

**NH Fire Standards and Training Commission****MEETING MINUTES** (Approved)**August 1, 2019**

9:30AM

Richard M. Flynn Fire Academy, Classroom 2, Admin. Building  
98 Smokey Bear Boulevard  
Concord, NH 03301

**FST Commission members present:**

Jeremy Thibeault (Chair), Robert M. Buxton (Vice Chair), Allan Clark, Justin Cutting, Ashley Frame, J. Michael Joyal, Andre Parent, Paul Parisi, Perry Plummer, Steven Sherman and Eric Wilking **(11)**

**FST Commission member not present:**

William Campbell, Kerry LeBlanc, Peter Lennon and Nancy Smith **(4)**

**Division of Fire Standards and Training & EMS Staff:**

Director Deborah A. Pendergast, Chief of Strategy and Planning Nick Mercuri, Bureau Chief Andy Anderson and Hayley O'Brien **(4)**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Item 1.** The meeting was called to order at 9:30AM. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Director Pendergast gave a membership update to introduce Hayley O'Brien as the new Administrative Assistant. Chair Thibeault welcomed Commissioner Wilking to his first meeting.

**II. REPORTS****Director Pendergast added to her report:**

- As of yesterday, Denice McAdoo retired and her position is vacant.

**A motion was made (Buxton/Parisi)** – *to accept all of the reports*, passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A motion was made (Cutting/Plummer)** - *to approve the minutes for the June 2, 2019 meeting*; passed unanimously.

**IV. SUB-COMMITTEES****Item 1.** Administrative Rules Sub-Committee

- Nancy Smith was absent so there was no update reported regarding the changes.
- Nick Mercuri reported incorporating our ICS rules into the NFPA 1 and the fire code. If this change occurs, the Divisions rules will change as well. The Commissioner's Office is satisfied with the rules set and the word and definition changes.
- Nick Mercuri responded to Assistant Commissioner Plummer with a plan to keep these rules up to date resulting in a tracking sheet with the expiration dates so that they can get on regular revisions with the Legal Department.

**A motion was made (Plummer/Buxton) - to move forward with the formal rule making process with the Commissioner and get the rules filed for change,** passed unanimously.

**Item 2.** Curriculum Review Sub-Committee – **not active at this time**

**Item 3.** Visiting Committees

- **Visiting Committee Structure**

- **Haz Mat Technician:** Reported by Vice Chair Robert Buxton

The committee met on June 28<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the curriculum, program and power points. A few chapters were signed for the review process to move forward and the next meeting is scheduled for 9:00AM on August 29<sup>th</sup>.

- **NFPA 1001 Firefighter** (discussed under Old Business)

- **Driver Operator:** Reported by Andre Parent

No one showed for the public session during the day or night. AD Phillips received one phone call in regards to it. Hoping to move this forward for finalization from the Commission next month.

- **Technical Rescue:** Reported by Chair Thibeault

Focusing on the Rope Rescue Program, Captain Antonucci is still gathering information on what is out there for available curriculums before the first meeting occurs.

- **Fire Officer** – No meeting, nothing to report.

- **Inspector/Investigator** – Peter Lennon was absent, nothing to report.

- **Instructor:** Reported by Justin Cutting

The fourth meeting was following the FST Commission meeting. They will be choosing a text and proceeding to work from that point on. Things are going well.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS (discussed after New Business)**

**Item 1.** Visiting committee policy (**See attachment**)

Director Pendergast mentioned reviewing the discussion from the last FST Commission meeting, Assistant Director Phillips established a policy for seating the visiting committee. The understanding was that the Commission would like to choose the voting members of the visiting committee having a wide diversity of members.

Chair Thibeault re-read the FST Commission minutes from the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to clarify the decision that was made was to have the Commission select the visiting committee participants.

**Chair Thibeault mentioned accepting the motion to adopt the new structure to stay flexible by design based on needs of each class.**

Allan Clark mentioned seeing a conflict of interest for any of the Staff Instructors paid by the Academy to be a voting member. The number of hours that the Staff Instructors are instructing is an important part of their compensation.

Cutting respectfully disagreed stating the instructors have a passion for instructing and first-hand knowledge of how long it takes to teach certain skills. He does not see the instructors

sitting on the committee just to receive more hours and make a few more dollars. Joyal agreed with Cutting as far as not seeing instructors trying to gain more hours just for more money and agreed with Clark as far as a conflict of interest.

**Chair Thibeault closed the discussion with having the curriculum review sub-committee work with Assistant Director Philips to present at the next FST Commission meeting a visiting committee structure document in a policy format combined with the edits from last month's structure and suggestions from this month. Also, providing a recommendation of who the members of the visiting committee should be and the Commission will vote on that list at the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

Director Pendergast added that the new structure will cover all visiting committees to ensure the flexibility.

Assistant Commissioner Plummer suggested making phone calls to get a committee together of the correct representation.

**Item 2.** Legislative authority of the FST Commission to establish credentials

Director Pendergast reported that she and Assistant Director Phillips met with Attorney Brodhead from Department of Justice on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Attorney Brodhead had many questions and stated that he would get back to the Director and Assistant Director within 2 – 4 weeks with a recommendation.

Assistant Commissioner Plummer asked if this was the right time to move forward with a major undertaking or if it should be placed on hold. Director Pendergast recommended placing this on hold temporarily.

**Item 3.** Legislative Report: Reported by Nick Mercuri

- House Bill 224 regarding EMT's LODD has been enrolled, but has not moved forward.
- Senate Bill 59 was recently signed for PTSD.
- Senate Bill 177 regarding the use of restraints has been signed by the Governor.

**Item 4.** Committee of Merit ceremony update

Director Pendergast reported that ceremony will take place at the Capital Center for the Arts on Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 6:30PM. The number of awardees is being finalized for EMS and over 60 awardees for Fire. Hayley O'Brien is the new Secretary for the Committee of Merit.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS (discussed before Old Business)**

**Item 1.** Division Assessment Plan

Director Pendergast shared a presentation discussing the assessment of all that the Division does from policies, procedures, programs, where are we at, where are we falling below expectations and are we meeting the needs of our stakeholders. Several meetings occurred with Chiefs, Senior Staff and Captains and examined what is done on a day to day basis. What comes out of this draft plan will shape what direction the Division will go in the future. The Division looked at communications, customer service, continual assessment, procedures and processes. The following bullet points are results from the assessment done by the Division;

- Over the last 6 months, 1 class has been cancelled due to lack of Instructors and several classes have been cancelled due to lack of enrollment.

- A new cancellation policy was established stating if a class is cref'd and enrollment is below expectations within a few weeks of the start of class, procedures have been put in place to put forth all effort to keep the class open.
- EMS stakeholders spoke out about an unfair amount of EMS programs being run in comparison to Fire programs. The number of instructor coordinators for EMT programs has significantly decreased.
- Training needs to be covered in every area of the state that needs it, not just in certain areas.
- The Division is working diligently to inform their stakeholders about upcoming classes by using social media while the website is still undergoing changes over time.
- The Division discusses customer service at all of their monthly briefing meetings. Also, how an event in the state related back to the Division.
- Documentation is being taken for all meetings that the Division has, for all the processes that are changing and monthly data reports are now being done.
- Student evaluations will be online and accessible to everyone.
- Course request policy is in the making regarding a window to allow requests to come in based on what the Divisions budget it allotted for.
- The instructors are held to a very high standard to meet the behavior expectations of the Division. The Division has a zero tolerance policy for egregious behavior. Every instructor is required to re-read the policy when they renew their IC license.

**Allan Clark asked how the Division becomes aware of an inappropriate behavior.**

**Director Pendergast stated that students often say something and also other instructors looking out for other instructors. Assistant Commissioner Plummer suggested an online confidential form can be filled out and goes directly to Director Pendergast.**

- AFG grant program opened up to the Fire Academy and the Division spent 3.5 million dollars in upgrading apparatus, equipment, PPE, gas meters, props, simulators, and fire trucks. Capital projects were upgraded such as, technology, sound systems, seating, carpeting, energy efficient projects, security upgrades, drill yard upgrades, and HVAC.
- Adding; a quarterly newsletter to keep stakeholders informed about the happenings at the Academy, annual customer satisfaction survey, "how to" area added to the website and documentation taken for all communications and interactions with customers. All Chiefs and Captains will carry iPads.
- Future challenges; Aging facilities, physical capacity (parking lot, cafeteria space), PFAS issue, North Country Facility training house replacements, and the future of the fire fund.
- Assistant Commissioner Plummer requested that Director Pendergast show a budget presentation to provide a better understanding of the overall budget and challenges. Director Pendergast added that being in a continuing resolution, some classes had to be put on hold, whether they are grant funded or not. The Division is attempting to find new ways to work around the continuing resolution to prevent putting classes on hold. Assistant Commissioner Plummer added to Director Pendergast's comment that they are actively working on finding ways to fix the continuing resolution issue so that the local communities will not also be affected, including long-term funding strategies.

**Item 2.** Assistant Commissioner Plummer asked Director Pendergast to discuss the State-wide Medical Director overview. Director Pendergast explained that every state in the country has to have a Medical Director that oversees pre-hospital EMS. The State of NH is the only state in the country that does not have a paid Medical Director. Up until July 1<sup>st</sup>, NH had a State Medical Director volunteer who was also the Chair for the Medical Control Board. The issue with a volunteer is that we have no control over attending mandatory meetings or advocating for NH. The rule changed as of July 1<sup>st</sup> and an RFP was put out for a part-time State Medical Director that will be separate from the Chair of the Medical Control Board.

**AC Plummer asked about the dollar figures involved. Director Pendergast responded with maxing out at seventeen thousand five hundred dollars, which is in our budget. 4 responses have been submitted so far and the closing date is Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.**

**Commissioner Buxton asked if we will be able to receive the funding for this part-time position in August or if it will be put off with the continuing resolution issue. Director Pendergast responded that September 30<sup>th</sup> is hopefully the end of the continuing resolution, therefore once the hiring process is complete there shouldn't be much of a delay as long as the continuing resolution doesn't proceed to another additional 90 days.**

**Marshal Parisi asked if the legislature specifically funded this job or if it is coming out of the Division's budget. Also, is the job realistic? Director Pendergast responded that this is out of our budget and the applicants applying will be full time physicians therefore they will already have a full time job. The term is for 3 years with the ability to extend 2 additional years, which will give us an insight on whether or not we need more hours put in or if it is working well how it is.**

## **VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Assistant Commissioner Plummer and Vice Chair Robert Buxton put together a task force about what is being done, what can be done and what we are missing concerning the mental health issue with First Responders. AC Plummer was looking for a member from the FST Commission to come and represent the committee at this meeting. A meeting is scheduled for late August 2019. Chair Thibeault volunteered to represent the FST Commission at this meeting.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Item 1. Motion to adjourn regular meeting

**A motion was made (Buxton/Parisi) – to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 AM, passed unanimously.**

**NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 in classrooms 5 & 6, Dormitory Building**

(Notes by Hayley O'Brien, Administrative Assistant)