

**FIREFIGHTER STANDARDS AND TRAINING
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
January 25, 1999**

A regular meeting of the Firefighter Standards and Training Advisory Council was scheduled at the Prime Osborne Convention Center, 1000 W. Bay Street, Jacksonville, Florida on January 25, 1999 at 10:00 A.M. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Iacona at 10:17 A.M.

PRESENT:

Larry D. Evans	Firefighter Member	Orange County Fire Rescue
Michael Gonzalez	Fire Training Member	Tampa Fire Department
Michael Iacona, Chairman	Fire Chief Member	Orange County Fire Rescue
Michael Randolph	Fire Officer Member	Tallahassee Fire Dept.
Shayne Stewart	Firefighter Member	Okaloosa Island Fire District

ABSENT:

Cynthia Diven	Fire Training Officer	Gainesville Fire Rescue
David Paulison	Fire Chief Member	Metro-Dade Fire Dept.
Christian Swann	Civilian Member	Winter Park
Benjamin Wacksman, V.C.	Civilian Member	Tampa

A motion was entered by Shayne Stewart for approval of the November 19, 1998 minutes. Michael Gonzalez seconded, motion carried.

The Chairman addressed modification to the agenda regarding report to the Governor's Wildfire Commission which would be presented by Chief Tom Harmer, Titusville Fire Department.

REPORT FROM DIVISION DIRECTOR

Director Clark was unable to attend the meeting..

REPORT FROM BUREAU CHIEF

Chief Napoli was unable to attend the meeting due to giving a consecutive presentation for Fire Rescue East.

Allen Lovvorn, Assistant Superintendent of the Florida State Fire College, updated the status of the Bachelor degree program. Two courses offered this fall have recently been completed and five more are slated for offering beginning next month. That program goes before the Board of Regents in March for approval and then will be offered in the State University system. There was discussion with group of participants about the fact that the numbers are not what was expected. This may be attributed to the fact that the Bachelors degree had not been formerly designated as a degree program, although the courses will count towards that.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the Fire College has been brought up to speed as an electronic library and is now functional. This will be used as another element in training classes on campus

enabling some different approaches and off-time use of the library.

Automated testing databanks and procedures is now being implemented. Test items are provided by a professional test writer, which are randomized sufficiently to assure up-to-date testing. Standards began utilizing this process in October which reflected a higher initial fail rate. This may have been partially due to instructors not spending enough time in the new 4th edition of IFSTA reference book which was introduced simultaneously with the new testing procedure. Subsequently there have been 11 tests given, each different and developed from the question bank and specific chapters. These have shown a dramatic increase in the percentage of passing grades.

Mike Randolph asked for clarification of the 160 hour Volunteer Training being transferred over to Minimum Standards. Mr. Lovvorn stated this would not be transferable, however, there is an intent for it to evolve to that process at some point. Statutes and rules would not allow such a transfer. A Basic Instructor would be able to deliver this program because all the components are a part of that. People that formerly held an instructor's certificate for 40 hours (Volunteer Basic Instructor) will have to complete the curriculum of 160 hours and go through a qualifying process as instructors for that. One of these train-the-trainer programs has already been given with intent of offering several more. These courses will be abbreviated as much as possible to take advantage of the training the people already have.

There was discussion of incorporating this training into a component of Firefighter I with Firefighter II being the component to meet the balance of the minimum standards training. Ron Thomas explained that the NFPA 1001 Firefighter I standard was used as a benchmark, meets all the requirements of the law, and trains a person up to the level where they could make safe interior attack. This would be sufficient for a Volunteer Firefighter to use. The Department of Education (DOE) rules require occupational completion points which lead to a job entry level of training. The DOE has ruled that placement on a Volunteer Fire Department roster is considered job placement. If the school chooses to lay out the curriculum that way, the 160-hour program could be a jumping off point.

Larry McCall quoted the statute referring to minimum standard training requiring a "360 hour basic employment program". Interpretation of that statute, including legal counsel, is minimum standards training is to be offered as one program of 360 hours, not modularized, must be taught by certified instructors, and must be taught at a certified training center. The statute would have to be changed in order to roll one into the other. Mike Iacona stated that was the Council's overall intent to provide a two-part process: Volunteer Training would be formalized, expanded, and brought to the point where it met the necessary criteria for first responder, hazmat awareness, and other components required of these personnel. That would be a stepping stone from which they could move into certification.

Allen responded that the stepping stone theory continues to be the process as far as the development of the curriculum for the volunteer firefighter course. Because of the way the statute is written, we don't have the same kinds of instructors that are required by statute currently teaching the volunteers. We also haven't met the requirement of the training centers. These are not obstacles that can't be overcome, but they are obstacles that are in our way today. There will have to be some statutory changes.

If it required pursuing statutory changes that enabled that to take place, the Chairman replied that it was his understanding that staff take those steps. That was the overall sentiment of the Council's recommendation. Shayne Stewart mentioned the big push was to upgrade the training. He suggested a time-table for the Council to review before they could get this implemented since this was going to change FS633. Allen Lovvorn stated he could not address a time table.

Shayne Stewart reiterated the change to FS633 in re-identifying Florida's fire service more in line with the NFPA standards for Firefighter I and Firefighter II. Ron Thomas mentioned that there would be a

delivery issue that the Council should also be aware of. Research had been done some time ago and reflected that this training needed to be something these firefighters could do at their stations. In that way they could accrue the number of people they needed to train in-house rather than try to collect enough people to make a course that a certified training center would be able to offer. The need is for two delivery systems. The volunteer community expressed the need to be able to get the program and provide it to their own members. This means you have different categories of instructors and different locations of training that would be at hazard with the statute absent any language changes.

The Chairman suggested that volunteer entities who choose this training, not necessarily towards applicability for basic standards certification, would not utilize certified instructors or facilities. Those that choose to use the certified instructors and facilities would have to comply with that requirement but then that would be a stepping stone to move into full certification. The option would still be there and depending on the need, they could structure their training accordingly.

Allen Lovvorn agreed that that could be a successful resolution to many of the problems, however, the statute defines a "360 hours of instruction". What they do not want to do is open F.S. 633 multiple times. All of the factors coming into play must be addressed, outlined, and resolutions discussed prior to seeking changes to F.S. 633. Chairman Iacona asked staff to provide feedback at the February meeting regarding specific changes to F.S. 633 needed to address this situation. Allen said staff could prepare generic feedback rather than individualized bullets and furnish an update with respect to Fire College issues.

Allen introduced staff from the Fire College: Jacquie Niles, Larry McCall, Ron Thomas, Chuck Smeby, Barbara Klingensmith, Gene Lazarus, Dennis Andrews.

Jack Jarrell (audience) asked if any work had been done with the Department of Labor (DOL) as to meeting the fire brigade standards (on the 160 outline) and if there would be any requirements. Dennis Andrews recently met with the DOL and stated that at no time was the fire brigade mandatory or intended for volunteers. Jack Jarrell mentioned receiving notices of violation and discrepancies between the DOL and the Fire College in meeting volunteer training standards in regard to fire brigade. Dennis will be meeting with the DOL again in March and will discuss several issues.

Mike Randolph asked about the six new areas of regional testing sites for the volunteers. Allen reviewed the new schedule. Standards will be giving the test three times annually scheduled in the evenings for convenience. The designated locations are Crestview, Perry, Ocala, Winter Haven, Clewiston, and Marathon. Testing will be scheduled for the months between the existing scheduled regional exams beginning March of 1999.

Tom Harmer provided a review of the Governor's Wildfire Commission focusing on wildfire training meshing with the minimum standards training. Members were appointed by the governor who met six times within the four months following the wildfires of '98. Discussion was divided into three areas: response, mitigation, and recovery. Final report due out by the end of January 1999 comprised of 91 recommendations. First was a recommendation incorporating wildfire training into the minimum standards program. Second, incorporate similar command level or supervision level training into the Fire Officer program. Third was a collaborative effort: a partnership with Forestry on Wildland Urban Interface training and the prescribed burning issues. Fourth issue deals with volunteers in two phases: volunteer fire response training incorporated into the volunteer curriculum, secondly, should volunteer training be mandated or not. Another consideration was to have the wildland firefighters attend the fire college and receive structural training.

Shayne Stewart expressed concerns if wildland firefighting was incorporated in minimum standards that there may not be any continuing education on wildland firefighting. Since the situation changes con-

stantly, he would prefer mandating a yearly 40-hour course. The Chairman mentioned the difficulty in mandating recertification for volunteers since there's no mandate for certification.

Mike Gonzalez had questions on the new minimum standards test and the high fail rate. Allen Lovvorn defined the process Standards went through developing this bank of test questions. Mike asked about the difference between validity, reliability and if the questions weighted depending on which course was being tested. Allen explained each item and subject was analyzed, a manual review was done to check for discrepancies and three questions were removed from the initial test. This process has been used for the past two years. October was the first time a test was given from this bank of questions. This will become the means by which tests are given in all disciplines.

OLD BUSINESS

Ron Thomas provided a review of the FO1 and FOII programs accommodating the most of the Council's recommendations. (Handouts of Ron's presentation are attached).

Fire Officer I Proposal – 320 hours

The Bureau felt it was important for a first level officer to receive both Tactics I and II which will be offered in two 40-hour consecutive courses. In retaining Fire Prevention Practices, 16 hours are contained in this program and the other 8 hours is done in the local department on local policies and procedures. This language will be reflected in the new college catalog and announced to other training centers. Fire Service Instructor I will be revised strictly on the delivery of programs not on design. Fire Instructor II (not developed yet) will be a higher level program based on needs assessments, designing courses, supervising course evaluations and preparatory work. Hazardous Materials I and II do not need to be included in the officer program. Building Construction needed to be involved to provide the requisite understanding of the place where they would be engaging in fire combat. Introduction to Command is comprised of 24 hours of the basic ICS course, 8 hours of ICS for EMS, and 8 hours of ICS for HazMat, and interplays with Forestry and command challenges that a prospective Lieutenant would have to face.

The Council asked about inclusion of Domestic Terrorism Training. Allen Lovvorn explained that there was a way to accommodate the wishes of the Council as well as the opportunity for Introduction to Command course in Fire Officer II. Utilizing part of the Introduction to Command segment, 16 hours available for a "hot topic" item, terrorism for now, might be a viable solution to satisfy the Council's request.

Options

Option 1 – Downside: difficulty in just covering just the firefighting content of the material and this ERT:BC would subtract from that time allotted. The modules within that course should include a current topic segment so that terrorism scenarios would be appropriate.

Option 2 – Similar downside as above considering time allotted, would not be able to include the whole 24 hour Intro to ICS

Option 3 - Beneficial in that there are several events or training seminars where this can be completed without taking up classroom time.

Option 4 – Beneficial in that if renewal of the basic officer certificate is implemented, it can be mandated that the ERT:BC 16 hour course, or current issue of state concern, be a portion of the 40 hour continuing - ed rule.

Ron summarized the Bureau's preference of Options 3 or 4 and the necessity of having an NFA certified instructor to deliver ERT:BC. Allen defined that the Bureau did not want to infiltrate Tactics courses with the subtraction of 40% of the coursework (16 hours), especially if a person is only taking Tactics I for the information it provides rather than trying to obtain a company officer certification. Allen also referred to one of the Governor's Wildfire Commission's recommendation in adopting NIMS which would form a good basis for command structure.

The Chairman made a motion to approve FOI and suggested adding additional 16 hour component as a co-requisite, Option 3. Shayne Steward seconded the motion with amendment: adding Option 4 as continuing education. Motion passed.

Chief Northcutt suggested modularizing the 16 hours into 4-8 hour blocks, outlined by the Fire College, in order for the department to deliver these requirements themselves. Allen Lovvorn stated this would eventually be available through distance learning.

Fire Officer II Proposal – 280 hours

Ron Thomas reviewed staff recommendations (see handout attached). Explained that Beth Hardee, new faculty member at the Fire College, recently completed the national Public Education. She will be developing a 40 hour exportable version of this course will be made available making it widely available throughout the state. Similarly, the Public Information class taught by Ron Thomas will be handled in the same fashion. The Computer Literacy Course and Report Writing course will both be pre-requisites, 40 hour/3 credit equivalent from a hometown college. The last three courses, designated with asterisks, may not be courses which the Fire College develops any state standards questions. Mike Randolph stated the Council felt strongly about requiring development of legal issues curriculum as part of the FOII rather than making it an elective. Secondly, there should not be an exam for FOII, merely completion of the courses. Re-certification would be at the highest level.

Allen requested that discussion on Fire Officer II and initial Fire Safety Inspector be tabled for the February 23rd meeting.

Allen Lovvorn and Ron Thomas explained 60-70 instructors have currently been trained to deliver statewide Terrorism Training with another 30 expected in March. There will be another meeting scheduled with Terry Brown who indicated that there would be significantly more money coming into the Terrorism fund. This information will be provided by staff to the Council as received.

Shayne Stewart explained the new logo developed for the Council. No picture was available at this time. The pins have been ordered and should be available for presentation at the Recognition ceremony scheduled in February. Ron Thomas provided suggestion as to wording for plaques which may be presented in the future (attached as handout). Also explained the process of approval this wording would have to through in Tallahassee, however, a resolution would be possibility for this February presentation. Due to time constraints, the Council decided to give the pins to Bill Nelson to award to each recipient in representation of the Council. Subsequent meetings will allow for the Standards Council to give their own formal presentations. Council directed staff to list categories in which the Council could give their own awards of recognition.

Mike Randolph asked the Council if they still wanted to move the meetings around the state. Council agreed it was a good idea to continue and providing information early enough for those throughout the state who may consider attending.

NEW BUSINESS

Report from the Governor's Wildfire Commission was given earlier in the meeting.

Ira Jolly, Division of Forestry, reported task force recommendations with regard to firefighters. Forestry has been working with the Fire College Wildland Fire Operations and Urban Interface courses and have been presenting some of these courses in the field. They have also accepted the 360 volunteer course as part of their certification program for their wildland firefighters which Forestry will begin in the spring session. They will increase the forest rangers hours to 580 hours. A fourth ICS team has been put in place now.

Shayne Stewart asked if the Division of Forestry was going to provide assistance to departments regarding personal protection equipment. Ira said he knew of no plans on obtaining the equipment however, if grant monies were made available by legislation, perhaps they could assist in some manner.

Shayne Stewart addressed a question if structural firefighters in departments will be assisting the Division of Forestry in prescribed burning program. Ira responded with an affirmation and that it will have to be a multi-agency function. He explained the many functions and issues are involved in Urban Interface.

Shayne also asked if would red card training would be mandated for structural firefighters by the task force. Allen Lovvorn responded that it probably would not be the Forestry red card system but likely there may be a move towards a Florida card system which is similar in nature but stands alone.

The Council will meet again February 23, 1999 in Tallahassee at the recognition ceremony at the Capitol to present awards.

AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Gene Lazarus asked Ira Jolly how many hours was NIMS. Mr. Jolly explained there were several different levels. The basic level is Basic:ICS is the same course Council/staff have been talking about – 16 hour course.

Larry Fauci suggested that the Fire College incorporate certification for the 160 hour volunteer firefighter and get an Administrative Rule change to incorporate certification. Regardless of who taught the 3 hour module on "X", the firefighter can take that training and from there build for the Firefighter II state exam. Chief Iacona stated that was an option Council was evaluating. Similarly, its an ideal component for the wildland firefighters to take structural firefighting in the future. Its a question of what changes and modification must be enacted to allow this.

Mike Randolph appealed staff to look at the Fire Officer II program and maybe make a pre-requisite for technical writing or business writing and computer literacy. His concern was to address cognitive skills in moving into the Bachelor degree program.

ADJOURN

On a motion duly made by Mike Gonzalez, seconded by Mike Randolph and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

