



Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council Meeting
January 7, 2025
Orlando, Florida

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:

NAME	REPRESENTING	TERM ENDING
Carlos Aviles St. Augustine Fire	FL Fire Chiefs' Association	June 30, 2026 (2nd term)
Brad Bischoff Bradenton Fire Department	FL Professional FF Assoc.	Jan. 31, 2027 (1 st term)
Aaron Colburn Reedy Creek Emergency Svs.	FL Professional FF Assoc.	Jan. 31, 2027 (1 st term)
Thomas DiBernardo Florida Department of Health	Bureau of EMS	Jan. 31, 2027 (1 st term)
Darrel Donatto Town of Palm Beach	Florida League of Cities	Jan. 31, 2027 (1 st term)
Shawn Hanson Greater Naples Fire Rescue	Florida Fire Marshals Association	Oct. 31, 2026 (2nd term)
Dara Hennessey City of Cocoa Fire Rescue	State Fire Marshal	June 30, 2026 (1 st term)
Jeremy Joseph Florida Forest Service	Florida Forest Service/DOA	Jan. 31, 2027 (1 st term)
Patrick Kennedy West Palm Beach County F/R	Florida Association of Counties	June 30, 2026 (1 st term)
Terry Parris Panama City Beach	State Fire Marshal	Jan. 1, 2027 (1 st term)
Kevin Reed Hillsborough C.C	State Fire Marshal	Oct. 31, 2026 (2nd term)
Michael Woodward City of Oviedo Fire Dept.	FL Fire Chiefs' Association	June 30, 2026 (1 st term)

ABSENT:

Dr. David Lee Sylvester Comprehensive	State Fire Marshal	June 30, 2026 (2 nd term)
	Florida Association Sp. Districts	Oct. 31, 2026 (2 nd term)

The Firefighters Employment, Standards and Training Council meeting was called to order.

On a motion duly made, the minutes from the Firefighters Employment, Standards and Training Council held on July 22, 2024, were approved.

The October 8, 2024, meeting was cancelled due to Hurricane Helene.

Motion carried.

REPORT FROM DIVISION: *given by JoAnne Rice, Director*

- CFO/State Fire Marshal Jimmy Patronis has resigned as of March 21, 2025. He is running for the District 1 position in the Pan Handle to replace Matt Gaetz. No word yet on his replacement.
- Director Rice and Symposium and Dinner in Washington D.C. in February along with multiple other meetings/conferences with constituent groups.
- Legislative Session
 - Meetings begin January 14, 2025
 - Focusing on public safety
 - First Responder Health Initiative
 - Decon grants
 - Additional personnel to staff ES 4 & 9
- State Fire Marshal staff vacancies
 - Working to fill positions
- Rule Making
 - Working on cleaning up multiple rules including 69A-37
- Upcoming Events
 - Fire Service Day at the Capitol – April 3
 - Black Tie Gala – April 3
- Photo contest for Annual Report due 2/15 as well as data entry.

REPORT FROM THE BUREAU: *given by Bill Sturgeon, Bureau Chief – Power Point provided*

- Save the Dates
 - NFA Weekend – April 5-6, 2025
 - Instructor Conference – May 7-8, 2025
 - Safety and Wellness Conference – May 29, 2025
 - Lithium-Ion Symposium (and Burn) – Week of September 15, 2025
 - Fallen Firefighter Memorial – November 21, 2025
 - North Central Florida Fire Conference – December 12-14, 2025
- Administration
 - FireTraQ – New FCDICE. Replacement kick off meeting held November 21, 2024. Implementation July 2025
 - Master Plan for FSFC Campus
 - Statewide Training Needs Analysis in 2025
 - Auditorium Update

- Security Alert System
- Hiring two new full time Safety Field Reps
- Hiring full time Safety Supervisor to fill Susan's position
- Courtyard repair
- Paving
- Roofing
- Safety & Health
 - 2024
 - Issued 43 Decon Grants
 - 13 Line of duty deaths
 - 10 cancer related
- Standards/Certification Data – handout provided
 - 2024 – decrease in Firefighter II certifications and decrease in students on campus
 - 2025 – Marion County Fire Rescue will also be providing training on campus
 - Instructor applications down as well as course applications.
 - DOD/Out of State Firefighters
 - 78 pending applications-decrease of 9 from last year
 - 114 pending verification of training, increase of 39 from last year
 - Scheduled to test 36
 - DOD/Out of State courses scheduled quarterly with the next class taking place in February

Darell Donatto requested the total number of DOD/Out of State firefighters tested in 2024.

Workforce shortages/Fire Department Rosters

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association has established their legislative priorities for 2025 and one of those legislative priorities is workforce development and recruitment.

- Firefighter Recruitment Bonus Program
- Public Safety Apprenticeship Program
- Creating of Cadet Programs
- Funding for Research and Development
 - Paramedic low testing scores on first test
 - DOD/Out of State firefighters
 - Issued proposed rule on DOD/Out of State
 - Currently under review by Legal in SFM
 - Will distribute to Council

Bob Rand, Accreditation Manager ProBoard –answered questions about Pro Board Accreditation and Reciprocity.

Reciprocity – an agency would accept the persons credentials from another location to allow them into their existing system to fulfill prerequisites and any other pre-level expectations for them to be able to climb the ladder from there.

Currently, a certification from Florida must be issued as a direct result from testing as it meets Florida Rule.

Discussion was held on out of state firefighters who already hold ProBoard, be issued a Florida Firefighter II certification without meeting Florida ProBoard requirements as they

already hold Firefighter II ProBoard from their home State. This certification would have to “look” different that was is issued to Florida Firefighters or Out of State firefighters who test for certification and would NOT be Florida Firefighter II ProBoard.

This would lead to three different Florida Firefighter II certifications

45 States participate in ProBoard. Not all States provide the same amount of training hours.

ProBoard does not track training hours. Focus is on testing process only.

Bill Sturgeon

2024 – 50 tested

2023 – 52 tested

2022 – 52 tested

2021 – 24 tested

71% passing rate from 2023-2024

Bureau has streamlined the administrative process and is now looking at practical testing geared more towards critical tasks, for Out of State and DOD applicants.

Carlos Aviles – although there are more certified training centers in the State than prior years, the number of certified Firefighter II certification remains stable at approximately 2,300 per year.

Departments around the state are growing faster than the supply of firefighters becoming certified.

Further discussion was held on accepting out of state firefighters in addition to Firefighter II certification.

Bill Sturgeon requested a recommendation from the Council.

Darrell Donatto put forth a motion for the Council to support the proposed rule change that will allow out of state firefighters who are IFSAC or ProBoard certified to transition to certification in Florida in a manner better than we have today.

Council tabled motion until Legal review has been completed and they have the opportunity to review the language.

Motion withdrew.

As requested by Chief Hennessey, the Bureau will supply, a side-by-side evaluation of proposed language against what is in place now.

Director Rice asked the Council to consider the impact of this. She recognized that something needs to change, but, the State, including the Council, has worked really hard to establish the Florida standards and she does not want to see a rash decision made to how we do business that will impact our future. Florida does 492 hours of training, that this Standards Council established. She wants to move forward cautiously so we maintain consistency with our standards.

Continued Bureau Update

- Training – Curriculum Review & Revision
 - Focus group established
 - Advanced courses
 - Simulations
 - Applied learning
 - Hybrid class formats
 - Incorporation of Li-Ion training
 - Technology upgrades for classrooms
 - Live Fire Training Rule
 - Back on track
 -

Aaron Colburn asked what the current status of the Memorial wall is, referencing how much room is left on the existing wall.

Director Rice estimated that in approximately 6 years, it will be full. A legislative budget request (LBR) has been submitted for funding.

OLD BUSINESS:

Carlos Aviles recommended reinforcing mental health components into every layer of professional development. As individuals move up to the company officer levels, that they receive reinforcement of the message/mission, and they have the needed tools.

Director Rice suggested putting together a work group to work on this.

Carlos Aviles will relay idea to the Collaborative and bring back information to the Council, trying not to add any additional hours to the curriculum.

Carlos Aviles commended SFM

NEW BUSINESS:

Carlos Aviles recognized the Division on the honorable job done, honoring Susan Schell. She served the State of Florida for a very long time and did a phenomenal job. It is a big loss for everybody.

Update on Recruitment and Retention project. The University of Florida has a research team excited to pick up the project. The proposal is a 3-yearlong study to gather data on economic impacts of staffing shortages. The data we hope to get will benefit not only the fire service, it would also track migration across the state for long term planning for law enforcement, education, etc. An LBR request will be submitted to fund.

On a motion duly made, The Fire and Emergency Incident Information System Technical Advisory panel voted to renew the terms of Chairman Darell Donatto and Vice Chairman Aaron Colburn.

Motion carried.

AUDIENCE:

Bill Klein – requested he receive a copy of the proposed language for the DOD/Out of State Firefighter.

Chief Woodside, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

Thanked the Council for the work they do. He reminded the council of their purpose, to provide input to the Division, not try to circumvent rule and statute. Research and discussion with the Council should be had before any rule proposal is submitted by the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association. He reminded the Council to consider the impact on firefighter safety and to the citizens of Florida.

Chief Harold Theus, Alachua County Fire Rescue

A Listening Session was held the Executive Development Conference, and that group tasked the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association to come up the proposed rule language.

NEXT MEETING: TBD

ADJOURN.

Audio file available upon request