

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 25, 2021**

**Commission Members Present:**

Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Karen St. Germain	Governor's Appointee
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Matt Lee	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
William Parker	Louisiana State Firemen's Association
Ken Himel	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Brandon Davis	Governor's Appointee
Bryan Adams	Governor's Appointee

**Commission Members Absent:**

Brian Lindberg	Louisiana State Firemen's Association (phone attendance)
Martin Latino	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association

**In Attendance:**

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Christine Earnheart	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Ken Fowler	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Don Wallis	SFM
T.K. Devall	FETI
Michael Donahue	FETI
Miranda Meynard	FETI
Samantha Burton	FETI
Dustin Kleinpeter	FETI
Erin St. Pierre	OSFM
Nick Palmer	LSU
Ken Fontenot	FETI

**QUORUM PRESENT**

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission was called to order by Mr. Chad Major. Invocation was performed. Pledge was performed as well. Mr. Major called the roll and announced that a quorum was present. The meeting began.

Adoption on the minutes from the meeting held on January 19<sup>th</sup> was waived due to corrections needing to be made. Motion was made by Mr. Butch Browning and Mr. Bryan Adams seconded the motion. No objections were voiced. The minutes were done by an automated system and there were many errors that needed to be cleaned up per Mr. Major.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Chief's Report**

Mr. Fowler presented the report. He stated that he did not have much to update on since the last meeting. They were still offering regional classes and trying to schedule as Covid allowed. The Zoom classes were still very popular, and they had heard great feedback from the students. The Rapid Intervention program would be held May 24-28. This was a train the trainer class type so that they could get the instructors up to speed and hopefully be ready to offer the first class by late summer.

There had been positive results for the Instructor 3 class but since it was a pilot, there were items noticed that needed to be fixed. The hope was to deliver it once a year in the northern and southern part of the state. As well, they were hoping to have all classes and activities made up that had been postponed due to the recent weather.

Mr. Major asked if there were any other questions regarding the chief's report. None were voiced.

This concluded the presentation of the chief's report.

**Certification Report**

This report was not addressed. The certification committee had not been able to meet due to Covid so the report was due to be presented after a meeting could take place.

There was some discussion regarding a situation with an out of state individual who was trying to transfer his certification to Louisiana. Ms. Earnheart clarified that the situation was being worked out. Everything that the individual had from South Carolina was being used to give his certification here. The only thing he would need to do was just take the actual test and he was aware of what needed to be done. The reciprocity was only for firefighters from out of state.

Mr. Major asked if there were any other questions regarding the certification report. None were voiced.

This concluded the presentation of the certification report.

**Financial Report**

Ms. Ramezan presented the financial report. As of January 31, 2021, there was not really anything out of the ordinary with the exception of one expense that had been incurred. They had purchased a Mod X addition on the multi-story, or the burn rooms and they had to have that structure inspected every 5 years by an outside party. The inspection cost them \$9,664, but they did get some minor repairs completed while the inspection was being performed. There were some more labor-intensive repairs that needed to be done but the structure overall was in really good condition. The cost of the recommended repairs in the inspection report came to \$19,000. They had worked with a company and issued the purchase order a few days ago to get the repairs moving and the burn room back in great shape.

She then presented their current project list which was attached in the board packets. Ms. Kathe Jones spoke about the AFG that was submitted for this year and the list of items that had been in that submission.

Mr. Major asked if there were any other questions regarding the financial/budget report. None were voiced.

This concluded the presentation of the financial/ budget report.

**Chairman's Report**

Mr. Major presented his report. He began by saying that some of the committees had been able to meet but others had not. His goal was to get those up and running. As well, the legislative season was approaching, and he felt like they would have four sessions this year.

He asked if any of the sub-committees would like to present a report.

**Finance committee** – They had been able to have two meetings. They did have some questions for the administration, but they had been able to get all their information together. They wanted to be able to show the commission what they were paying for and not paying for and where they could get the best prices and money return.

No other sub-committees presented an update.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 15 at 10 am.

This concluded the presentation of the chairman's report.

**Old Business**

Mr. Major stated there were some questions regarding a particular piece of legislation. There was some confusion regarding what part the commission played in employing individuals.

Ms. St. Pierre gave an explanation to the commission. She explained that the intent behind the employment portion of the legislation was to allow for the commission to be the entity that would vet and set forth who would be voted on by the LSU board to be hired.

Mr. Donahue gave a statement from Mr. Decuir since he was unable to be there in person. Mr. Donahue was adamant that the staff at FETI had not been going alone on this and making up rules as they went along. Since Mr. Decuir was their chief legal counsel, he had been advising them through this whole process to date. His advice on this was the following in brief. The commission would provide advice, guidance and recommendations specific to section B, subset 2, employment of management and other directors. Mr. Decuir then asked FETI to go above and beyond what was actually listed in the brief which they had done.

Mr. Major stated that there might be a misinterpretation involved. He had definitely heard Mr. Decuir say that the commission would not be doing the firing and hiring but would be able to have input. There was some concern among the group regarding the commission being able to have input and be able to vet candidates for positions. There was also discussion regarding part-time instructors and that the Commission was not interested in the hiring process for them.

Mr. Browning commented that his concern was not so much about filling vacant positions but the creation of positions and that they actually meet the present needs. Sometimes it was best to re-evaluate training needs for the present time and see if the position could be cross-trained and combined. Mr. Donahue stated that all three positions under discussion were not new but replacing existing vacancies.

After discussion, it was decided that at the next meeting they would conduct a meet and greet with the final candidates and conduct a Zoom meeting for them if they could not be present. Ms. St. Pierre added further her assessment of the disconnect regarding the hiring process. The disconnect here was whether the board made the recommendation of the person that they wanted hired which would go before the LSU board or was it just the recommendation and a person within FETI that said the recommendation was good but there was a different candidate that was better, and that person would be the one going before the LSU board for hiring. The board felt that it would have been good for Mr. Decuir to be present at the meeting for this discussion.

No action was taken. This concluded the presentation of old business.

### **New Business**

Mr. Major asked if there was any new business to present.

Mr. Donahue had a few things to mention for informational purposes. He stated that the engineering had been approved for the relocation of the FETI entrance to Ben Hur. Currently, the project was waiting on East Baton Rouge City Parish to complete some work on Ben Hur so that the entrance/exit could be put up. There were no FETI funds being used on this project.

He also informed the commission about the opportunity to partner with the Harvard Medical School in conjunction with the National Fall and Firefighter foundation to do a study concerning recruit firefighter lifestyle intervention. There were other state recruit academies involved as well. Again, there were no FETI funds being used for this and it would strictly be on a volunteer basis. They were only in the pre-award phase, but if the grant was approved then they would move toward a cooperative agreement.

Lastly, he stated that Ms. Kathe Jones was setting up an advisory committee which would consist of her stakeholders in 9 governmental agencies or private industries. It would just be an avenue to exchange stakeholder information so that potentially someone could have another set of eyes and ears to provide the commission an opportunity in an environment where they did not work every day. This was in the early stages. He did extend to the board the request for any recommendations for committee members for this panel of stakeholders.

Next, Mr. Bryan Adams expressed his concern with the fact that the fire service and FETI seemed to be doing things the same way they had for the past 40 years. He stated that the firefighters of today wanted something new. He was on the commission to make a difference and he was there for the next generation. Because of this he desired to make a motion so they could have some discussion.

Motion was made by Mr. Bryan Adams that the chairman of the commission notify the president of LSU that they would be requesting LSU FETI to be moved to the Office of Digital and Continuing Education effective immediately. Because of the due diligence on the finance committee, they had researched, vetted and found the best place that was felt they could work as a family and continue the relationship to do what was best for the firefighters of the state. Mr. Browning seconded the motion pending discussion.

This topic was discussed. Mr. Browning gave a history of where FETI was placed in the academic arena for LSU. He felt that the relationship between the chancellor and the president's office was not what it once was and if they could get that back, then they would solve many concerns. He felt it was a smart move for FETI and would give them notoriety.

The general consensus was that it would be a great move because FETI would have a greater voice.

Motion was restated for the commission. No objections were voiced.

**MOTION PASSED.**

Motion was made by Mr. Browning to elect Chief Dan Wallis as an interim administrator for the commission. His duties would be to be present and active at any and all activities of FETI and the commission, gather information of all activities, positions and finances, evaluate programs, training delivery and facility usage, continue to report to the chairman and commission members and fulfill any requests made by the commission members or sub-committees. Mr. Bryan Adams seconded the motion.

This topic was discussed. Mr. Browning stated that out of all the discussion that they had had, it was clear that the commission needed someone there working with the staff and gathering information. He did not feel like they were going to accomplish anything with having meetings as they currently did and not ever meeting with the management. The goal was to improve communication and leadership. Chief Wallis gave a brief introduction of himself to the commission and meeting attendees.

Mr. Major asked if there were any more questions or objections. None were voiced.

**MOTION PASSED.**

Motion was made by Mr. Bryan Adams to direct the commission administrator, Mr. Wallace, to begin a study of potentially certifying regional training facilities across the state as one of his first assignments. Mr. seconded the motion.


This topic was discussed at length. No objections were voiced.


**MOTION PASSED.**

This concluded the presentation of new business.

Motion to adjourn was entertained by Mr. Major. Motion was made by Mr. Major to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded. No objections were voiced.

Meeting was adjourned.

  
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Approved by: Chad Major

  
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Date:

