

Vermont Fire Service Training Council
Minutes of the September 26, 2016 Meeting

The meeting was held at the Division Fire of Fire Safety Central Office in Berlin and called to order by Chairperson Corbin at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL:

Organization Representatives

Vermont Career Chiefs Association	Troy Ruggles, Vice-Chairperson
Secretary of Education	Alexander Northern (designee)
Vermont Fire Chiefs Association	Wendall Mansfield
Commissioner of the Department of 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	Vacant
Commissioner of the Department of Labor	Dan Whipple (designee)
Vermont Domestic Insurance	Jeff Pryce
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, F. Tom Estey, Mrs. Mansfield

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mansfield and seconded by Northern to accept the previous meeting minutes as written. PASSED.

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

The Division of Fire Safety rules were submitted to LCAR and the effective dates of the new Codes will be October 10, 2016. The Division adopted the 2015 NFPA standards and the 2015 Building Code. There is a six-month service-ability clause in the adoption of the rules.

Two studies are underway 1) Regulating internet based lodging and 2) the Secretary of State is trying to take over the Division's licensing programs. If the Secretary of State takes the licensing funds away from the Division it would be devastating.

The new Chief of Training, Peter Lynch, was introduced and welcomed by the Director.

A heatstroke prevention initiative is underway. Public Safety wants to come out with a department wide policy that takes care of everyone. Public Safety wants to be a catalyst in an awareness campaign that carries into other state agencies and the private sector. There was talk

about reaching out to the Health, Transportation, and Fish and Wildlife Departments to assist with the initiative.

No bills were carried over into the current legislative session that pertain to the fire service and Desrochers is not sure if Ken Morton will bring the Blue Light Bill back up again this session since the bill was defeated last year.

The Division is level funded and unable to fill positions.

There has been a press release on the PFOA and PFOS in the water storage tank at the Academy. There is a plan in place with the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS) and the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to empty the tank, filter the water, clean the tank, refill the tank, and then the Academy will be on a monitoring schedule. The detectable contaminant may be coming out of the sludge in the bottom of the tank. There is no contamination in any private wells surrounding the Academy that have been tested. ANR will be doing a site inspection to try to figure out where the product is coming from.

Report from the Chief of Training: Peter Lynch

Lynch thanked the staff, especially Michael Skaza for keeping the Fire Academy moving forward even in the absence of the Chief of Training throughout the summer. The Academy is undergoing a tremendous change right now.

An individual has been chose for the open Site Coordinator position but the Academy cannot announce who the individual is at this time. An email will be sent within the next month with that announcement.

The Chief of Training believes that listening to what different departments, both volunteer and career, and organizations within the State have to say is a very important part of his new position.

The Chief of Training is first going to clearly understand the Academy and what everyone else in the Fire Service population is in need of, then take the very strong foundation that the Academy already has and massage it to move forward. The Chief of Training is going to focus on creating Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's) so that the Academy is being consistent and delivering the same message across the board.

The new Chief of Training encourages people to contact the Fire Academy with anything that they would like to see changed. You can contact Peter Lynch either via email or by cell phone at any time at (802)579-6059. Michael Skaza can be contacted in Peter Lynch's absence.

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 target finish date is May of 2017.

PFOA's were in the older style of AFFF so BGS tested the water in the tanks at the Fire Academy. PFOA's were found at a greater level than the State would accept but less than the Federal accepted level. There is nothing today that the Fire Academy is using that would create the hazard again. The tank was cleaned, water removed, tank is filling and will be sampled the week of the September 26th. A sample from the concrete on the pad needs to be tested to finish the process.

Every five years the Academy has to apply for reaccreditation with the Pro Board. Last year the Fire Academy applied for a one-year extension which was granted so the application is due by December 31, 2016. A staff member from Pro Board visited and reviewed the Academy's original application for reaccreditation and minor changes will need to be made to some of the Academy's processes. Once the application has been accepted by the Pro Board, they will schedule a time to send a team to review the actual practices that the Academy uses. The Pro Board team may contact some of the Council members. Once the team visit has been completed the team will go back and sit in front of the Pro Board committee and vouch for the Academy's policies and procedures. There may be a three-week period where Vermont will appear as though they are not accredited however the Pro Board will approve our accreditation retroactive to December 31, 2016.

The Academy has to focus on reaccreditation right now and then look at curriculum development.

Northern asked a question regarding disability and testing. The explanation was that if a student has a qualifying disability, they can be afforded additional time or other assistance as long as it doesn't distract from proving that they met the job performance requirements or possess the knowledge base according to the standard. The student needs to bring the request to the Lead Instructor who then handles the situation.

The Chief of Training asked that if organizations or counties have meetings and would like to invite him as he would gladly attend.

Michael Skaza discussed course development and the status of courses. The Rapid Intervention Crew course is in development. All equipment and a trailer has been purchased and all props have been constructed. Curriculum review/improvements need to be focused on next. Flammable Gas Control needs revisions to include natural gas. PADO and AADO are out of compliance with the standard so they are not currently being offered. The reason these courses are not up to date is because of resource issues at the Academy. Right now the Academy needs to focus on reaccreditation and then getting courses up to date.

At the last Council Meeting, the Council voted to use the VFIS Traffic Incident Management program, which the Academy will use in this fiscal year. The Academy is now revisiting the TIM's course taught by the Vermont State Police.

Terry Farr discusses the handout on student numbers and courses in regards to this year's Firefighter I, II and I/II. Two courses failed to meet the 15 student minimum by the orientation

date therefore they were cancelled. The handout reflects student numbers after orientation not the registered number for orientation.

The Academy trained 27 instructors to teach the Photovoltaic course. The initiative for this course was a collaboration between the Fire Academy, Clean Energy States Alliance, and the Department of Public Service. They funded the Train the Trainer at \$5,000 and an additional \$7,500 was ear marked for 15 course deliveries that will take place before September 30, 2016. The Academy has delivered 13 classes to date with another scheduled for September 27th in Middlebury. The Academy will have satisfied the grant by delivering 14 courses to an estimated 532 students. All courses were organized and registered during a very busy time at the Academy. The course was very well received because solar panels are popping up everywhere and because the course focuses on awareness. The course will stay in the Academy course catalog and they will try to deliver more in the near future after some adjustments have been made to the course.

The Academy has cleaned up a back log of stand-alone courses.

The Academy is going to establish an annual schedule for Fire Officer and Instructor and has committed to that. Going forward the Academy will offer two Fire Instructor courses per year; this year the Instructor courses will be in Bristol and Chittenden County. Going forward there will be one in the South and one in the North. One will be held in fall, this year it starts on October 25th in Bristol and the other will start in January, this year it will start on January 11th in Chittenden county.

Fire Instructor and Fire Officer applications will be accepted using a priority registration process because of the different reasons students choose to take the course and the limited course size.

The Fire Officer I/II will be offered once a year. It will alternate between the north and south each year. This year it will be in Chittenden County and will begin in April.

Statute and Review Committee:

The Committee is going to try meet again in the beginning of November with Bob Patterson so he can guide the committee through the legislative process. The committee wants to see what other states do in regards to recertification. The Council will have a chance to comment on the document before it starts to the legislative process which will take an additional five to six months.

Unfinished business:

Al Barber has stepped down as the VSFA representative on the Council. The VSFA has asked Tom Estey to be the new VSFA representative on the Council. The Chief of Training is working on his appointment paperwork.

The Fire Inspector course has been finished and about half of the students completed the program. The practicum phase had a deadline and it was very difficult for several of the students to finish by the deadline. Because this delivery was a pilot, the practicum deadline was extended to make accommodations for those who were struggling. Most likely, everyone who is going to

finish has done so by now. One of the issues with the practicum phase was that there were a fair number of students that were working in jurisdictions that “were really slow” with the projects that they needed for the course. All students were offered the chance to work with the Division of Fire Safety staff to accomplish those projects however only a couple have done that.

Modern Fire Behavior practical will not be offered in Firefighter II this year since logistics have been a challenge. If Firefighter II or Firefighter I/II courses want to submit a request for Modern Fire Behavior they would be considered. In the past students have not signed up to for the Modern Fire Behavior class when the course was offered.

New Business:

More discussion of the heat exposure initiative and how important it is. Recognition and treatment is critical.

Department of Education (Northern):

The Fire Science program has started; there are 12 students enrolled. There have been two changes to the curriculum. A MOU has been signed with the Fire Marshal’s office. The Fire Marshall’s office will provide students with an externship in their public education program. Students will be out in the field at events and talking about Fire Safety. The tactics class and the Firefighter I class were combined at VTC. Three hours have been added to the VTC Firefighter I class.

VT Coalition of Fire and Rescue Association: Desrochers

The coalition is working on rewriting their by-laws. A new president will be elected at their October meeting. The coalition will have a legislative meeting similar to the one that they held last year in the Cedar room in Montpelier.

VT Career Chiefs Report (Ruggles):

The spring conference planning is underway. Career chiefs are honored and proud to have Peter Lynch appointed as the Chief of Training.

VSFA Report: No report

VT Fire Chiefs Association Report (Wendall Mansfield): No Report

Professional Firefighters of Vermont Association (Corbin):

Welcomed Peter Lynch

Agency of Natural Resources Report (Lund):

Act 71 was passed, however, by January 1, 2017 the agency needs to come up with a reimbursement plan. There was another LODD, Justin Beebe. ANR assisted with the Cadet Academy in August. Lund is working on revising the Wildland programs which may result in part of Wildland being in Firefighter I and part being in Firefighter II.

Department of Health (Bell):

The Department of Health was asked to submit a report on licensing as well. EMS rule making will be reaching out to PFFV, Career Chiefs, VSFA, and volunteer chiefs with the latest revisions for comments. The EMS office wants to finalize the process by the holidays. The department just hired Dan Batsie, a Paramedic/Firefighter from Portland, Maine. He also was a Deputy Chief in Yarmouth, Maine and a Director of Education of Atlantic Partners of EMS in Maine. He will be the new EMS Chief.

Department of Labor (Whipple):

During Vigilant Guard there were several heat monitors available.

Insurance Company (Pryce): No Report

General Public (Marcus):

Asked if Tier 2 fees go to the Vermont Fire Academy. Desrochers explained that Tier 2 funding goes to the Haz Mat team and some may go to the LEPC's.

Any other Business:

Elections will need to held at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be at the Vermont Fire Academy in Pittsford, on Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 10:00 am.

A motion was made by Lund and seconded by Mansfield to adjourn the meeting. PASSED.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Pomainville

Jessica Pomainville
Administrative Services Coordinator