

## FINAL

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

Chaired by: Phil McLean

Meeting Date and Location: November 10, 2009, Ohio Department of Public Safety, 1970 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43223

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

Staff Present: Aleta Dodson, Heather Frient, John Kennington, Rachel Moore, Doug Orahod, Richard Rucker

Guests: Frank Clay and Geoff Garrison, Sinclair Community College; Jim Holcomb, EMS Board/Violet Township Fire; Bill Mallory, Madison Township Fire/EMS Board; 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 SEPTEMBER 8, 2009 FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR (FFSI) TRAINING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the September 8, 2009, FFSI committee minutes. Steele first. Sacco second. None opposed. Motion approved.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT, Richard Rucker

Mr. Rucker said the Division has a work group developing a process where all certifications will expire on the individual's birthday. This will be presented to the FFSI committee before the rules are filed.

The Investigations section is still experiencing a lot of delays completing fire investigations due to firefighters not responding to requests from the Division for documents and interviews as required by rule. An article was in the SIREN regarding this, but it does not appear to have helped the situation. Mr. Rucker asked committee members to share this problem with their respective organizations and bring back advice on how the Division remedies this. As of October 31, 2009, there are 655 cases, which is an increase of 10% from last year. Of those cases, 250 are fire, which reflects an increase of 20% from last year.

#### OPEN FORUM

No business was brought forward.

#### CERTIFICATION REPORT, John Kennington

Mr. Kennington had one request for exemption from the continuing education requirement due to active military service during the certification period and asked for approval.

**ACTION: Motion to recommend to the Executive Director to approve exemption from continuing education requirement due to active military service during the certification period.** Steele first. Mankins second. None opposed. Motion passed.

FIRE COORDINATOR REPORT, Doug Orahood

Mr. Orahood reported that the committee will revise the volunteer course objectives to accommodate all three textbooks and hopes to have ready for review at the January meeting. Copies of the evaluation sheets from the Meigs County volunteer course were distributed.

The Fire Section report for September and October was distributed. Mr. Orahood revised the report and certification numbers are now in a graph format. Members liked the format and requested that the last three pages contain year to date information. Mr. McLean pointed out that the testing re-instatement figures indicate only 600 out of 51,000 have had to retest, which is a very small percentage. Mr. Kennington said one issue he is concerned about is that some firefighters think they only had to renew one time and asked members reiterate to their organizations that all certificates will continue to need renewed as well as checking the verification site to ensure their people are certified. Mr. Steele wondered if a second e-mail should be mandated, but Mr. Kennington said if individuals don't use their e-mail accounts regularly, it won't matter how many e-mails are sent--they won't be opened. Mr. Steele asked if an analysis has been done of those who did not renew to determine if they are all Hotmail or Yahoo users or if they are all volunteers. Mr. Orahood said the biggest issue is either the individual doesn't check their e-mail or someone else does it for them. Mr. Steele suggested it might be prudent to reevaluate that section of the rule and see if there is something they are not seeing. Mr. Wallis said it would be nice if the Division standardized the certification process information that schools distribute to students so everyone receives the same information. Mr. McLean suggested it could be on the check off sheet and Mr. Orahood will bring a revised copy to the next meeting.

The fire investigations actions and monthly statistics report was also distributed.

Mr. Orahood said audits will begin in March for 10% of the February fire renewals received and a draft of the audit form was distributed for review. Notification issues were discussed and it was suggested a space be added to the form for secondary e-mail and fire affiliation. Mr. Kennington said the current database does not have a place for e-mails and staff will not know that unless each application is manually retrieved. Mr. Orahood asked committee members to email their comments about the audit form to him.

The flyer for the Division's 16 Life Initiative and Everyone Goes Home program to be held December 11<sup>th</sup> was distributed and has been disseminated through the Listserv to all the charter training institutions. Mr. Orahood is waiting on a copyright release in order to create a link on the EMS website to the program's national website.

Mr. Orahood will speak at the Ohio Fire Service Instructor (OFSI) conference and will attend the Ohio Township Trustees Association conference in February.

Mr. Orahood reported he has completed 75% of the self study required for the Pro Board application for the state to become the certifying agency in Ohio. He is developing skill sheets

for the practical exam and wanted to know if members feel a practical exam should be required for Ohio certification as well. Mr. McLean said the initial Pro Board proposal was it would be optional and non-Pro Board schools testing would remain the same (written exam only). A lengthy discussion ensued regarding whether Ohio certification should require a practical skills exam that would be the same for Pro Board. The main issues discussed included a practical exam would eliminate the risk of serious coaching that can occur during a group skill sheet check off session, requiring the test would increase staff, hours, and expenses for schools, a practical exam would bring consistency via a standardized state test, and students need to be segregated during the exam so no one has an edge.

Mr. Mankins asked Mr. Orahood if there is data showing students in Ohio are graduating not functional because there is no practical exam required. Mr. Gill asked if Mr. Orahood's site visits can show whether schools are requiring a practical exam. Mr. Orahood said site visits do show whether schools require practical exams as the documentation is included in student files. Several members felt if there was evidence to support Ohio students were graduating non-functional because there was no practical exam, then it should be an all Pro Board state. Otherwise, testing for Ohio would remain as is and Pro Board would be an option. Mr. Mankins cautioned that making Ohio an all Pro Board state and requiring the same practical exam would be like mandating National Registry for the fire side. Mr. Gill said he does not believe Pro Board will allow the same state exam be used for the Pro Board exam. Additionally, he feels the committee should only be concerned with making the Ohio fire service better. He expressed frustration that the committee spent 45 minutes discussing Pro Board and accommodating firefighters who want to move out of state to work.

Mr. McLean said Mr. Orahood needs to develop skill sheets for the Ohio certifications that will probably be used for the Pro Board practical exam and Mr. Orahood asked if there was a motion to do so. Mr. Mankins asked if he wanted a motion to approve it or to look into it further and Mr. Orahood said he needs a motion that the committee is going to move in that direction so he can begin working on it. The committee requested the number of schools who are giving such an exam now and Mr. Steele said he doesn't think the committee is prepared to do that today. Mr. McLean said the question is will the committee allow Mr. Orahood to develop a practical testing skills check off sheet looking at Pro Board certification for current training that is in place now. Mr. Walker from the Fire Academy asked how this would impact them, their expense operating the IFSAC program they have in place, and whether the committee would require them to use the state's test as part of their program. Mr. Orahood said the Academy will have to play by both sets of rules since they are a chartered school and IFSAC approved. He said Ohio will develop a process that would hopefully remain consistent with what the Academy is doing now, whether IFSAC or Pro Board. The Academy won't have to offer Pro Board; it will just be a question of whether their skill sheets will be approved by the committee to use for state certification. Mr. Orahood said he would like this to be a team effort: he will do the design and layout and committee members will be the subject matter experts. He would like to work with other entities since there is no sense in re-creating the wheel if they don't mind the Division piggy-backing on what they have already done. The requisite knowledge (written test question) and requisite skill (hands on/practical skills) of 10.01 will be done first. Mr. Orahood said as the skill sheets are developed, he will send them out to members for input on what are critical steps versus non-critical steps. Mr. Steele said the goal of the skill sheet is to be Ohio specific.

**ACTION: Motion to proceed with the development of a Pro Board practical skill test sheet to match the Ohio certification classes.** Sacco first. Babb second.

A discussion followed the motion. Mr. Steele wanted clarification as to what levels are included and Mr. Orahood said Firefighter I and II. Mr. Orahood said the volunteer course can be developed, but there is no standard and will require more work which could be done later on. Mr. Gill said the state should walk away from the volunteer course as there is no NFPA standard it can be tied to. Mr. Wright said there are NFPA skills contained and Mr. McLean said the course was just revamped and is a good course now.

**None opposed. Motion passed.**

Mr. Orahood gave a report on the State Fire Marshal education collaborative meeting he attended. The Fire Science program was discussed and the Board of Regents had a chart showing a large disparity in what is being taught for that program. The Board of Regents will take the lead on the project to get 8 to 10 Ohio fire science degree programs together to develop a standardized fire science degree. They are looking at the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) model to find some common ground. Mr. Orahood said they are trying to develop a career path for a firefighter to go up the ladder to a leadership degree, from an Associate to a Bachelor. He and Frank Conway will attend the meetings.

It was brought up that the fire equivalency certification does not require driver training like is required in the FFI and FFII courses. It was felt this should be required and would like to add a question on the form asking whether the individual has completed a driver training course and a copy of the certificate would be required. Mr. Gill suggested if the individual's state requires a CDL license that could be used in lieu of driver training. Mr. Steele thinks a CDL is valid and far exceeds Ohio's standard. Mr. Mankins said a CDL can only be used if it is substantially similar in design to a VFIS or a national equivalent training course and Mr. McLean said the course curriculum would have to match up with what is contained in FF I and FF II. Mr. Orahood said fire chiefs are responsible that their drivers have received some type of emergency vehicle operation course as it is a requirement to be insured by BWC. Mr. McLean asked if members are in agreement to require driving training from a person coming from another state in order to get an Ohio certification through equivalency for a FF I card.

**ACTION: Motion to alter the equivalency form to include a question indicating whether a person coming from another state has had driving training or a CDL licensure.** Steele first. Mankins second. None opposed. Motion passed.

#### CHAIR'S REPORT, Phil McLean

Mr. McLean attended the Fire Alliance meeting October 6<sup>th</sup> where current continuing education requirements, NFPA 1403, 16 Life Safety Initiatives, standardizing curriculum for volunteer firefighter courses across the state, advanced certifications, and Pro Board were discussed. The OAPFF discussed collective bargaining, proposed pensions changes, and seeking support for cancer bill and arson task force. The Ohio Fire Chiefs noted that they met with the BWC regarding line of duty deaths, applied for a grant to do more recruiting of volunteers and work on retention, and will be holding Fire Officer I and II classes in 2010.

The Ohio Fire Chiefs winter conference symposium will be March 9 and 10, 2010 and Mr. McLean will be attending. The next scheduled fire alliance meeting will be held January 6, 2010 at 10:30 AM at the Ohio Fire Chief's building.

Mr. Orahod said NFPA 1403 was discussed at the Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI) meeting and they are waiting for the state to roll this out. Mr. McLean said the Fire Alliance has approved 1403 and the committee can move forward on it. He wants to get the curriculum developed and finish the project. Mr. Steele said the work group will meet after the first of the year. Mr. Steele contacted a number of charter programs that teach the instructor's class about the advanced course. He said the time spent on 1403 varies from a little to a lot of time. After talking about what should be included in an advanced level course, most felt it should focus on the practical applications (math part of water flow, accountability in acquired structures, etc.). He reviewed the Fire Instructor II standard to see if they could be merged in a national based curriculum. Mr. Steele suggested two options: It should focus strictly on 1403 acquired structures (approximately 16 hours) or create a FI II level certification. Mr. McLean will send an email to participants about continuing working on this after the first of the year.

Mr. McLean said there are still too many close calls still occurring and pointed to the fatal training at the row house fire in Baltimore. Mr. McLean said the report only had one mention of 1403. The report said the exercise violated dozens of recognized safety standards, a series of investigations in the death revealed that the cadet had been issued tattered protective gear, and training officers set seven fires instead of the single fire that the national standards permit for such exercises. The report does not say 1403 was not followed. Mr. McLean said this is another incident like the one in Florida that triggered this committee to take a proactive approach and validates the committee is on the right path.

Mr. McLean and Chief Steele visited Columbiana County to discuss a volunteer test issue that Mr. Orahod had addressed numerous times. He said when the individual saw it in black and white, they understood they need to retake the test. The other issue dealt with was where a gentleman's wife had logged the entire department in for certification. One of the individuals has no computer experience and didn't renew, but the Chief knew the night before the card was going to expire. The solution is the individual can sit in on the next 36 hour class and retake the test. Mr. McLean asked members of the committee to share information and statistics of what this committee is working on with departments in their area and it reassures them this committee's work is not to take their cards away.

#### NEW BUSINESS/OLD BUSINESS

No new or old business was brought forward.

Mr. McLean said the next committee meeting is January 12, 2010. Mr. Orahod said the committee would continue meeting every other month in 2010. Mr. McLean expressed such a schedule makes it difficult to get projects done.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.**