

NH Fire Standards and Training Commission**MEETING MINUTES** (Approved)**September 6, 2018**

9:00AM

Richard M. Flynn Fire Academy, Classroom 2 in the Admin. Bldg.

98 Smokey Bear Boulevard

Concord, NH 03301

FST Commission members present:

Jeremy Thibeault (Chair), Robert Buxton (Vice Chair), Richard Bailey, Jr., Stephen Carrier, Justin Cutting, Kerry LeBlanc, Peter Lennon, Richard McGahey, Paul Parisi, Kevin Pratt, Steven Sherman, and Nancy Smith **(12)**

FST Commission member not present:

William Campbell

Excused: Ashley Frame (medical)

Division of Fire Standards and Training & EMS Staff:

Director Deborah Pendergast, Assistant Director Jeffrey Phillips, Chief Nick Mercuri, Captain Scott Cathy, and June Connor **(5)**

Guests:

Fire Marshal (Retired) J. William Degnan, Chief Allan Clark from Sugar Hill (pending representative for NHAFC), Michael Todd (NH DOS PIO), Amy Doherty and Michael Wimsatt from NH DES **(4)**

NOTE: "Action items" are in bold red.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 9:30AM, and Chair Thibeault led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. SPECIAL PRESENTATION (added to the agenda)

Chair Thibeault presented Fire Marshal (Retired) J. William Degnan with a plaque honoring his years of service on the FST Commission.

III. PFAS UPDATE (taken out of order, V. OLD BUSINESS Item 3)

Director Pendergast reported that she received the results of the initial testing done by the NH Dept. of Environmental Services out on the drillyard and asked Assistant Director Jeffrey Phillips, the PFAS project manager, to give a report to the commissioners.

He began by introducing Amy Doherty and Michael Wimsatt from the NH DES.

- The results of the testing showed PFAS contamination in the retention area.

- A RFQ was formulated, and the Division has reached out to several companies to do additional testing which will map out the extent of the contamination.
- Site visits were done last week, and we are now waiting for the quotes to come in.
- Training continues at this point; there are no safety issues for students and staff. The wetland area between the A Building and the B Building is now restricted.
- We are no longer using AFFF Class B foam in any of our classes. Any Class B foam we had on hand was removed from site and is being treated as hazardous waste even though it is not classified as such.
- After doing some research based on guidance from DES, the Division has purchased fluorine-free training foam.
- Next step: Once we have a contractor in place, a plan will be determined as to how this problem will be remediated.
- Commissioner Pratt asked Mike Wimsatt if it was safe for firefighters to train on the drillyard, and Mr. Wimsatt answered in the affirmative, explaining that what we know now is that ground water has been impacted and does not meet the standards for groundwater. The Academy gets its water for training from the river behind the drillyard and from the City of Concord. There are no private wells in the area.
- Commissioner McGahey asked about the payment method for mitigation. Director Pendergast answered that the money will be coming from the Division's budget; State funds are not available.
- Commissioner Pratt asked if any Superfund money can be used. Mike Wimsatt explained that at this time, it is not clear that a federal superfund site could be listed solely on the presence of PFAS compounds because they have not yet been designated as hazardous substances under federal law. Additionally, becoming a superfund site can be a very complicated process.
- THE SPIN-OFF CONVERSATION: AC Bailey and Asst. Director Phillips met with Chair Thibeault and Vice Chair Buxton and discussed the impact of using Class B foams on the entire fire service in NH. The NH DES is working on a fire service initiative, and the Division will work in conjunction with DES to get information out to the fire departments.
- Commissioner Sherman asked if Class B foam has been used at the Bethlehem facility. AD Phillips answered that it has not been used since being owned by the Dept. of Safety. The area was owned previously by the Forest Service; also, our land abuts a landfill and it is not known what might have come from that. Chief Allan Clark added that the Burton Training Facility has municipal water.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBER (added item to the agenda)

Chair Thibeault welcome new Fire Marshal Paul J. Parisi to the FST Commission.

(From **I. CALL TO ORDER**, Item 2. Membership update):

- Chair Thibeault received his letter from the Governor's Office regarding the approval of his 3rd term on the FST Commission. His term will expire on August 1, 2021.
- **Memberships expiring in November:**
 - Robert Buxton
 - Stephen Carrier

- Justin Cutting
- Michael Joyal

V. REPORTS

Director Pendergast added to her report:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will be on campus from September 10 - 13 doing a full evaluation of the EMS System in NH. The last time this was done was 20 years ago.
- Chair Thibeault asked about the status of the ladder truck at the Academy; it is still an item on the capital budget for next year.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made (Smith/McGahey) - to approve the minutes for the June 7 2018 meeting; passed with abstentions from Commissioners Sherman, Parisi, LeBlanc, and Cutting.

IV. SUB-COMMITTEES

Item 1. Administrative Rules Sub-Committee

Commissioner Smith had nothing to report. **Chair Thibeault reminded the commissioners that this committee is developing issue statements and surveys to send out to constituent groups, and he would like them to be ready by the November meeting.**

Item 2. Curriculum Review Sub-Committee

Commissioner Carrier reported that this committee met after the June FST Commission meeting. The discussed 3 items:

- 1) **Standard Error of Measurement:** the committee approved moving forward with the SEM proposal by sending it to the Rules Committee. **The NH FST&EMS staff will draft the appropriate language to bring to the Rules Committee.**
- 2) **Re-training for non-firefighter courses:** The committee members agreed that students who fail programs, with the exception of Firefighter I and Firefighter II, must retake the courses in their entirety.
A discussion ensued about procedural correctness for making this policy.
- 3) **High School FF programs:** The committee feels that more information should be gathered regarding high school students taking full firefighter courses; the failure rate is high. Options could possibly include not offering the program at all or offering an awareness type of program instead. We also need to reach out to the Dept. of Education and High School administrators as well as the instructors who teach these courses. AD Phillips added that one of the problems involves high schools having 90 minute blocks being reduced by as much as 30 minutes due to student transportation issues.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Item 1. Standard Error of Measurement update (see IV. SUB COMMITTEES, Item 2, #1. Above)
This item can come off the agenda for the November meeting.

Item 2. Haz Mat NFPA 1072 Visiting Committee

Because the standard has been changed that Haz Mat follows, we will be transitioning from NFPA 472; the program curriculum is the same.

Item 3. PFAS update (See **III** – taken out of order at the meeting)

Item 4. (added to the agenda at the meeting) SAMHSA Grant **(see attachments – click on paperclip icon)**

Chief Nick Mercuri informed the group about the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant.

- The grant totals \$3 million being dispersed over 4 years.
- Two full-time employees have been hired to work on this.
- The pillars of the grant involve training first responders how to administer Narcan and how to become more involved in preventing opioid calls through community interactions and connections.
- Local communities will be able to apply for sub-grants to become involved in this program using overtime/backfill.
- This is NOT mandatory and will not work in all communities.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. Fire Inspector II, Warrants and Citations requirement

Commissioner Lennon addressed the commission about removing the “Warrants and Citations” section from the Fire Inspector II program and making it a stand-alone program because not all students need it. The Warrants and Citations class would be held immediately following the completion of the Fire Inspector II program. Doing this would decrease the Fire Inspector II class by 2 days. The members discussed whether or not this was a large enough change to follow the procedure of holding public hearings, etc. and decided that a visiting committee would not be necessary due to the fact that this was going to be a minor adjustment rather than a large curriculum change. Making this change has nothing to do with ProBoard because “Warrants and Citations” is not included in its standard.

A motion was made (Lennon/Pratt) – to proceed with scheduling a public hearing at the November 8th FST Commission meeting to hear comments regarding removing the “Warrants and Citations” section from the Fire Inspector II program; passed unanimously.

This change will not be presented to the Curriculum Sub-Committee alone because it was the desire of the entire commission to hear about this change.

(AD Phillips apologized that this should have been brought to the Curriculum Sub-Committee first, then gone through the Visiting Committee process, and finally brought to the full commission.)

Commissioner Carrier stated that the Curriculum sub-committee will work on a revised Fire Inspector II Curriculum Approval Guide and then bring it to the full commission.

Item 2. (added to agenda at the meeting) Statistics software **(See attachment – click on paperclip icon)**

- AD Phillips stated that the Division conducted an RFI to find out about the availability of new testing software.

- Captain Scott Cathy was on hand to speak to the FST Commission members about this subject and solicit additional input.
- Our current LXR software is no longer supported and it has become archaic, having been purchased in 2002.
- A number of vendors have been identified that may be able to meet our needs, and research was done to find out what other states are using.
- Critical aspects need to be able to...
 - do online testing and continue doing paper testing as well
 - do everything we have done better, such as putting multiple test forms together to create single tests
 - customize query reports
 - track the life cycle of questions
 - flag questions that are not good quality
 - capture digital recordings of performance testing/practical exams as well as instructors/evaluators
- Captain Cathy asked the members to consider the question, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could...?"
- Commissioner Carrier suggested that tracking re-takes would be beneficial.
- Commissioner Smith supported the idea of digital recordings in terms of students being able to see what they need to work on rather than just being told they need to work on something.
- **Chair Thibeault suggested that the Instructor Cabinet should discuss this and come up with suggestions of what they would like to see in a new software program.**

Item 3. Questions about pass/fail statistics

Commissioner Pratt asked about the high fail rates and also wanted to know if all of the Firefighter I and II students are doing live fires; they are. (Though the A Building is not currently operational, the B Building is fine. The North Country burn building is also being utilized.) AD Phillips explained that these statistics include high school programs which skew the results. Commissioner Carrier asked how many Firefighter I's and II's were given each year and if the number varies much from year to year. The number of courses offered does not vary that much; Director Pendergast added that last year, 2 classes were cancelled due to lack of enrollment. This year, we have waiting lists. **AD Phillips will pull some numbers to more accurately compare yearly results.**

VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Item 1. Committee of Merit ceremony (September 24th at 6:30PM)

Item 2. RE the Fire 602.01 roster submittal rule: At this point about 58% of the fire departments have submitted rosters. Of those 58%, there are 1507 full-time firefighters, 1637 call firefighters, 128 part-time firefighters, and 506 volunteer firefighters. (NOTE: These are post meeting figures; estimates were given at the meeting.) Many of the departments that have not yet submitted rosters are volunteer departments.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made (Cutting/McGahey) – to adjourn the meeting at 11:00AM, passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: November 8, 2018 (final one for 2018)

Notes prepared by June Connor, Administrative Assistant I