

NH Fire Standards and Training Commission**MEETING MINUTES** *(Approved)***February 1, 2018**

9:00AM

Richard M. Flynn Fire Academy, Dormitory classrooms 5 & 6
98 Smokey Bear Boulevard
Concord, NH 03301

FST Commission members present:

Jeremy Thibeault (Chair), Richard Bailey, Jr., Robert Buxton, Stephen Carrier, Justin Cutting, J. William Degnan, Kerry LeBlanc, and Kevin Pratt **(8)**

FST Commission members not present:

William Campbell, Amy Clark, J. Michael Joyal, Peter Lennon, Richard McGahey, Steven Sherman, and Nancy Smith **(7)**

Division of Fire Standards and Training & EMS Staff:

Director Deborah Pendergast, Assistant Director Jeffrey Phillips, Chief of Strategy and Planning Nick Mercuri, Deputy Chief Scott Doherty, Captain Scott Cathy, Captain Daniel Tice, and June Connor **(7)**

NOTE: "Action items" are in bold red.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 9:30AM when a quorum was present, and Commissioner Degnan led the Pledge of Allegiance. Assistant Director Jeffrey Phillips introduced a new staff member, Captain Daniel Tice; Dan will oversee the SE region of the state as well as the ARFF and Driver/Operator programs. Dan is a recent retiree from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard where he was an Assistant Chief.

Item 2. Non-Public session

The FST Commission went into non-public session at 9:32AM to discuss a case involving hiring requirements.

Item 3. Public Hearing for Fire Investigator NFPA 1033 program

Chair Thibeault opened the public hearing at 9:44AM. In addition to the FST Commission members, Deputy Chief Scott Doherty was in attendance as well as Captain Scott Cathy. There was no discussion.

II. REPORTS

Item 1. Fire Marshal's Office – J. William Degnan (**See attachment – Click on the paperclip icon**)

Commissioner Degnan spoke to the commission about legislative activity not listed on his report:

- HB 1254 (study group formed working on how national codes are adopted)
- HB 1255 (Life Safety going back to 2009 version)
- HB 1214 (flame retardant chemicals in upholstered furniture)
- HB 1421 (event tents)
- HB 1416 (repealing prohibition on bottle rockets)

New Project to pay attention to: Rte. 101 corridor pipeline project for L & G plant in Epping

Item 2. Forest Protection Bureau – Chief Sherman (**See attachment – Click on paperclip icon**)

Item 3. Curriculum Review – Assistant Director Jeffrey Phillips (**See attachment – Click on paperclip icon**)

Several changes will be made to clarify the report for the next meeting. A separate section will be created for equivalencies.

Item 4. EMS Coordinating Board – Jeremy Thibeault (**No report submitted**)

- The EMS Coordinating Board met last on November 16, 2017.
- The meeting scheduled for January 18, 2018 was cancelled so that the members could attend a hearing for a Senate Bill having to do with allowing family members to determine where ambulances should take patients.
- Here is the link to the minutes for all CB meetings:
<https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/fstems/ems/boards/coordinating/cbminutes.html>
- The next meeting will be held on March 15, 2018 at the Fire Academy.

Item 5. FST & EMS Director's Report (**See attachment – Click on paperclip icon**)

Director Pendergast reported on a few updates since her report was written:

- An offer was made to a candidate who applied for the SW captain's position; that candidate withdrew after being promoted in his other job. The job has been reposted outside.
- A final candidate has been chosen for the EMS Deputy Chief position. An announcement will be made as soon as possible.
- Waivers for 2018 – one request to retake the FFI exam for the third time and another for CPAT for an administrative captain's position in Loudon. The student will take an online refresher course before retesting, and the CPAT waiver will be granted because the position does not require fire suppression duties.

Assistant Director Phillips added the following:

- The protocol roll-out has been out since the beginning of the year; over 2,500 people have completed the program. Local municipalities should be working with their MRH's to find an adoption date.

- The MCB will be working on a modification to epinephrine in regards to the “Check and Inject” program.

Legislative Season – additional information:

SB 544 – (The bill that takes an amount equal to 2% of the insurance tax from the general fund and puts it into the Fire and EMS fund.) An initial hearing was held with the Senate Finance Committee. Assistant Commissioner Bailey cautioned that the commissioners be careful how they explain this to their constituents so that there are no misunderstandings.

(Buxton/Carrier) – *A motion was made to draft a letter of support from the FST Commission for SB 544; passed unanimously.*

Commissioner Buxton asked that all members of the FST Commission go back to their constituents and ask for their support of this bill.

HB 561 – (the double-dipping bill) This bill was “ITL’d” in the Senate Finance Committee but was approved on the Senate floor. The number of hours that retirees can work for the Division may be affected. (Less than a dozen part time employees will be impacted.) The per-week requirement has been changed to an annual requirement, which will be easier to track.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND REPORTS

Item 1. February 1, 2018 reports

(Buxton/Bailey) – *A motion was made to accept the reports submitted for the February 1, 2018 FST Commission meeting; passed unanimously.*

Item 2. December 12, 2017 minutes

(Bailey/Pratt) – *A motion was made to accept the minutes from the December 12, 2017 FST Commission meeting; passed with an abstention from K. LeBlanc.*

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Added item. Standard Error of Measure **(See attachment – Click on paperclip icon)**

- Captain Scott Cathy, whose role is to oversee accreditation and certification at the Division, was on hand to clarify what SEM actually is.
- Currently, the cut score for all exams is 70%, which is in Administrative Rule. Discussions took place last year about going towards a standard error of measurement, established based off of a specific exam.
- The topic of SEM will be incorporated into the Curriculum Sub-Committee. This committee should meet before the next FST Commission meeting in March.

Item 1. Administrative Rules Sub-Committee

With Commissioners Smith and Joyal not present, Commissioner Buxton reminded the members that the minutes from the last AR meeting had been sent out in preparation for today’s meeting.

Chair Thibeault reminded the members to talk with their constituents within the next month about the bullet points listed in the AR minutes.

Item 2. Statewide training needs assessment

Chief Mercuri reported that the RFP went out and we received 2 responses; neither response met our needs or our budget. The Division is looking into whether or not some of this work can be done in-house.

Item 3. Retraining for additional testing

Assistant Director Jeffrey Phillips reported that there is currently 1 person going through the J&B online program, and another person has just reached out. This process will continue until a more formalized process is in place that can deal with more than Firefighter I and II.

Item 4. Hazmat NFPA 1072 Visiting Committee update

This item can come off of the March agenda. The VC is in process.

Item 5. Update on review of Firefighter II program

This item can come off of the March agenda. The VC is in process.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. The gradual modularized approach to training

This topic was discussed at a recent chiefs' meeting. For years, departments have requested CREF numbers for individual modules of Firefighter I. However, a couple of the smaller departments in the SW Mondadnock Area Fire Chiefs Association region chose to put together several modules adding up to 100 hours of training, which is unusual. They went through the proper procedures, and the Division even wrote out the evolutions for the sake of consistency. 15 people signed up and 13 actually finished the program.

- There are polarized feelings about this type of modularized training. The smaller departments support the idea due to their very small budgets. Director Pendergast made it clear that the Division does not support this as a replacement for Firefighter I; however, the Division does support the idea that some training is better than none at all.
- The director went on to tell the FST Commission members that there was a rumor going around that these modules were watered down. An internal investigation was done, and it turned out that one evolution was not done. The Division is now working with the instructors and students to find a solution. Their 2 choices are as follows:
 - 1) Take the module off the students' transcripts.
 - 2) The 13 students can get together and finish performing what they needed to perform in order to get credit.
- The Director asked for the FST Commission's opinions about modularized training, and a discussion ensued. ProBoard does not require that all modules be taken at once, and it is also clear in Administrative Rules that the FST Commission supports this approach. Chair Thibeault said that training this way does not necessarily result in someone finishing Firefighter I. A drawback is that when it comes time to take the final test and practical for Firefighter I certification, most students who have taken modules separately are not prepared. Chief Nick Mercuri emphasized that this topic is being discussed throughout the state, and some departments care more about getting at least some

training than they do about getting their firefighters certified. Currently, the Division does not offer the individual module concept. Commissioner Bailey asked if any of the modules require very specific equipment; Fire Suppression requires a burn building so few departments could do this module on their own. Assistant Director Phillips explained that when a non-funded module, taught by a state instructor, is not done correctly, it becomes a matter of concern for the FST Commission. Oversight of these programs by the Division is very difficult; it cannot afford to send a staff member to every non-funded module program to provide oversight. The members discussed the investigation process, from informal done by the Division to more formal, done by the commission. **A suggestion was made for the Division to prepare an information sheet to remind instructors what is required when teaching separate modules in non-funded programs; this will be done.**

V. ADJOURNMENT

The public hearing and the FST Commission meeting closed at 11:12AM because a quorum was no longer present. There was no formal adjournment.

VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER (NOT DONE BECAUSE QUORUM NOT PRESENT)

Item 1. Sub committee assignments

NEXT MEETING: March 1, 2018

REMAINDER OF 2018 SCHEDULE:

- May 3, 2018
- June 7, 2018
- September 6, 2018
- November 8, 2018

Notes prepared by June Connor, Administrative Assistant I