



Firefighters Employment, Standards, and Training Council Meeting  
January 20, 2022  
Daytona Beach/Fire Rescue East

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>REPRESENTING</b>	<b>TERM ENDING</b>
Carlos Aviles St. Augustine Fire	FL Fire Chiefs' Association	June 30, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Mike Bellamy Tallahassee Fire	State Fire Marshal	June 30, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Kasie Crowe Division of Forestry	Florida Fire Service	Jan. 31, 2023 (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Thomas DiBernardo Florida Department of Health	Bureau of EMS	Jan. 31, 2023 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Darrel Donatto Town of Palm Beach	Florida League of Cities	Jan. 31, 2023 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Ralph Franklin Okeechobee County Fire	FL Association of Counties	June 30, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Shawn Hanson Greater Naples Fire Rescue	Florida Fire Marshals Association	Oct. 31, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Dr. David Lee Sylvester Comprehensive	State Fire Marshal	June 30, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Jim Millican Lealman Fire District	Florida Association Sp. Districts	Oct. 31, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Terry Parris Panama City Beach	State Fire Marshal	Jan. 1, 2023 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Kevin Reed Hillsborough C.C	State Fire Marshal	Oct. 31, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Jason Schneider Winter Garden Fire Dept.	FL Professional FF Assoc.	Jan. 31, 2023 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Randy Touchton	State Fire Marshal	June 30, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)

**ABSENT:**

Jerry Forte City of Palm Coast	FL Fire Chiefs' Association	June 30, 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Nick Herlihy North Port Fire Rescue	FL Professional FF Assoc.	Jan. 31, 2023 (1 <sup>st</sup> 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 November 17, 2021 were approved.

**Motion carried.**

**REMARKS:** *given by Randy Touchton, Chairman*

Moment of silence was held for Buddy Dewar (past Director of SFM) who is currently ill.

Review of council member absences and new membership applications.

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

- Recognition of Jason Schneider and Nick Herlihy for their years of service on the Council.
- Budget
  - After Surfside Collapse, CFO announced that this would be the year of the Urban Search and Rescue teams. Funding has been made available for equipment and training. SFM working with Dave Downey and all leaders of task force teams to see what the needs are. Approximately 10.5 million in funds will be issued.
  - Requested 1.3 million for FCDICE program
  - Some of the money the State of Florida had for “COVID”, was also earmarked for infrastructure (“deferred maintenance program”)
- Legislature
  - HB 959 and SB 1874 – on CFO’s priority list
    - USAR
    - Protecting homes
    - Insurance premiums/protecting Florida’s consumers
    - Cancer Bill/coverage for fire investigators, etc.
  - Expanding eligibility for firefighter assistance grant which will allow for additional safety gear besides just the SCBA

## **REPORT FROM THE BUREAU:** *given by Mark Harper Bureau Chief*

- Grant Activity
  - Volunteer Assistance Grant received 1.65 million dollars of requests this year with 17 recipients
  - Decontamination Equipment Grant of \$500,000, awarded 52 recipients, 51 out of the 52 have already been issued.
- Grow As You Go
  - Module based program for Firefighter I
    - 2020-2021 went from 76 students down to 46
- Safety and Standards
  - Total written examinations for Firefighter II for;
    - 2020 tested 1,976
    - 2021 increased to 2, 257 – 14% increase
  - Practical Exams
    - 2020 tested 1, 981
    - 2021 tested 2, 620 – 30% increase
- Campus
  - 2020 – 2,352 students on campus for training
  - 2021 – 3,126 students on campus for training
  - Normal average is 3,500 – 4,000
  - Departments are still suffering from staffing issues
- Certifications
  - Firefighter II Certified
    - 2020 – 43,005
    - 2021 – 45,398
    - 5% increase
  - Certifications issued
    - 2020 – 4,837
    - 2021 - 5,478
- Training
  - Bob Coyne is the new supervisor of the Training Section
  - Class Offerings
    - 2020 – 5,558
    - 2021 – 5,730
- Campus Activity
  - Hosted (with neighboring departments) the first Annual North Central Florida Fire Conference. Participants were Alachua, Sumter, Citrus, Marion, The Villages, Gainesville and Ocala. For the first conference, the group did a fantastic job. 96 people signed up and completed all tracks. Looking at making this an annual conference in October of each year.
- Firefighter Vacancy Rate
  - The Bureau is certifying as many or more firefighters as we do annually, but we continue to see shortages/staffing issues with departments around the State. Working on figuring out the cause and address it.
  - Looking at streamlining the Equivalency process for out of state firefighters

Further discussion was held on firefighter retention.

- Fire College Water and Campus Repairs
  - The final connection points for our water filtration system – we will have clean water. This was one of the items from the 2.7 million funding that we received for campus needs.
    - New roof on Arson building
    - Generator
    - Paving for second half of campus
    - Repairs on existing roof
  - 5-year Fixed Capital Improvement
    - Additional training props
    - Renovation of the auditorium
    - Lecture Hall
    - Expand dorms
    - Upgrade kitchen/cafeteria

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Director Julius Halas announced his retirement after almost 13 years with the Division and a total of 48 years in the fire service.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**On a motion duly made**, Carlos Aviles was voted new Chairman of the Firefighters Employment, Standards and Training Council.

**Motion carried.**

**On a motion duly made**, Jim Millican was voted new Vice Chairman of the Firefighters Employment, Standards and Training Council.

**Motion carried.**

#### **AUDIENCE:**

Many congratulations and accolades from Council members and audience members to Director Halas for his service.

Mike Bellamy – would like to see mental wellness training at the officer level as well as critical incident tracking through reporting.

Discussion was held on this topic with support from the Bureau/Division.

Discussion was also held on retaining firefighters.

Good feedback for Bureau Safety Compliance Inspections.

Jason Schneider thanked all for his time on the Council.

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, April 21, 2022, 1:00 p.m., Conference Call

**ADJOURN.**

*Audio file available upon request*