

FINAL

**FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2008**

Chaired by: Phil McLean

Meeting Date and Location: May 13, 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: Mark Mankins

Staff Present: Aleta Dodson, Heather Frient, John Kennington, Lorrie Laing, Doug Orahod, Richard Rucker, Yvonne Tertel, and Melissa Vermillion

Guests: Jeff Cotner, President, Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI); Pat Foor and William Grubb, Delaware Area Career Center; Scott Henry, Washington Township Fire (Dayton); Michael Vedra, Columbus Division of Fire; Frank Conway, Superintendent, Ohio Fire Academy

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 17, 2008 FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING COMMITTEE MINUTES

ACTION: Motion to approve the April 17, 2008, Committee minutes, with correction to the guest attendance. Steele first. Gates second. None opposed. Motion approved.

OPEN FORUM

Guests in the audience introduced themselves.

Pat Foor and William Grubb of the Delaware Career Center gave an update of their program. Ms. Foor reported she is retiring August 1. Handouts were distributed which included minutes of their Advisory Committee meetings and an outline of the continuation of improvements to their program. The Committee commended the school for its improvements and stated that they are becoming a first class program.

STAFF REPORTS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Richard Rucker

Mr. Rucker reported there were approximately 80 people in attendance at the Canton Town Hall meeting held May 8, 2008, and thanked the members of the Committee for attending.

Mr. Rucker stated that the Division is still receiving complaints on the volunteer 36-hour test and that this issue is not going to go away. He will be working with Jim Holcomb's workgroup and will bring some proposed resolutions back to the Fire Committee.

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT, Yvonne Tertel

Ms. Tertel reported that case review is beginning next week and the June meeting will have the first set of cases presented

STAFF LEGAL COUNSEL, Heather Frient

Nothing to report.

FIRE CHARTER REPORT, Doug Orahod

Mr. Orahod received an agency listing from the Fire Marshal's office and is cross-checking that with the last survey conducted on volunteers and their membership. Mr. Orahod said, based on this listing, the number of volunteers who have recertified might be more accurate than originally thought. Previous surveys have been conducted, resulting in different numbers for the volunteers. It appears that several agencies have not responded to the surveys, however, which affects the accuracy of the numbers. Mr. Rucker stated that an accurate accounting of firefighters will be available after the January 25, 2009 deadline. Mr. Gates asked if there was a breakdown available of how many firefighters in each level there are by county; both Mr. Kennington and Mr. Orahod are working on that. This has only been done for volunteers, not for levels I and II.

Mr. Kennington urged members to continue to get the word out to volunteer firefighters to renew. Mr. Orahod will merge and cross-check reports to find where communication efforts need to be directed. Mr. McLean suggested other places could be used, such as Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) fishing and hunting license sites. Mr. Orahod said over 700 emails were sent to chartered schools and China Dodley will send press releases to all local community newspapers in Ohio.

Mr. Orahod distributed the regional coordinators report and included documentation on a CSX train derailment and lessons learned from that incident. Both regional coordinators will attend the June Fire Committee meeting.

The continuing education (CE) online tracking system should be completed by the end of May and Mr. Orahod hopes to demonstrate it at the Fire Committee's next meeting. This is a tool an individual, school or department can use. It was developed with the volunteer agencies in mind who cannot afford software training programs. Both CE's for EMS and Fire can be tracked. Individuals would have access to their records, a fire chief would have access to individuals affiliated with their department, and schools would be able to track the classes they teach and who completed them.

The Fire Safety Inspector (FSI) testing is now online. Sixty to seventy FSI exams have been administered without any issues. All fire tests are now online.

Mr. Orahod is still receiving e-mails regarding some firefighters who do not want to comply with the new 401 fire training rule. Mr. Orahod said all he can do is advise them of what their obligations are.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Phil McLean

Jim Holcomb gave an update on the 36-hour volunteer course workgroup. Mr. Holcomb said the state instructor group is going to review the curriculum and testing and make recommendations.

Frank Conway of the Fire Academy reported they are working on trying to bring together the Joint Vocational Schools (JVS) and the Junior Colleges to coordinate training across the state. The JVS's will be going under the Board of Regents in July, 2008. He stated that proper training is needed to ensure firefighters safety. Ohio ranks in the top 10 for firefighter deaths; this statistic must change. The Fire Academy itself cannot contact 40,000 firefighters and are trying a cooperative effort to work through the JVS's and junior colleges to achieve that objective. Mr. Conway said Dr. Unger is heading the Junior Colleges and Sandy Waggoner the JVS's. Mr. McLean said the University of Akron, which has a 2-year fire program and a 4-year EMS program, has not been contacted. Mr. Conway said he will get Mr. McLean connected.

Mr. Cotner of the Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI) said the Firefighter I (FFI) and Firefighter II (FFII) driving objectives are on target with the 1002 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard. There is no International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) training in the United States that goes back to the 1451 standard, which is cited in Ohio law as being required, so Ohio is leading the nation. The Instructor Society Group is a great resource and he offered any assistance to the Fire Committee they need. Mr. McLean thanked Mr. Cotner, and stated that he would rely on the OSFSI to help the Committee develop this curriculum.

The Committee discussed the Massillon fire truck collision. Mr. Rucker said accidents like this happen all over the nation every day. Mr. Cotner said right now there are 26 firefighters under indictment for vehicular manslaughter in the U.S. Mr. Rucker said this issue needs to be looked at closely.

Mr. Gill asked how many FFI and FFII classes have been started since the fire rules took effect and expressed concern about how the Committee ensures individuals are meeting the driver class requirements. Mr. Orahod believes eight classes have been certified but will confirm that at the next meeting. From the opening reports and class syllabi he has received, they appear to be adding the driving portion to the course. Per rule, the program director is responsible for the development of that course and the 16-hour course is approved by the charter program, not the Committee. Mr. Orahod stated the rule was written this way because not every school is able to do the drive time. Once the online CE tracking system is finalized, Mr. Orahod will begin working on an online charter process where they can go online and register their course so the information can be tracked better.

The Committee discussed other driver training issues including inconsistency in courses due to lack of guidelines, outsourcing the "hands on" driving portion, students with no fire department affiliation, and schools' lack of funding to cover liability insurance or purchase vehicles for the "hands on" driving. Mr. Orahod reiterated that the course must be sixteen hours, meet the

requirements of NFPA standards 1451 and 1002, be developed by the program coordinator, and approved by the charter program. The Fire Committee is working on developing a check-off list for this training. Mr. Steele said the committee determined schools could tie in with the fire academy to allow students to drive and as for the cost of liability insurance, the cost to attend that class is up to the local chartered institution because the Committee does not dictate what a maximum charge for a class should be.

Mr. McLean said the driving class has created a lot of work for the schools, and the Committee acknowledged that there are often growing pains when something new is implemented. However, these changes are an attempt to solve the driving safety issue.

Mr. McLean reported he attended the EMS Town Hall meeting on May 8th in Canton and was at Sandusky on Friday, May 9, at the EHOVE for a rules rollout presentation.

Mr. McLean distributed a sheet regarding 1403 from the last month's meeting. Last month, the committee talked about all the discussion points on 1403 and came up with items the Committee should discuss with the Alliance today.

The list included:

- Design class on 1403 and blend in some Florida data.
- Make class available to any currently certified instructor from a charter.
- Optional additional certification for an instructor
- Make it available for assistant instructors.
- Add hours to the crossover class.
- What should the additional hours cover?
 - a. site prep
 - b. layout
 - c. planning the burn
 - d. looking at the acquired structure

Mr. McLean said it is critical to present the exact document to the Alliance and make sure the committee looks at their input on where they want to go regarding 1403. Mr. Babb and Mr. Vedra said about a year and a half ago, Columbus Fire got into the discussion of 1403 and formed a committee with union representation and instructors to develop a pre-burn checklist following the 1403 standard. They had been doing the classes with about 24 hours of instruction and now do 40 hours.

The three levels of training developed were:

- Awareness (16 hours) class time
- Operations (16 hours) plus prepping for the burn (i.e. stripping the carpet, cover all openings, etc.)
- Technician – incident commander – has to calculate water supply, decide where fire boxes will go, etc. The technician needs to have operated all areas of a burn, usually three acquired burns, and be recommended by two certified technicians.

Mr. McLean would like to include the Columbus documents at the Alliance meeting. He said the committee has done a good job on gathering all the information to present to the Alliance.

Mr. Babb said they will be conducting a burn as part of their 240 class and if anyone is interested in observing, please let him know. He will send an e-mail out to committee members with the details.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Gill said the 36-hour volunteer workgroup met and went over the hours by topic. The goal of the course is to have a 36-hour firefighter be able to serve in a supportive role. The group agreed with the number of hours, and then examined whether there was a problem with the test.

The workgroup discussed the issue of inconsistent teaching methods for the same course, pass rates, ratio of number of test questions based on class hours, review of potential “bad” test questions, whether schools pre-screen for reading and writing skills, and reading disabilities. The workgroup looked at numerous data and statistics, and from that, deduced that the test needs to be fine-tuned, but not completely redone.

In regards to “bad” test questions, the workgroup determined that there were only 7 questions out of 75 on this test that were missed more than 50% of the time. A student could miss all seven of these questions and still receive a 90% score on the test. The exam pass rate on the volunteer test is around 63% - 64% on all three attempts. The pass rate for FF I is 83% and around 90% for FF II. The difference is due to the amount of hours being spent on the course. Mr. Gates said if you take the number of hours versus the number of questions on the test, they are not close (75 questions for 36 hours, and 125 questions for 240-315 hours). However, Mr. Gill said the workgroup looked at the number of questions per topic versus the number of hours in the class and they lined up.

Mr. McLean said there were concerns that needed to be reviewed again and there is only so much tweaking that can be done. Mr. Gates felt that the problem was not with the course, but with the test. Mr. McLean said the test cannot be thrown out for a number of reasons. Mr. Rucker again requested that the discussion be tabled until they can have a meeting. He believes they will have a consensus, but he wants to make sure it is discussed with the chair and Committee in order to get everyone’s opinion.

Mr. Gill said his proposal to the Committee is to get a group of instructors who teach this course together, give them the guidelines, and have them come up with an actual class. He was under the assumption that was what this Committee wanted to do. He said it will not be a quick fix. Mr. Gill said those with reading disabilities and with the proper documentation can take the test orally. Regardless of what the Committee chooses to do with the course and test, Mr. Gill noted that they will still receive complaints from those individuals who do not pass the test.

Mr. Gill expressed concern that politics were entering into this issue. Mr. Gates said some politicians expect a quicker fix than what is happening. Mr. Gates expressed his frustration with the process and is contemplating quitting the Committee as a result. Part of the problem he experiences is the turnover in fire chiefs, who are voted into office every few years. Mr. McLean said that part of the state has received a lot of attention in the last four years. The Committee

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listened to them during the development of the fire rules and continuing education, and made significant changes based upon their input. He said everyone has made a conscious effort to listen to every concern that comes through that door, whether they attend a meeting or not.

Mr. Orahod said that if anyone has handouts in the future, email to him and he will make sure copies are made.

NEW BUSINESS

None brought forward.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:47 AM