



Firefighters Employment, Standards and Training Council Meeting
 October 6, 2011
 Conference Call/Ocala, Florida

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING:</u>	<u>TERM ENDING:</u>
Bill Gulbrandsen Sumter County Fire Rescue	FL Association of Counties	7-1-2014 (1 st term)
Bill Lombardo South Trail Fire Protection	FL Association of Special Districts	11-01-2014 (1 st term)
Rand Napoli	Florida League of Cities	01-31-2015
Joe Palminteri Citrus County Fire Rescue	State Fire Marshal	06-30-2014 (1st term)
Ron Parrish St. Lucie County Fire District	Florida Fire Chiefs' Association	06-30-2014 (1st term)
Jon Pasqualone Martin County Fire Rescue	FL Fire Marshals & Inspectors Association	10-31-2014 (1st term)
Gene Prince City of Gainesville F/R	Florida Fire Chiefs' Association	01-13-2014 (1 st term)
Lew Simon	State Fire Marshal	06-30-2014
Rick Spence Reedy Creek Fire Dept.	FL Professional Firefighters	02-28-15
Laurie Sweeney Orange County F/R Dept.	FL Professional Firefighters	6-30-2014 (1st term)

ABSENT:

Greg Gay Civilian	State Fire Marshal	11-21-2014 (1 st term)
Bill Klein Brevard Community College	State Fire Marshal	10-11-2014
Daniel McAvoy Osceola County Dept. F/R	State Fire Marshal	2-9-2015

On a motion duly made, the minutes from the Firefighters Employment, Standards and Training Council meeting held on July 23, 2011 were approved.

Motion carried.

REPORT FROM DIVISION: *given by Director, Julius Halas*

The Tri-Annual Fire Prevention Code is up for adoption on December 31, 2011. There was one rule challenge which was dismissed. The on-line version should be ready to view in early December and will be ready for purchase the second week of December 2011.

REPORT FROM THE BUREAU: *given by Bureau Chief, Barry Baker and Assistant Superintendent, Bill Wentlandt*

FCDICE has been problematic for a number of years. The Bureau put out a request for information and recently interviewed four vendors in hopes of acquiring a new system. Of course, money is an issue and the Bureau has identified that to the CFO's office at a recent review. They in turn have tied us with our new DIS Division. They will provide us a review of the system and send someone down to Ocala to perform a needs analysis, help us write a request for proposal, and help us through the purchasing process.

The Bureau is hoping to have a decision on a new system by mid-year next year.

Fire Code Administrator:

As you know, the Fire Code Administrator was mandated by Statute and the Division is now required to develop curriculum, which will lead to certification.

The equivalency to that within the NFPA standard is Fire Marshal. Bureau staff has been working with different stakeholders in the development of that program.

One workshop has already taken place; a second workshop will take place on November 2, 2011 in St. Augustine at the FFMIA conference. (This will be advertised in FAW)

After the second workshop, the hearing process will begin as early as January 2012. Once completed the program will be adopted which will include the specific curriculum required which will most likely be at the baccalaureate level and be consistent with the NFA's FESHE model.

We anticipate the course offerings will be available as early as next spring, 2012. In addition, with the introduction of this certification, the Bureau will be implementing the process of a portfolio assessment.

In addition to the Fire Code Administrator, the Bureau continues to work on the Fire Officer III and IV curriculum. There has already been one workshop held on this topic and a second workshop is being scheduled to occur at Fire Rescue East. The adoption of this curriculum is also being evaluated. The recommended elements will also be consistent with not only the NFPA standard for Fire Officer but also be consistent with the FESHE model.

This will most likely also include a portfolio assessment so academic achievements of applicants can be valued.

After the second workshop in January, a hearing will follow in the spring of 2012 and also provide course offerings as early as late spring of 2012 or most certainly by summer of next year.

It is important to note that for both of these programs the curriculum will most all be at the baccalaureate level.

The Division's Safety Program is working with a federal grant with Drexel University looking at non-fatal injuries in the fire service. The grant program is assessing the State of Florida and the City of Philadelphia. A vendor agreement has just been finalized which will pull data from our FCDICE system and collate that data with data from Worker's Compensation in Florida and also with hospital outcome data.

The data should be available to us by 2013 and will be important data for us and help the Bureau in making some critical decisions regarding firefighter injuries.

Supplemental Compensation:

As you know, the rule regarding supplemental compensation changed in March. This rule change now requires all seeking supplemental compensation with a bachelor's degree, to have regional accreditation. The Bureau has had some "kick-back" from that, particularly from south Florida, largely from a University called Columbia Southern.

The Bureau has been collecting data to determine the impact of that rule regarding that particular institution ever since. There are several more meetings set up with the University and also a meeting set up with the CFO to review the findings.

During the rule hearing, no one came forward to mention that this would have an adverse impact on a select group who had received a large number of credits and therefore, they had no ability to respond in a reasonable manner so the Bureau agreed to take a look at it. This does not change where we are headed but it may affect a group that may have had a large number of credits and were not able to transfer those credits to a regionally accredited institution to finish their degree.

Retention Testing: *Update provided by Karl Thompson, Standards Supervisor*

Retention testing continues to grow. The last regional testing held here required seven days of testing and tested over 220 applicants. The majority of these applicants are for retention. The retention pool continues to grow. Methodology needs to be addressed to achieve a better program for retention of firefighter certification. Right now, it is completely contingent upon employment. It is recommended that we look toward continued education. Additionally, we are closing in on the July 1, 2013 window where

the exemption that allowed instructors to continue to hold their certificate of compliance will expire. This is huge issue and it continues to grow.

The Bureau is looking into several options which include possibly offering testing regionally and working toward a continuing education program with testing attached to it. However, this will require a Statute change and the Statute is specific that there must be testing attached to it.

The Bureau is hopeful that the Legislature will hear our agency Bill and come back with the opportunity for continuing education credits.

In the interim, the Bureau is trying to determine if it is beneficial to do statewide regional testing and if that is a possibility, where the testing will be held.

Chairman, Chief Parrish stated that this is something that we need to move forward with and agrees that something should be developed, under our criteria, that allows people to recertify.

Chief Gene Prince requested a time-line for progress.

Chief Barry Baker advised the Council that a rough draft will be provided at Fire Rescue East.

Chief Baker noted that even if an individual has let their certification lapse, at the present time, that individual can also take advantage of the retention examination for recertification. The issue right now seems to be if the Bureau is offering the retention examination frequently enough. This is more of problem for individuals, not for the State.

Chief Parrish stated that he feels it is the responsibility of the Council, to find a solution to allow these people, that have committed the time to get certified, the ability to recertify (other than having to drive to Ocala).

About a year ago, the Division approached the Training Directors Association about the possibility of providing a Train-the-Trainer program and have some of the veteran instructors across the state assist with testing us so the Bureau could reduce travel costs. Although a few of the academy's thought it was a good idea, some did not due to credibility and accountability issues.

Further discussion and ideas were discussed on the subject of regional testing.

Chief Bill Gulbrandsen informed the Council that within the EMT/Paramedic programs, a refresher course is given for renewal and no additional testing is required.

Chief Baker reminded the Council that with whatever decision is made it will require a Statute change, which is part of our agency bill that is submitted. The Bureau has

submitted this over the past three years and unfortunately it has not been heard. The Legislature is so busy trying to balance the budget that many very worthy bills that are out there, they simply just do not get to during their session.

We are hopeful this year that our Bill will be heard and we can get some of these things done.

Chief Gene Prince suggested that regional testing be limited to only those who are trying to recertify their Florida standards. Any out of state applicants or those who have been out of fire service for a period of time still be tested in Ocala to keep more stringent control. Chief Prince stated that it seems we are not only trying to take care of CEU's for those recertifying we are trying to take care of CUE's for every firefighter in the state whether certified or not, and this has complicated things. Understanding that this is hard to separate for the Legislature, but it might be a good idea. Fire departments do not need another obligation to meet.

Jon Pasqualone agreed with Chief Prince in the fact that there are multiple issues that need to be looked at.

Regional testing is currently given four times a year. September, November, February and May. If this exam is failed twice, certification is lost. At the point you lose your Florida certification, by Statute (F.S. Ch. 120), a right to appeal must be administered. So, as can be imagined, some legal issues are arising.

Chief Baker related that the Bureau just underwent a Bureau Assessment with the CFO's senior staff. This provided the Bureau an excellent opportunity to review with them our processes, why we do things, the authority behind them, issues we are facing in the future and along with what we are going through right now which is a rule review.

This has provided the Bureau with an excellent opportunity to look at what we are doing, where we are, what we should be doing and what opportunities exist. It has been very positive and good things are coming out of it so far. Some of the identified issues are currently being addressed in a prompt manner. One of these issues is the Bureau's web-site. We will soon be handling our own web-site which will help greatly with keeping things updated.

The Bureau will be seeking IFSAC accreditation. When students finish classes they will be able to receive both ProBoard and IFSAC.

Another topic discussed during the assessment was changing the term certification to licensure to raise the playing field. The Bureau would like to see both licensure and certification. Licensures would equate to "a requirement to do something" such as firefighter or inspector. Certification would refer to a "nice to have" – training.

Chief Baker asked the Council for input.

Chief Parrish asked for a verification of these terms through e-mail.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Legislature: The Division is currently tracking related Bills and will continue to monitor closely.

Jon Pasqualone – There are consolidations within the fire service going on between fire prevention bureaus and building departments. There has been an outcry basically blasting this process and looking for solutions.

This is a considerable concern. The Florida Fire Marshals Association is looking at ways to combat this and looking for support with all allied partners. Firefighter safety must always come first.

AUDIENCE:

**NEXT MEETING: Fire Rescue East, Daytona Beach, Florida
Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 8:30 a.m.
Room 104 A&B**

ADJOURN.

