. Orahood reported there have been no major problems on recent web based testing. Mr. Scott Walker, Ohio Fire Academy, reported two incidents occurred during their online web testing last Friday. He said one student lost his test information, but it was able to be retrieved.

Mr. Orahood attended a meeting of the Education Collaboration at the State Fire Marshal office. They are working on setting up a regional communication system and a survey is being developed for charter program and education institutions to collect data on a tier-system concept depending on equipment and resources that are available. He said the education collaboration group will not meet again until after the survey is complete.

Mr. Orahood reported the 36-hour volunteer course can now receive credits through the Stackable Certificates with the Ohio Board of Regents (CT2). He is working with Ann Light from Bowling Green State University to get the fire safety inspector and instructors courses qualified for credit. The more hours a course has, the more college credit will be given. Courses that are two or three hours will not receive any credit. If the committee develops a Fire Investigator or Fire Officer as a forty hour course, that could qualify for credit.

Mr. Orahood attended the Ohio Fire Officials and Ohio Fire Chief's foundation education committee group. One of the requests is for a centralized resource where courses for fire safety inspectors, firefighters, and non-affiliates can be housed and instructors could use. Mr. Orahood said in three or four weeks, such courses will be able to be posted on a resource page of the EMS website. These courses are free and any instructor can use them. Mike Dutton, Vice President of the Ohio Fire Officials group, has seven or eight courses for Fire Safety Inspectors that will be put on the website. Mr. Mankins asked if EMS or Fire classes can be advertised on the EMS

website. Mr. Orahod and Mr. Kennington said the state cannot do that as it would appear they endorse one school over another. Mr. Orahod said once the instructor information sharing site is ready, he will email FFSI members requesting courses they can share. He is hopeful the fire organizations will provide courses as well.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Phil McLean

Mr. McLean distributed copies of the 2008 FFSI report presented at the February 19th EMS Board meeting. The report also reflects the FFSI committee members' passion to raise the bar in fire training and safety.

The FFSI goals for 2009 are to continue to be proactive along the lines of firefighter safety, safety in training, and continued driver training requirements. The committee has incorporated drivers training and will soon complete a live fire 1403 training program. Continued work with chartered institutions to maintain consistency, frequent audits, and better trained instructors will provide quality training and quality firefighters. Mr. McLean said once the 36-hour volunteer course is finished, the next goal is to work on the modules to advance from FF I to FF II.

The 1403 workgroup met February 19th. Currently, the instructor class taught in Ohio is a mix of both the Firefighter Level I and Level II courses. Recommendations made were:

- All fire instructors will receive a 1403 Phase I awareness and operations certification.
- The current Phase I eight-hour module will increase to sixteen-hours.
- The Phase II level is an optional advanced certification and available to any instructor who wants to train for it.
- Current instructors could be certified at the Phase II level with proper credentials and experience, which need defined.

It was recommended a mandatory instructor meeting should be held to roll this draft out with a short presentation of all nine chapters of 1403, including the history of the problems and proposed solutions. Mr. Walker will meet with Fire Marshal Bell to get his approval.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Walker of the Ohio Fire Academy said the Fire Marshal's office is pushing the "Courage to Be Safe" program. There were eight national awards given, and five were awarded to Ohio. The Ohio Fire Academy received special recognition for presenting this program in Ohio. This course and the "Near Miss" program are available through the Ohio Fire Academy for free. Unfortunately, Ohio still ranks in the top 10 in the country for firefighter fatalities, averaging over five firefighter deaths a year. Mr. Walker said these courses use the "train the trainer" setup. Mr. Orahod thought they could be appropriate for the instructor resource page.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Orahod reported he has a speaking engagement next Saturday at the New Fire Chief's conference and will be at the Ohio World Firefighter Council conference April 4th.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 AM.