

Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting

The meeting was held at Vermont Fire Academy in Pittsford on December 5, 2017 and called to order by Vice Chairperson Marcus at 1:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Organization Representatives

Vermont Career Chiefs Association	Troy Ruggles (phone)
Secretary of Education	Absent
Vermont Fire Chiefs Association	Wendall Mansfield
Commissioner of the Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation	Lars Lund (designee)
Professional Firefighters of Vermont	Christopher Corbin, Chairperson (phone)
Commissioner of the Department of Health	Lindsey Simpson
Vermont State Firefighters Association	F. Tom Estey
Commissioner of the Department of Labor	Absent
Vermont Domestic Insurance	Absent
Division of Fire Safety Director	Michael Desrochers
General Public	John Marcus – Vice Chairperson
Commissioner of Public Safety	Absent

Visitors: Peter Lynch, Michael Skaza, Jessica Pomainville, and William Jones, Mrs. Mansfield

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mansfield and seconded by Estey to accept the previous meeting minutes as revised. Motion passes. Revision: The motion to accept the VFA PADO proposal for pilot was made by Tom Estey and seconded by Troy Ruggles.

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

Mike Cannon's position is going to become a full time USAR position and be a limited service program manager. Town of Colchester has agreed to give their equipment to the State USAR team. The Division has requested \$350,000 in general funding to pay USAR through general funds, making the team more secure.

\$250,00 grant to launch a Firesafe 802 project buying CO and smoke detectors and installing them in single family housing for those who cannot afford them. Will partner with Red Cross and Fire Service.

Haz Mat team has been busy and been working with Canadian neighbors. The team is up in calls from last year. Funding is strong and there has been increase in Tier 2 Reporting.

Permit reform is underway for people to obtain building permits in a timely manner.

The Division is working to hire a Regional Assistant in Berlin and Electrical Inspector in Williston.

The budget is strong and we do not expect much to happen in the upcoming legislative session.

Vermont Fire Service Training Council Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting

Report from the Chief of Training: Peter Lynch
Fire Academy programs are underway.

The Instructor program is underway in the North and there is one coming up in the South. The Fire Academy is working with the EMS office on the possibility of a bridge course.

Fire Officer I/II will be held in 2018. The Fire Service has been asked to give feedback on where the location should be. Chris Corbin speaking on behalf of the groups that he represents says that the greater candidate pool will most likely come from central Vermont.

The Vermont Fire Academy has been working with the Regional Fire Schools to improve communications and a better working relationship. The Vermont Fire Academy has another meeting scheduled for June at the New Haven State Police Barracks.

The Vermont Fire Academy is actively hiring instructors. One instructor is in the hiring process and two more interviews are scheduled for next Tuesday, December 12.

The Vermont Fire Academy and the Director of the Division have been talking with the Commissioner and a Curriculum Developer position for the Fire Academy has been added to the DPS budget, however it still needs approval from the Governor and the Legislature.

Flammable gas is being revised, however the propane portion is easier because it is a revision and natural gas is being added. Michael Skaza has committed at least 8 hours a week to the development of the course and has been working to get subject matter experts involved.

RIC course has a VFA Lead Instructor working on the RIC working group recommendations and hopefully when we come back to meet in March the modulization will have been established.

Discussion of the VFA Initiative timelines.

- Planning – Strategic planning group is working on data collection and analysis and the VFA is working on identifying some holes in the data and filling them in.
 - Tech Rescue committee has submitted a final draft document on technical rescue training needs. Cannon and Lynch will meet to review the committee document and then Cannon and Lynch will make a proposal to the Director.
 - Staff and Instructor Development – job descriptions have been revised and instructors have been reclassified. The VFA staff has drafted an evaluation tool and it is now being circulated amongst a select group of instructors, then it will go to the Director and then to Human Resources.
 - Instructor Development day was successful. The next event will be in January 2019.
 - Training prop Train the trainers will continue
 - A new class room was created out of the old IT room in the Admin building.
 - Burn Building is getting its final punch list completed this week. Funding for the concrete around the building has been secured and will go in next

Vermont Fire Service Training Council Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting

Spring.

- AFG grant for \$420,000 to purchase 35 sets of gear and rescue tools. All gear has arrived and it is being rolled out and about 30-40% of Rescue tools have arrived and the purchasing will continue until late Spring.
- Exterior/Entry Level course work will begin this winter and a request for funding has been submitted.
- Aerial program has not been touched.
- Federal TIM's course has been adopted and is being delivered.

Vermont Fire Academy Strategic Plan will hopefully be finalized by the end of 2018 and so that 2019 initiatives will be based on the Strategic plan.

Former Chief of Ferrisburg, Bob Jenkins, received a Presidential award for his important work. He had been in the Fire Service for 50 years and had a resume full of volunteerism.

Chief Estey was honored for his hard work and dedication in Addison County. Middlebury Fire Department added him as an honorary member.

Report for the Council Chair:

No report.

Statute and Rule Revision:

Discussion/distribution of rule revision explanation, Chris Corbin asks that everyone review the documents on their own and with their constituents. In the March meeting Chris Corbin would like to seek Council approval and then move forward with formally submitting the proposed revisions.

Unfinished business:

After the Vermont Fire Academy was given the approval to pilot the PADO program, the VFA found that not enough instructors are qualified/certified to that level. Therefore, the Academy would like to take those instructors who are capable of teaching the program and give them a "bridge" course and then ask that New Hampshire come in and be exam proctors for a Challenge Exam. The Academy doesn't want to wait the amount of time it would take send instructors to other states to become certified. New Hampshire would only be supplying the evaluator pool. The selection process for those that can attend the "bridge/update" would be those who that taught the PADO program in the past. This will be a one-time Challenge for PADO.

Motion by Ruggles to move forward with the request as the Chief of Training has introduced/recommended using the bridge course, seconded by Estey.

New business:

Discussion that the Vermont Fire Academy would like clarification on what the Training Council has purview over. Does the Council approve programs and courses or just programs? Courses don't earn Pro Board certification. Courses can be created last minute, and don't have to be accredited.

Ruggles says that he is okay with the VFA pursuing courses, however he doesn't want it to get in

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting**

the way of the development of other more advanced accredited programs like Fire Officer III, Fire Instructor II, and so on. Discussion that only formal approval is needed for accredited programs, and courses need to be introduced to the Council but they do not need prior approval to be used. If a course is deemed a Vermont Fire Academy course, it is taught by Vermont Fire Academy Instructors, however the VFA can sponsor an outside vendor to teach a course. Discussion that the terminology needs to be right in the Statutes and Rules change so that the Vermont Fire Academy can formally move forward doing business as they have however; the Council needs to make sure that it does not create problems in the future. Discussion that courses that are required for certification (prerequisites) come before the Council for approval and that all other courses do not need to be.

Motion made by Estey that the Chief of Training can continue doing business as usual, which means that programs need approval and courses do not unless they are required for certification until the revised rules and policies are brought forward and voted on, seconded by Lund.

Clarification, that the Chief of Training can evaluate whether a course should come before the Council before being released, however any course required for certification must come before the Council for approval before being released. **Motion passed.**

Discussion of how many Challenge attempts a candidate gets per level, per lifetime. The rule has always been that each candidate gets one Challenge test per level, per lifetime. The Vermont Fire Academy is asking the Council if this is too extreme. The Rule Revision proposal is that a candidate can take a Challenge exam once every five years. The Council has never made a rule regarding Challenge exam attempts, and the belief is that the Academy created the one Challenge attempt per lifetime rule. One Challenge per lifetime can be problematic. Five years may be too long to have to wait to take a Challenge exam. Section 7 of Hearings and Appeals in the current Council rules allows the ability for an individual to appeal the five-year rule.

Motion by Corbin that until the Council rules revision is approved and made effective the Vermont Fire Academy shall follow the Council and Rules Policies draft in section 5.8.3, which states that a challenge attempt can only be made once every five years. Seconded by Lund.

Discussion that the Rules cannot be appealed and that different language would be needed to allow variances if the Council wants to allow individuals to appeal the five year rule.

Discussion of the pros and cons of the five-year rule as well as appeals.

All organizations and Fire Chief's need to do a better job explaining "How to become a Firefighter".

Motion passed to implement a five-year challenge interval.

Standard Operating Guideline Discussion:

1. Retests for Certification Exams – establishes guidelines on how the VFA retests

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting**

certification exams. People must wait two weeks but no more than 60 days after their first exam attempt. Release date is when they are dropped in the mail. The SOG will now define the release dates. Additional skill are added to confirm competency. Candidates can submit a request for additional time to take the re-test if they are unable to retest within the 60 days. Number seven needs to be amended to say if the Challenge process has not been utilized in the prior five years. Lays out how candidates may gain certification. Tabled until the next meeting since a quorum was lost.

Troy Ruggles and Chris Corbin had to leave the meeting which lost a quorum.

2. Inactive Instructors SOG passed out for FYI. This SOG addresses instructors who work for the Vermont Fire Academy but are not keeping up on their minimum hours worked as dictated by their job descriptions.
3. Dorm Use SOG passed out for FYI. \$20 per night per person, per night to stay. Obey the rules and conduct requirements. Meals are not included. Instructor costs will be covered by VFA. Program and course participants can use the dorms, however only student attending programs will have their room cost covered by the VFA.

Coalition Report: No Report

Vermont Career Chiefs: (Ruggles) – No Report

Vermont State Firefighters Association: (Estey)

Desrochers and Lynch have done a really nice job getting to out to see “customers”.

Vermont Fire Chiefs: (Mansfield) – No Report

Professional Firefighters of Vermont: (Corbin) – No Report

Agency of Natural Resources: (Lund) – No Report

Department of Education: (Northern)

Absent

Department of Labor: (Whipple)

Absent

Department of Health: (Simpson)

New protocols are in the process of being rolled out and right now they are taking comments. EMS uses Center-Learn for an online learning platform and the protocols will be published online. They are also working on High Performance CPR initiatives.

Vermont Domestic Insurance: (Pryce)

Absent

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting**

General Public: (Marcus)

The Fire Academy is rolling along very professionally.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 14th at 1:15 at the Vermont Fire Academy and the purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and to schedule another meeting in January to finish unfinished business.

The Vice Chair adjourns the meeting. There was no quorum so there was not a motion to adjourn