

Vermont Fire Service Training Council

MEETING AGENDA

Meeting Date: Thursday, June 9, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location: Vermont Department of Public Safety, 45 State Drive, Waterbury

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Approval of the February 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes
5. Reports
 - a. Director of the Division of Fire Safety
 - b. Vermont Fire Academy Chief of Training
 - c. Council Chair
 - d. Committee Reports
 - i. Certification Testing Committee (Skaza, Corbin, Estey, FA Staff)
 - ii. Governance Committee
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business
 - a. SOG
 - i. Make-Up Process (Endorsement)
 - ii. Recertification (Approval)
 - iii. Return to Physical Activity After a Medical Event (FYI)
 - b. Endorsement of Firefighter Program location awards for FY23
 - c. Consider changes in methods of selecting Firefighter Program locations
8. Organization and Agency Reports
 - a. Coalition of Fire and Rescue
 - b. Vermont Career Chiefs Association
 - c. Vermont State Firefighters Association
 - d. Vermont Fire Chiefs Association
 - e. Professional Firefighters of Vermont
 - f. Agency of Natural Resources – State Fire Supervisor
 - g. Department of Education
 - h. Department of Health
 - i. Department of Labor
 - j. Vermont Domestic Insurance
9. Comments from the General Public
10. Any Other Business as it Relates to the Council
11. Next Meeting Date Thursday, October 13, 2022, at the Vermont Fire Academy.
12. Adjournment

Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the February 10, 2022 Meeting

The meeting was held virtually with a conference call-in available and called to order by Christopher Corbin.

ROLL CALL:

Organization Representatives

Vermont Career Chiefs Association	Alex Northern
Secretary of Education	Absent
Vermont Fire Chiefs Association	Absent
Commissioner of the Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation	Lars Lund
Professional Firefighters of Vermont	Christopher Corbin, Chairperson
Commissioner of the Department of Health	Bambi Dame
Vermont State Firefighters Association	F. Thomas Estey
Commissioner of the Department of Labor	Dan Whipple/Bailey Thibault
Vermont Domestic Insurance	Absent
Division of Fire Safety Director	Michael Desrochers
General Public	John Marcus, Vice Chairperson
Commissioner of Public Safety	Absent

Other Attendees: Michael Skaza, Jessica Pomainville, William Jones, Micah Genzlinger, and Greg Lamoreaux

Modification of Meeting Agenda:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Motion made to by Estey and seconded by Marcus to accept the October 7, 2021 minutes and the minutes from the November 30, 2021 special meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

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

There are a couple of Fire Marshall positions that are open. The Central Office of the Division of Fire Safety has relocated to DPS Headquarters located at 45 State Drive, Waterbury.

Funding has been approved for a \$50,000 capital request for a study on repairing the shooting range in Pittsford and the other portion is to for a feasibility study on how to utilize and repair the Main Police Academy Building in Pittsford. This will be a catalyst for future projects on the campus in Pittsford.

The USAR team has secured money to purchase swift water assets.

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The Government Operations committee is still discussing the creation of the agency of Public Safety versus the Department of Public Safety.

A lot of the legislative committee meetings are still being held virtually. The Director encourages people to attend the committee meetings and review any past testimony, which is available on the legislature's YouTube page.

Report from the Interim Chief of Training: Michael Skaza

Chief Lynch has departed from the position but has stayed on as a lead instructor. Introduction of Micah Genzlinger who has joined the Fire Academy as a full-time Training Coordinator.

Pro Board accreditation was approved and accepted. The Pro Board favored the VFA's certification operations so well that Michael Skaza was asked to deliver workshops as a presenter at the Annual Pro Board Conference and share Vermont's processes with other training academies from around the world.

There is an open Administrative Assistant position, interviews are scheduled for the next two weeks.

There are instructor candidates in the hiring process and five were interviewed yesterday.

Programs are underway and with the change of the delivery of the combined programs. 12 students tested out at the completion of Firefighter I and four were added for the Firefighter II portion in Hartland bringing the total to 29 students. In the Williston program five students tested out at the Firefighter I level and 13 students were added to the Firefighter II portion bringing the total to 35.

15 students finished the Brattleboro Firefighter II program and we expect two additional students from that program will test out and certify with the Hartland FFI/II program.

The Fire Officer program is underway with 18 students and is being delivered in a hybrid format.

Firefighter I Live Fire days have been split into two days instead of one long 12 hour day. This allows for instructors to spend more time with students and focus on important skills. The feedback from instructors has been positive.

Last year there was a strong request from Franklin County for a program however one was not awarded. The Fire Academy has made good on the promise that was made to support their local training efforts. They have been running a local training course where they are delivering what is important to them out of the Firefighter I curriculum. The Academy has supported that by helping them secure curriculum materials and helping them to purchase textbooks. The Academy has also supported them with the delivery of a PPE/SCBA module and are planning a Hazardous Materials program for them as well as some other stand alones which will help to prepare their students to challenge the Firefighter I exam.

National Fire Academy Direct deliveries have been successful, four out of the six two-day deliveries have met the student minimums and will be held.

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The Academy partnered with the Propane Gas Association of New England to deliver four 4-hour Propane Emergency Awareness courses. There are 37 students registered for the upcoming course in Lyndonville. There are future deliveries scheduled for Chester, Underhill/Jericho, and the Vermont Fire Academy.

There is a lot of work going on in program development. An Ice Water Technician Train the Trainer course will be offered in March and be followed by a full course delivery. This is a new course for the Fire Academy and a new level of technical rescue training that was requested by the stakeholders and identified by our working group as a priority.

The Vehicle Rescue Operations course development is still underway. A new standard was released which the Academy will be working off. This should be completed in mid-May.

The Rope Rescue Operations program is being updated and there is a plan to deliver two programs in Spring and Summer of 2022.

Fire Instructor I needs to be brought into compliance with the newest edition of NFPA 1041. Once that is done, the Fire Academy will begin exploring the addition of Levels II and III.

At the last Council meeting Chief Lynch mentioned that course requests were on hold until Spring. Short-limited courses or ones that require limited resources may be awarded.

The East Cottage renovation is substantially complete and the dorms are being used. Two-day course attendees were offered use of the dorms as well as the Fire Officer students.

Alex Northern asked about the process to reserve the dorms. Ben Whalen, the site coordinator, is in charge of coordinating the dorms.

The Academy is working with the Governance Committee on establishing a fee schedule. At this time, though there is no cost for lodging provided to students enrolled in Fire Academy courses or programs.

Work is underway in the Acadis software application for the Academy's training management system. The Academy has used the application for the first time for testing as pilot. Eventually there will be a public facing portal where instructors and students can log in and access courses and programs, transcripts, scheduling for instructors. This will be great for the Fire Academy and be beneficial to students.

Four full-time staff members attended the North American Fire Training Directors Technology Symposium, which was held at the Connecticut Fire Academy. Staff was able to network with vendors and other Fire Academy trainers and see the latest developments in training equipment from a technology standpoint.

Four instructors will be attending the UL Fire Safety Research Institute Fire Dynamics Boot Camp Train the Trainer, also at the Connecticut Fire Academy. This training looks at the latest fire dynamics research and everything that has been learned by the UL Research surrounding fire dynamics.

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the February 10, 2022 Meeting**

A meeting is going to be scheduled with the certification testing committee. This committee is under the Council. This meeting is to address improvements to the certification testing process.

Dan Whipple joined the meeting as Bailey logs off.

Report from the Council Chair:

None

Committees:

Certification Testing Committee (Skaza) – No report

Governance Committee (Desrochers) – In 2015 the legislature mandated the Governance Committee be created to create one voice in capital projects for the entire campus. There is also a legislative safety sub-committee that is made up of all the users of the facility. The biggest initiative currently is to get the East Cottage upgraded and support the current study funded by the capital bill.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

Standard Operating Guidelines:

The Fire Academy is seeking endorsement of the East Cottage SOG. The SOG addresses who can use it, how to request it, what is available during a stay, and the check-in/out procedure, and what to do during an emergency.

On page 8 in the middle of the page change the spelling of emergency's to read emergencies.

Motion to endorse the East Cottage SOG with the spelling change suggestion made by Lund, seconded by Marcus. Motion passes unanimously.

The Course and Program Minimum and Maximum SOG revision was sent out previously and there is no discussion.

Motion to endorse the revision to the Course and Program minimum and maximum SOG made Estey and seconded by Northern. Motion passes unanimously.

Coalition Report:

The coalition has had a meeting and discussed the recruitment and retention issues. There was also discussion on changes to the cancer bill.

Vermont Career Chiefs: (Northern)

Is sitting in for Collette. There was a question about the New England Association of Fire Chiefs conference and the training and educational opportunities. No one on the Council has information about it.

Vermont State Firefighters Association: (Estey)

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the February 10, 2022 Meeting**

Brad Carrier is the new President, William Elwell is the 1st Vice, and Craig Bowman is the 2nd Vice, Bob Schlachter is the Treasurer, and Kevin Goodhue is the Secretary. Work is underway on the Cadet Academy which will be held this summer. The Convention is August 12, 13, and 14 in Bennington.

Vermont Fire Chiefs: (Bothfield)

Absent

Professional Firefighters of Vermont: (Corbin)

No Report

Agency of Natural Resources: (Lund)

Forest Parks has been asked to participate in the upcoming visit of the Masedonians, which is being coordinated by the National Guard. They want to discuss floods, earthquakes, and wildfires.

Twin State Regional Fire School has asked ANR to teach a Wildland class at their Regional Fire School this year.

\$94,000 worth of wildland gear has been ordered and is being organized through the grant program.

A virtual Forest Fire Warden meeting/training will be held on April 6. Firefighters who are seeking to meet their 24 hours of recertification can get credit by attending this training.

The Infrastructure and Jobs Act that was signed into law will allow some money to trickle down. There was one billion dollars awarded. In order to be eligible for this grant, municipalities have to have a roofing ordinance that meets NFPA or ICC standards. Lars does not believe there are any such ordinance in the East and suspects that the money will all go to the West. There is conversation that single-family owner-occupied homes are not regulated. The Director asks Lars to send him and email so he can look at it from a National level.

Department of Education: (Evans)

Absent

Department of Health: (Dame)

COVID numbers are coming down however hospitalization is going up. The DOH is moving into endemic phase.

DOH is holding a virtual conference on the weekend of March 16. They are working on speakers for the weekend.

DOH is working on hosting a bridge course that would transition Certified Fire Instructors to EMS Instructor Coordinators.

Department of Labor: (Whipple/Thibault)

**Vermont Fire Service Training Council
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VOSHA has been in the headlines for their emergency temporary standard for employers that employ more than 100 employees. In August of 2021 VOSHA adopted an emergency temporary standard for health care facilities which is what the most recent one modeled. They are now working on Pandemic standard, or a communicable disease standard that will be permanent. It will take features of the emergency temporary standard.

OSHA intends to adopt a heat related standard that is related to outside and inside work sites. This is open to comment now. They are concerned about climate change. The Fire Responder standard is in limbo but is in the regulatory process.

Vermont Domestic Insurance: (Miles)

Absent

General Public: (Marcus)

Thanks the Academy for their work through the pandemic and Michael Skaza for stepping in.

UVM Rescue will be celebrating 50 years of service in April. The first ambulance was purchased in the summer of 1972. The student/volunteer service is much appreciated.

The Chairperson asks Greg Lamoreaux if he has anything to add. Greg has no comment for the meeting and will be working with the Fire Academy on his needs. He mentions that he may need to request a special meeting of the Council in the future if need be. Greg mentions that he was one of the participants of the Fire Officer who was able to use the East Cottage and mentions that the dorms were very nice.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 10:00 am and the location will be in the EOC at DPS Headquarters in Waterbury.

Lund makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Estey. Motion passes unanimously.

VERMONT FIRE ACADEMY
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Title: Make Up Process

Section: Course Conduct

Section Number: 6.8

Council Approval: N/A

Council Endorsement: October 8, 2020

Effective Date: November 1, 2020

Approved By: Peter J. Lynch

Revised Date: March 4, 2022

Purpose: To Identify the Make-Up process for students enrolled in a Vermont Fire Academy program or course.

Definitions:

Guideline:

1. This procedure applies to student absences due to reasonable or unavoidable causes such as personal illness, family illness, must work situations, and full-scale emergency responses.
2. Students participating in a Vermont Fire Academy Program are restricted to a two-time use of these absences at the discretion of the Lead Instructor. These include FFI, FFII, Fire Officer, Fire Instructor, and Fire Inspector.
 - a) Students participating in a stand-alone Hazardous Materials Operation Program are limited to the one-time use of this make-up option.
3. The preferred method for a student to make up a planned or unplanned absence from a curriculum lecture, or practical is to attend the same chapter lecture, or practical at another scheduled Vermont Fire Academy program location.
 - a) The Lead Instructor shall request in writing to the VFA Chief of Training that a special make-up session for cognitive and psychomotor skills be held at the VFA if no other location or online option exists.

- b) This policy shall not be used for Pumping Apparatus Driver Operator, Aerial Apparatus Driver Operator, or any course offered by the National Fire Academy. 100% participation is required for the above curriculums to include both cognitive and psychomotor skills for a student to be eligible to test for certification or receive a certificate of attendance.
4. Students may be allowed to take the lecture online if the option is available. If the online lecture is chosen, the Lead Instructor shall verify with the student what work will need to be completed.
5. VFA Lead Instructors may choose to record the classroom presentation and share this with the students via an online platform. This method only applies to the cognitive portion of the program.
6. The Lead Instructor or Instructor in charge shall provide the student with a Make-Up form, the student shall have the make-up form filled out by the proper instructor at the make-up location and return the completed form to the Lead Instructor or Instructor in charge of the students enrolled program.
7. After a student utilizes all make-up opportunities, a Vermont Fire Academy Training Coordinator or designee will contact the student via phone, and email to inquire what the students' intention is moving forward. The student will be reminded of the make-up and attendance policy. The student will be allowed to continue with the program and receive credit towards certification on completed chapters within a program in an allowed time frame.
8. Any student that has not completed all program material at the conclusion of the program will not be eligible to participate in the certification exam.

Reference:

1. Program session Make-Up form
2. Student Materials Reimbursement

VERMONT FIRE ACADEMY
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Title: Recertification

Section: Certification

Section Number: 7.2

Council Approval: March 28, 2017

Council Endorsement: N/A

Effective Date: April 1, 2017

Approved By: Peter J. Lynch

Updated: March 15, 2022

Purpose: To verify all certified Vermont Firefighters have completed the required annual fire service training which is established by the Vermont Fire Service Council to maintain a Vermont Fire Service certification.

Definitions:

Annual: Fiscal year starting July 1st an ending June 30th

Guideline:

1. All Vermont Fire Chiefs or Training Officers are required to report the annual training hours of all certified firefighters in their department. The Vermont Fire Service Training Council requires:
 - a. 24 hours, which include:
 - i. Complete a hazardous materials refresher to maintain the current level of Hazardous Materials Certification.
 - ii. Complete a CPR-AED course/refresher to maintain a valid American Heart Association or equivalent CPR-AED card.
 - iii. Complete necessary SCBA training to maintain competency in respirator operation, donning, and use.
 - iv. Additional training is at the discretion of the Chief and/or Training Officer, and should be subjects that are commensurate with the duties and

responsibilities of the current level of certification that is held. This shall be consistent with Council curriculum, knowledge and skill requirements of applicable professional qualification standard, and have an emphasis on structural firefighting.

- b. All Vermont Fire Chiefs or Training Officers will be required to complete a Recertification Verification Form provided by the Vermont Fire Academy by June 30 of each year.
2. Firefighters may be granted an extension if they are members of the national guard, state guard, or reserve component and were activated or deployed in accordance with 20 V.S.A. § 368.
 - a. An extension of the period of active certification through the duration of and up to 60 days following the person's return from activation or deployment, provided that maintenance of active certification is required by the military during the time of such activation or deployment. In order to qualify for the extension, the person shall:
 - i. Notify the agency of his or her activation or deployment at any time prior to the scheduled expiration of the current certification; and
 - ii. Certify that the circumstances of the activation or deployment impede good faith efforts to make timely application for renewal of the license or certification.
3. A reasonable opportunity to meet the terms or conditions of certification following the person's return from activation or deployment if military service in any way interferes with a good faith effort to complete a term or condition of certification, regardless of whether the military requires the person to maintain the certification during the time of activation or deployment.
 - a. A person shall be granted a 6 month extension for every 24 hours of continued training that is due, beginning on their end date of activation or deployment.
 - b. In order to receive an extension, the person shall have held a current firefighter certification at their time of activation or deployment.

Reference:

1. Council Rules and Polices
2. Vermont Statutes Title 20: Internal Security and Public Safety
3. NFPA 1001, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Firefighters

VERMONT FIRE ACADEMY

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Title: Return to Physical Activity after a Medical Event

Section: Safety

Section Number: 4.1

Council Approval: N/A

Council Endorsement: N/A

Effective Date: November 1, 2017,

Approved By: Peter J. Lynch

Purpose: To Define when Vermont Fire Academy students and personnel shall return to Vermont Fire Academy functions after a medical event.

Definitions:

Illness: Illness that inhibits participation in two or more consecutive Fire Academy events while participating in Vermont Fire Academy functions.

Guideline:

1. Vermont Fire Academy students and personnel who have been injured, have a medical procedure, or illness where the injury, procedure, or illness are severe enough to inhibit basic bodily function and required medical treatment shall provide to the Vermont Fire Academy Site Coordinator a signed doctor's note indicating their allowed level of activity before returning to any function at any level of participation.
 - a. Vermont Fire Academy students and personnel shall only participate in Vermont Fire Academy functions to the level at which the signing doctor states in their note.
 - i. If a doctor's note is vague, or more information is required, students and personnel shall not be allowed to participate in any function beyond their current limitations until all information is clear and concise.
 - b. Vermont Fire Academy students and personnel who have been cleared to participate in the classroom setting only shall provide a second doctors note stating they can return to physical duty prior to participating in any physical capacity.

- i. If the original doctors note states specific dates at which a Vermont Fire Academy student or personnel can return to certain levels of activity, only one note shall be required as long as a date is given stating when the individual can return to full physical duty.

Reference: