

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council**  
*Minutes of the December 13, 2016 Meeting*

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The meeting was held at the Vermont Fire Academy in Pittsford and called to order by Chairperson Corbin at 10:00 a.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Organization Representatives**

|   |                                      |
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| Vermont Career Chiefs Association                               | Troy Ruggles - phone                 |
| Secretary of Education  | Alexander Northern (designee) -phone |
| Vermont Fire Chiefs Association                                 | Absent                               |
| Commissioner of the Department of<br>Forest, Parks & Recreation | Lars Lund (designee)                 |
| Professional Firefighters of Vermont                            | Christopher Corbin-Chairperson       |
| Commissioner of the Department of Health                        | Christopher Bell (designee)          |
| Vermont State Firefighters Association                          | F. Thomas Estey                      |
| Commissioner of the Department of Labor                         | Dan Whipple (designee) - phone       |
| Vermont Domestic Insurance                                      | Absent                               |
| Division of Fire Safety Director                                | Michael Desrochers                   |
| General Public  | John Marcus                          |
| Commissioner of Public Safety                                   | Absent                               |

Visitors: Peter Lynch, Michael Skaza, Jessica Pomainville, Terry Farr, William Jones, Ben Whalen, Aaron Collette.

**Report from the Executive Director of the Division of Fire Safety (Michael Desrochers):**

FY18 budget getting ready to be submitted it will be level funded. Hope to hire a new Electrical Inspector in Springfield within the next few months. Met with the Secretary of Administration regarding a 1.5 million capital expenditure for the east cottage. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Director submitted a report to the Secretary of States offices regarding the merging of all licensing fees. Attended the New Hampshire and Vermont Carbon Monoxide summit at Dartmouth Medical Center. Where about 125 people attended. The summit hopes to make a strategic plan to outline how to better public awareness.

The Division's database is in the process of being replaced.

The Division is in a good spot fiscally at this time.

A New Haz Mat truck has been placed in Lyndonville.

Whipple and Northern joined the meeting at 10:12 am via the phone.

**Approval of Minutes**

**A motion was made by Northern and seconded by Estey to accept the previous meeting minutes as written. Motion passes unanimously.**

**Report from the Chief of Training: Peter Lynch**

Introduction of the new Site Coordinator, Ben Whalen.

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Bill Jones has transitioned to the Southern Coordinator position.

The Fire Academy has added three new instructors to the instructor core.

The Chief of Training has been attending meetings and getting out meeting, and listening to members of the Fire Service.

The Fire Academy is up for Pro Board reaccreditation. The application has been submitted to Pro Board and is currently under committee review. The Pro Board site meeting is scheduled for December 20 - 22, 2016.

The Chief of Training explained that the Academy was awarded an Assistance to Firefighters Grant to build a new burn building at the Pittsford site. The Town of Pittsford approved the zoning permit. Some of Act 250 has to be gone through which is the current step that the Academy is at.

The last set of PFOA readings from the training water tank are not a level of health concern.

The RIC, PADO, AADO, LP Gas classes are in development there will be an update at the March meeting.

The RIC prop is ready for use however the curriculum needs more development.

The Firefighter II classes in Rutland Town and Bristol are wrapping up.

309 students registered for FY17 Firefighter I, II and I/II classes. 258 students attended orientation and 221 are still enrolled in the courses.

The Vermont Fire Academy submitted an AFG grant for FY17. The request was for 35 sets of PPE for instructors and for rescue tools. The Academy put together a SME group to compile a list of tools that would upgrade/replace the tools that the Academy currently uses. The request is for approximately \$470,000. The application has been filed and is awaiting approval.

If the East Cottage can be renovated it would give the Academy 26 new beds. 11 students from the South Hero Firefighter I course stayed at the Academy on a Friday prior to a Saturday practical at the Academy.

The Bristol Fire Instructor I course ends tonight. The Fire Instructor I course in South Burlington will begin on January 11, 2017. The course notice with dates for the Fire Officer course to be held in South Burlington will be sent out very soon.

A Technical Rescue SME group will be put together to help the Fire Academy better understand the needs of the team as well as the Fire Service as a whole. The group will be made up of members of the Tech Rescue team and Vermont Fire Academy Instructors.

Northern asked the Chief of Training if he could give the Council some insight into what he is hearing from people/groups around the State. The Chief of Training says that there are two things that he is hearing the most:

- 1) Interest in having an entry level class for firefighters who are just starting. The idea of what that looks like are:
  - a. 45-hour course that will not end in certification.

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- b. Modulization – with the option to certify at the end.
  - c. Exterior/interior firefighter based on the anticipated NFPA standard that has yet to be released.
- 2) That the Fire Officer program be offered on a different schedule format or a Fire Officer program that is not Pro Board certified but is relevant training for a Fire Officer.

After the Fire Officer I/II course ends in May the Council will have to vote to adopt the curriculum since the Council grants final approval of new curriculums after two pilots.

#### **Statute and Rule Committee:**

The committee met to review the rule and statute process with Bob Patterson.

The committee asked that the Council organization representatives get any input from their constituents now to alleviate or cut back on pressure from legislation after the process is in motion. The Chairperson distributed a memo regarding the three main areas that they wish to revise: 1) definition of the levels of fire service training provided 2) standards for maintaining certification/recertification and 3) establish a standard for the process of challenging certification. See attached memo.

Two main goals with the revisions are to not tie the Council or the Academy's hands as appropriate and work the Academy staff to address any issues with rules and policies that the Academy is having to deal with now that are holding them back.

The committee wants all feedback from constituents by the next Council meeting so that they can work on a draft proposal for the next Council meeting.

#### **Unfinished business:**

Tom Estey is officially the new VSFA representative on the Council. Troy Ruggles has been reapproved by the Governor.

#### **New Business:**

Traffic Incident Management change proposal. Vermont State Police has a TIMS program and the VFA thinks that it meets the needs of the VFA students. Department of Health is using either the VFA or State Police TIMS curriculum. The Academy would like to adopt the TIMS program that the Vermont State Police are using for consistency. Ruggles makes a motion to accept the TIMS course change proposal. Estey seconds it. Discussion: has the VFA seen the State Police program? Yes, the VFA has seen the course and the course has a lot of Vermont specific course information. All disciplines (EMS, law officer, highway department, etc) are learning the exact same information. Three issues need to be cleared up: 1) standard certificate 2) specific train the trainer 3) logistics of delivery. There would be no change in hours. Clarification. **Motion is made by Ruggles and seconded by Estey to accept the new State Police TIMS. Motion passes unanimously.** The program will not go into effect until next year.

VFA would like to set a yearly meeting schedule for the Council and opened the discussion up with the Council. The VFA would like have the meetings held on the fourth Tuesday of February, June and October. The Council Chair is concerned that three may not be enough. **Motion made to standardize the Council meeting dates for 2017 and going forward for meetings to be held on the fourth Tuesday of March, June, September and the first Tuesday in December. Motion made by Estey and seconded by Northern. Motion passes unanimously.**

The VFA meets every other Wednesday discuss, create and set Standard Operating Guidelines. Chief

Lynch reviews the process of the SOG development and implementation plan (handout). Comments will be accepted from various groups that the SOG's pertain to. The Council will see the final draft and be asked to either approve (as listed on list) or endorse (items that do not fall on the SOG approval list). The Director will then endorse the SOG and then the Chief of Training will sign the document with an effective date.

SOG discussion:

Multi – Level Written Exam Procedures: The SOG was handed out and reviewed to the Council (see attached). This SOG applies to certification testing for Fire Inspector I/II, Fire Officer I/II, and Firefighter I/II. Segregated scoring must be done in order to test both levels. Hazardous Materials Operations and Hazardous Materials Awareness does not need segregated scoring. Students cannot certify to one level if they only pass one of the levels. They must pass both levels to certify. Students must re-test both levels if a re-test is necessary. The number of exam questions are based on the length of the course. Changes need to be made in 4b and 4d.

**Ruggles makes a motion to adopt the SOG with changes in 4b and 4d. Seconded by Estey. Motion passes unanimously.**

The Chief of Training will come into future meetings with a proposed effective date. An SOG that gets endorsed by the Council is informational to the Council. Adoption of an SOG is the Council giving approval to an SOG.

Age requirements: The SOG is handed out and reviewed by the Council (see attached). Students must be 18 by the start of the program or course. **Bell makes a motion to endorse the SOG, Northern seconds. Motion passes unanimously.**

A question was asked as to why technical schools can teach skills to minors that they VFA can't. There is a special exemption built into the law regarding technical schools under the Department of Education which is why technical centers can teach skills that the Fire Academy cannot.

**Department of Education (Northern):** No Report

**VT Coalition of Fire and Rescue Association:** Desrochers

The coalition is partnering with dry hydrant group at the State house for a meet and greet. At the end of March the coalition is reserving the Cedar Room. PFFV is pushing towards a behavioral health bill.

**VT Career Chiefs Report (Ruggles):**

The spring conference planning is underway. Career Chiefs is hearing good things about the new Chief of Training and staff at the VFA.

**VSFA Report (Estey):**

VSFA does not meet until January. Also, hearing good things about the new Chief of Training.

**VT Fire Chiefs Association Report (Wendall Mansfield):** Absent

**Professional Firefighters of Vermont Association (Corbin):** No Report.

**Agency of Natural Resources Report (Lund):**

Neal Montith is a new hire for ANR he will be teaching Wildland courses. January 1 is the policy deadline for the Forest Fire Reimbursement.

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**Department of Health (Bell):**

Department of Health has filed their rule revisions. Department of Health will get a new commissioner. Working on changing the agency licensing from one year to three years.

**Department of Labor (Whipple):**

Has not heard anything about adopting the NFPA standard for health of firefighters and EMS personnel.

**Insurance Company (Pryce):** No Report

**General Public (Marcus):** No Report

**Any other Business:**

Collette asks if the SOG's can be posted online for everyone to access on the VFA website, which is agreed upon.

**Corbin nominated by Estey as the Chair, Lund seconds it. Motion passes unanimously.**

**John Marcus nominated by Estey as the Vice Chair, Bell seconds it. Motion passes unanimously.**

The next meeting will be at the Division of Fire Safety Central office in Berlin, on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 10:00 am.

The next meetings will be held:

March 28, 2017 - Berlin

June 27, 2017 – Vermont Fire Academy

September 26, 2017 - Berlin

December 5, 2017 – Vermont Fire Academy

**A motion was made by Corbin and seconded by Northern to adjourn the meeting. Motion passes unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jessica Pomainville*

Jessica Pomainville

Administrative Services Coordinator