

FINAL

**FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 17, 2008**

Chaired by: Phil McLean

Meeting Date and Location: April 17, 2008, Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), 1970 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43223

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

Committee Members Absent: Terry Gill, Mark Mankins

Staff Present: Summer Boyer, Aleta Dodson, Heather Frient, John Kennington, Lorrie Laing, Thomas Macklin, Robert Ruetenik, Richard Rucker, Yvonne Tertel, and Melissa Vermillion

Guests: None present.

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 11, 2008 FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING COMMITTEE MINUTES

ACTION: Motion to approve the March 11, 2008, Committee minutes. Steele first. Sacco second. None opposed. Motion approved.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Kennington gave an update of fire certifications. To date, there are 5,045 volunteers, 1,483 Level I, 9,978 Level II, and 4,940 Fire Safety Inspectors, totaling 21,446. He has received a lot of feedback at how well the online system is working. Mr. Kennington reported there are a lot of veteran firefighters who are applying for a card who never had them issued through the Board of Regents, the Department of Education or the Division of EMS.

Mr. Kennington said there is still concern about the number of volunteer firefighters who have not yet signed up. Mr. Steele requested a list of county representatives from the Ohio State Firefighters so Mr. Kennington can contact them about ensuring volunteers get registered. Mr. Kennington will be speaking to Wood County volunteer firefighters at the Fire Academy on April 26. Mr. McLean said he has done numerous rollouts and has not received any calls or complaints, and agrees that everything is going well.

Mr. Gates asked whether the fire departments that weren't listed in the EMS database because they did not have EMS have been entered. Mr. Kennington said Mr. Orahod provided him a list and these agencies are currently being entered into the database.

STAFF REPORTS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Richard Rucker

Mr. Rucker said he normally gives a Director's report to the Board, and will be doing this for the Fire Committee as well.

An award presentation will be held May 21, at 10:00 AM in the ODPS Atrium. Each year an award is given to recognize a department during National EMS Week. He and Director Guzmán will be speaking, and all Fire Committee members are invited to attend.

Mr. Rucker reminded committee members if they receive any inquiries for the Fire Committee's position on an issue, they need to contact China Dodley or himself. Ms. Dodley will schedule the meeting, go over the interview questions and provide talking points. Mr. Rucker stressed it is important that the Fire Committee and ODPS send a consistent message. He said it is fine to give an opinion in your job or for your association, but if asked for a position as a Fire Committee member or as an ODPS representative, this process needs to be followed.

At the January 2008 Board Retreat, the Board charged the staff to hold regional town meetings throughout the state. The first one is May 8th at the Canton Civic Center. Flyers were included in your packet. If the meeting is in your area, it would be appreciated if you attend. If Fire Committee members have anything they would like on the agenda, please let Mr. Orahod know. Mr. Orahod will be handling the Fire portion of the meeting.

The Ohio Fire Marshal's ad hoc Fire Service committee is having its first meeting April 30, 2008.

Mr. Rucker reported that Bob Babb and Carl Jordan have been selected to be the representatives for the Fire Committee Case Review Team. They will review cases before they are presented to the full Fire Committee. No dates have been set yet, but will be scheduled in the very near future. Mr. McLean asked how the two individuals were selected. Mr. Rucker chose Mr. Jordan because he has been on the EMS Board case review and Mr. Babb is local and can easily attend meetings.

A proposal from Working Fire Training Systems for tracking continuing education (CE) hours was distributed for review and discussion. Mr. Rucker was interested to see what committee members thought about it. Mr. Babb said it was an interesting proposal, but the committee needs to be careful that they do not exclude other vendors as this is a commercial product. If the committee is going to consider such an item, an official request for proposals should be sent out. Mr. Steele said he is not comfortable endorsing a particular program and feels local jurisdiction can manage tracking CE hours on their own. Mr. Holcomb said some departments use the EMS Jane system, which has a cost involved. Mr. Rucker said the Division of EMS is very close to having the capability to document all online continuing education for free for anyone who wants to use it.

INVESTIGATION PROCESS, Melissa Vermillion

No report was given.

FIRE CHARTER REPORT, Doug Orahood

No report was given.

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT, Yvonne Tertel

No report was given.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Phil McLean

The proposed fire plans examiner certification was discussed. Mr. Rucker said the EMS Board would have to approve it if it will be a certification. Mr. Rucker said when he was contacted, they asked for a certification person who would know the do's and don'ts of what it would take for it to be a certification in the state. They also asked for a staff member to represent the fire committee, and he recommended Mr. Orahood. Mr. Rucker said they did not ask him to be on it, but he told them he would be there because he wanted to hear what was going on. Mr. Rucker said he doesn't have a problem if anyone else on this committee wants to be at these meetings; they can. Mr. Holcomb, Mike Dutton and Mike Beckman (OFOA), will be on the committee. Mr. McLean said if Jim Holcomb and Mike Dutton are there, he feels confident. He said nothing against Mr. Rucker and Mr. Orahood, but he believes it is good that someone who is an inspector and involved with the hands on technical experience will be at these meetings.

Mr. Steele asked if there are other certifications they are looking at outside of this one and if such a certification already exists. Mr. Holcomb said if you are a plans reviewer for Building or Commerce, it would be an existing certification. Mr. Gates said this would be strictly a fire inspector plans reviewer. Mr. Steele surmised this is separate from what building standards people do. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has numerous levels for fire inspectors that cover plans inspector, and this would be a level 4. Mr. Holcomb said it is not mandatory, does not supersede their signature and would be based along International Code Council (ICC) guidelines. Mr. Steele asked, "Where is the rest of the alliance on this issue?" Mr. McLean said he has no idea since this didn't officially come through this group. Mr. Steele said it has been forever since a certification has been added and wondered if there is a better way to channel requests through this committee. Mr. McLean said there is a better way to do it and it is the way the Alliance did it with continuing education: their leaders brought members concerns directly to the Fire Committee. Mr. Holcomb said the positive side to this is that the education group and the Board of Building Standards are communicating and working together to come up with certification.

A lengthy discussion was held on the various issues with NFPA 1403 training (Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions). Mr. Steele said 1403 is first and foremost a safety issue for firefighters at every level. He thinks it is always a good thing to base change on whether it increases the life and safety of firefighters. Mr. Steele said that for whatever reason, there aren't many people in Ohio well versed in 1403. He doesn't know how it is in other areas, but he receives requests all the time asking for live burn training. Mr. McLean receives calls from departments asking for a refresher because they haven't burnt anything down for two years or ask to go over the new standards. Mr. Sacco recalled that at one of the rollout meetings, a fire chief asked what 1403 was, which is scary.

Mr. Steele said live fires are something you have to do and believes there are five levels of training in the fire service to learn the trade. The first level is when you read and are lectured,

the second level is drills, the third level is when the two are combined in an active drill, level four is a pre-engineered burn, which is very controlled, and level five is an acquired structure burn. You have to get to that level because you cannot learn to be a firefighter any other way. Firefighting is inherently dangerous. Even though you do everything right, you can still have injuries and death.

There are only 32 pre-engineered structures in the state of Ohio and they are the most common live fire training. Mr. Steele said an acquired structure fire is a whole different animal. You do not know if the chimney is safe, should the windows be removed or take the asbestos out. This is where the experience level comes into play. You can burn a thousand times in a pre-engineered building and it is not like one time in an acquired building. Strategically it is the same animal, but it is different tactically. There is no way of knowing how many acquired structure fires there are. Mr. Steele said the water supply is a constant issue at pre-engineered buildings, but uncommon in acquired structures. He tells his instructors that if they encounter a live fire training that is not plumbed to walk away.

Mr. Steele said as a Chief, when he sends one of his firefighters for live burn training, he expects all the instructors to be certified, experienced, well-trained and expect his people he has sent to be safe. He said institutions have to show they have the ability to teach the classes well. Mr. Gates said that is utopia.

Mr. Gates said the new 1403 standard references NFPA 1001, which states you must be a Firefighter I level to attend live burn training. But in the Ohio Revised Code, it is okay. How do we deal with that? To follow the NFPA rule to the letter, they can't attend a training fire, but they can go to a real fire. Mr. Steele said if you are serious about this, put them in the three year training course allotted for them under the new law. Once they are in a training class, they can go. That gives a three year window to plow through this if they are JVS and accredited to teach. Mr. Gates replied that he would have to tell them, I am going to put you in this program and raise you to Firefighter I, but by the way, you have to shave (to be in compliance with NFPA 1404 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)). He said there was a department that got federal grants for air packs, and they all had beards in the picture. Mr. Steele said there is nothing written that can stop a department from having a live burn when they allow their men to have beards, except maybe outside the EPA, until there is a problem. Mr. Gates and his instructors follow the standards, but they are violating the other side of it, even though it is only for their own fire department. Mr. Steele said as an instructor, he does not go to those burns. He requires all participants to be FFI or above, even his volunteers.

Mr. Gates said as an instructor and fire chief, he does one acquired structure burn a year for his department. How should he handle the issue ethically in his mind knowing he has 10 people from a 36 hour class who are participating in that live fire? Mr. McLean said if you follow the standard and are willing to assume the liability for those people with your certified instructors who are also following the standard, then you shouldn't have a problem.

Mr. McLean said NFPA 1403 (Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions) is used in mandated charter classes. Charters are required to have a 1403 plan in place to be available for the audit. He was not aware you had to have a plan in place for each time you went, even if it is to the

same burn building. Fire departments that conduct live training may or may not follow the standard. Ohio is doing a good job of controlling what we can in certified classes.

All class participants think we need to raise the bar and an additional 16 hours should be offered. Suggestion offered were:

- Design a class on 1403 (the academy has one)
- Blend in some Florida data
- Make a class available to any current certified instructor (from a charter)
- Additional certification for an instructor as an option
- Training available to assistant instructors
- Add additional hours to the current 52 hour instructor course;
- Add additional hours to the cross over fire instructor course
- Additional class hours for covering site prep, lay out planning, and hold a live burn in a pre-engineered burn building

Mr. McLean said if hours are added and instructors don't attend, but someone is killed or injured, we as a group might look back and ask should we have continued our pro-active approach to this? The committee needs to come together on this to make a presentation to the alliance on where we should go with this. This is a top priority item along with the driver training. Mr. Sacco agrees with the addition of 16 hours. Mr. Babb isn't sure a live burn can be done in that time frame.

Mr. Steele says the committee needs to give more guidance to local charters, not just on 1403, but a variety of topics. There will be inconsistent driver training in the future. It is taught in the 52 hour part, but he doesn't think it is covering 1403. In the 70 hour course, there is 10 hour student teaching and an 8 hour fire module. Mr. McLean says in his class they spend six hours. Mr. Steele said he is probably the exception and believes it is more like one or two hours. Mr. McLean says not according to the audit because they got gigged for going to Stark State to burn, he didn't have a plan for each specific group of students. He has a plan for the water supply at Stark State, but it doesn't meet the standard. There are not two water supplies; there is no hydrant and no dump tank set up.

Mr. Gates said there were six acquired burns done in Southeast Ohio that were in the newspaper where they were conducting training. Mr. McLean said take those six departments that burned six places. Don't you think as committee members, it would make it more pleasing to tell that fire chief if you're going to burn a house down and have certified instructors, you can send them for more education on how to do that safer? The committee can never do anything to make sure they comply, we can't do anything about their beards, and you will always have that battle. What that Chief wants to do with his own guys is his business. You can never make people comply with 1403 who don't want to. We need to have something available to the people who have an obligation to do safe training and not kill their people if something does go wrong. Mr. Steele said the additional training will not be mandated or required; it would be available as an optional certification to instructors to learn more for conducting live burn training.

Mr. Steele said in the seven big cities he doesn't think they'll burn. Mr. Babb said they do, and they go to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a permit. Mr. Steele said some EPA jurisdictions treat this a little differently from place to place. They want 1,000 feet clear from

houses and keep the smoke level down. Mr. Gates said in southeastern Ohio, he knows of several burns that have taken place on Sunday's because the EPA doesn't work then. Not everyone who has an acquired structure burn reports it to the EPA, so the number of permits they have doesn't give a true accounting.

Mr. Lundy agrees a place to start is with new people. Mr. Steele said if they aren't trained at least in awareness, they shouldn't be on the ground during a live fire. Mr. Babb said Columbus Fire has three different levels of additional training once they are already certified as a fire instructor: Awareness (8 hours), Ops level (8 hours) and technician (technician level can run a training fire on their own in all critical areas). Mr. McLean would feel comfortable if additional training is available to a fire instructor to take, but does not know how it can be enforced. Mr. Babb says every fire inspector needs to be 1403 certified. Mr. McLean likes the levels that Columbus Fire uses and thinks it should be dovetailed into the awareness.

Mr. Steele is working with Bowling Green State University and Owens Community College to develop a three day pilot program for acquired structure burns. Owens is willing to commit their burn building and they have both wood and gas. He would also like to bring in other instructors and possibly other trades to look at structural integrity. He is more comfortable burning old houses than new as the new ones burn faster.

Mr. Steele asked what would happen in a live fire training occurred and three people were killed? He said he believes the committee would reinstitute mandatory instructor training at every accredited institution in the state of Ohio in 10 days or less. He thinks we could do that. Which means we probably need to go back and really do an instructor roll out and talk about something important instead of the rollouts that talked about subjects that were a waste of time. Mr. Rucker said you are right, if there is was a fatality, that is exactly what would happen. Mr. Steele said all burns would be suspended and everyone would be re-educated before anyone is allowed to strike a match in the state.

Mr. Holcomb said the awareness is a key as is increasing hours for all instructors. Mr. Holcomb thinks being proactive, Ohio is ahead of the game. He thinks Mr. Babb has a great idea with having the multiple levels and those are easy to track and is already being done with Hazmat. The awareness can be done immediately. Politically and from a public relations view, it is an excellent thing this fire committee, the Board, and the Division of EMS can do on a very positive note. Concerns have been identified and are being addressed. There have been too many near misses. Mr. Steele said his father said no one can argue against safety. Mr. Lundy says if you put it out there for the charters, not everyone will follow it, but we as a committee have a responsibility because we have said all along the reason the rules are here is to raise the bar. Most fire departments have someone from one of the chartered institutions on site when they are doing a live burn. Mr. Steele said the Alliance needs to play on this and people at all levels, as well as some outside agencies, are needed.

Mr. Sacco said if we have the awareness and technician levels, it would be fine. When you have a Hazmat situation, you don't let just anyone handle it, you get a technician to deal with the main part. If you want to have a live burn, the committee can mandate that a technician must do it, and if you don't, it's up to you. At least we have set it out there, and if they don't follow it, we can't help it.

Mr. McLean summarized the options the committee is considering:

- Designing a 1403 class on multiple levels: awareness, basic 8 hour crossover and technician level. (The Academy's 1403 is a great awareness class.)
- Develop a 1403 checklist
- The class will be taught through charter schools
- Provide additional class for instructors to take
- Assistant Instructors should take an additional class for any type of burn.

Mr. McLean will edit this and bring back to next month's meeting for further review.

NEW BUSINESS

Tom Wallace has requested dates for the Fire committee to meet with the Ohio Fire Alliance. The committee agreed to meet May 13 after the regular fire committee meeting.

Mr. McLean sent out an e-mail that Jeff Cotner is no longer teaching at the Fire Academy.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Steele requested Doug Orahood send out a list or directory of the fire committee members to everyone.

NEW BUSINESS:

None brought forward.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:56 AM

***** Returned from lunch at 12:30 PM *****

A brief presentation was made by Ms. Vermillion on the Investigation process. Once the fire committee case review begins meeting, investigations and Goldman proceedings will take place at the regular monthly meeting and will need to be added to the agenda.

Ms. Tertel and Ms. Frient presented a brief overview of ethics and the legal side of the disciplinary process. The difference between what the Assistant Attorney General and the in-house legal counsel does for the committee was explained. Ms. Frient will e-mail the ethics questions on the handout to Aleta to forward to members.

The presentations were completed at 2:30 PM.