

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting
February Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2020**

Commission Members Present:

Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Charlie Metcalf	Louisiana State Firemen's Association
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Brian Lindberg	Louisiana State Firemen's Association

Commission Members Absent:

Karen St. Germain	Governor's Appointee
Ken Himel	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Martin Latino	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association

In Attendance:

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Christine Earnheart	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Ken Fowler	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Mark Treadway	SFM
Crystal Bowman	FETI
Chris Vidrine	FETI
Kenn Fontenot	
Dan Wallis	SFM
Erin St. Pierre	SFM

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.

Mr. Major entertained a motion to adopt the minutes from the meeting held in December 2019. Motion was made by Mr. Browning to adopt the minutes and Mr. Metcalf seconded the motion. No discussion was made. No opposition was noted.

MOTION PASSED.

Chief's Report

Mr. Fowler presented the report. He began by stating that they had a new prop which would enhance their ability to do some rapid intervention classes. At the recent classed it was used in, there was good turnout and great feedback given. He added that the flashover prop that has been used for quite some time was on its last leg. Some repairs were made to get it through the rest of the burn season, but it

would need to be pulled out of service after that due to safety concerns. There were details included in the commission packets which outlined the mechanism in place to replace the flashover. Hopefully, they would be able to move forward with that soon.

He gave some updates on the Recruit Academy. They had moved Hazmat Awareness to week 2 since there were issues with some recruits not passing the test for it. Moving it to week 2 alleviated the issue of departments losing their reimbursement if a recruit did not pass the test.

He updated the board on the Jefferson Parish class offering issue. After meeting with them recently, he stated that they had been offered as many classes as he felt they could logistically support. There were still some chiefs and departments that were not completely satisfied with the outcome, but the stats showed that 11 departments attended the drills with the end result being 12 classes, 36 hours, and 299 students. Based on those numbers, he felt that they were definitely reaching the fire service population in Jefferson Parish. The 11 departments that participated were also the same ones that were requesting the night classes in addition to what was being received. He had tried to explain to the chiefs that simple 2-minute drill and PPE classes could be done internally by designated training officers but for larger and specialty classes, they could definitely accommodate and support that.

He updated the board on their class offering statistics. In municipal, they had offered 1,861 classes with 29,441 student contact hours in 2019. They were continuing to see an increase.

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

Ms. Earnheart presented the certification report. She stated that she and Ms. Ramezan had attended the Pro-Board conference at the end of January and had received their certificate of re-accreditation. They had come through their site visit with Pro-Board which meant that they were good for another 5 years. The next step would be IFSAC who would be there at the end of March for their site visit.

The certification committee had met February 11 there at LSU. She went over several items that were discussed at the meeting. Mr. Latino would be retiring soon so the committee had voted for a replacement for him. His replacement would be Dominic Bourgeois, chief of training for St. Tammany #12. They still had an opening for their industrial representative. A meet and greet would be done in April and would be voted on at that time.

Some tests had been updated and refreshed so as to keep in line with new textbooks and updated standards. Tests being updated were Firefighter 1 and 2, Instructor 1, 2, and 3 and the ARFF exam. Updates had to be completed by November.

They were adding the process to start Trench Rescue certification to their list. A class would be taught in October.

They were currently compiling a list of people that were interested in becoming a lead evaluator so she asked that any interested individuals be directed to contact them so they could be added.

Their next quarterly certification meeting was for April 14.

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. She stated that the balance sheets for December and January were included in the packets. There were not any special expenses. They had finished up their equipment show in January and financials were included on the report. There had been a profit of around \$10,000. They were looking to do some classroom upgrades with the proceeds.

Mr. Metcalf had some questions about a portion of the financial report. Ms. Jones stated that the expenses related to section 18 were purchases of items for Pine Country including a washer extractor, electric pump stimulator, and bunker gear.

Mr. Major asked if there were any other questions regarding the financial report. None were voiced. This concluded the presentation of the financial report.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Major presented his report. He updated the board on different legislation pieces. One of the reps was considering dropping a piece of legislation to count volunteers as 1 for 1 instead of the current 3 for 1. This may seem like a good plan but at the end of the day the insurance was only going to adjust for what it would cost them in the long run. He stated that they did sit on the advisory council for PIAL and at the last meeting, the council decided to allow for volunteers to stand as 2 for 1 if they signed in at the station and if they were responding from the station then they would be counted as a 1 for 1. However, the decision was not going to be unilateral across the board to change the current status. No matter what, ultimately, it was going to be everyone's bill to pay and it would hurt the fire service overall in the long run. Some discussion ensued regarding this topic.

He moved on to state that the state supplemental pay bill was introduced as well as the cancer bill.

The next meeting date was set for March 26, 2020.

No other matters were addressed. This concluded the presentation of the chairman's report.

Old Business

Mr. Major stated that he had spoken to Mr. Russell DiSalvo the other day and the survey had been vetted and were to meet and it would be disseminated to the masses then.

He also stated that the fire council had met, and many things had been discussed. The discussion had come up regarding what the rambling had been in the fire service about FETI and what was the resolution. He gave a little history on how FETI started and its initial purpose. The current opinion was that the commission was not in control of the decisions being made and that their input was not being asked for or taken into consideration when it was given. It was felt that the Louisiana Fire Service was not charting its own course but was being given pre-determined matter.

The result of the fire council meeting was to articulate and create legislation that would give the advisory council more authority. The bill would give the Commission more authority to make decisions concerning the direction the fire service was going. Basically, the bill would give the Commission the

ability to not only advise but have more governing power. Mr. Donahue asked what financial implication and budgetary abilities the legislation would include. Mr. Major clarified that the budget would have to be approved by the commission; however, it would have to operate within the means of the budget. Mr. Browning stated that industrial is what it is today because of the municipal program. He stated that in the past, the profits of industrial use to find their way back into the municipal programs. He wasn't sure if they still do, but they should. Mr. Donahue asked if there would be any human resource implications such as hiring, firing and the setting of salaries. Mr. Browning stated that those implications were already in the current by-laws and none of it would change with the new legislative action. Mr. Browning added that the new legislative piece would allow business to continue as it was and would add a governing piece. It would allow the board to actual make recommendations and decisions instead of just hearing about decisions after they were already made.

Mr. Donahue commented that he had done some historical review and had determined that there had been 5 recommendations over the past 8 years and all of the recommendations had been accepted and put in place. His concern in the discussion was if they had an advisory commission that did not provide advice or when advice was provided, it was accepted 100% of the time, then it was hard for him to ask them what they should do next day-to-day. He felt that it was their responsibility to reach out to their constituents to find out what the issues were instead of them reaching out to the commission and waiting around for them to solve things. He referred to the current situation with Jefferson Parish and added that they had brought items to the commission when they felt it was critical to have the fire service input in the decisions.

Mr. Lindberg stated that there had been communication regarding the fire service needs. It may not have just come through at the meetings, but there had been plenty of correspondence of many types.

There was discussion regarding the effects on FETI and how it would be run if this bill was passed. One of the major issues discussed was the lack on consistent communication and input given by the commission not being heeded. Mr. Major felt that changing the current model would make things better. If done correctly, it would take any heat from staff and put it on the members of the commission themselves. Any issues or needs would go through the commission members who in turn would bring to the next meeting to be vetted. The commission members at the meeting would then give the staff direction on how to handle it. If the issue could not be resolved, then the commission would need to be able to provide the reasons for that. The commission would not necessarily be involved in day to day operations, but they would be more knowledgeable. The current process that was happening was not working. Restructuring the model was vital to the present and future. It needed to be set up in a way that whoever sat on the commission in the future would have this model and guidelines to follow.

This concluded the presentation of old business.

New Business

Mr. Major asked if there was any new business to present. No new business was addressed.

Motion to adjourn was entertained by Mr. Major. Motion was made by Mr. Romero to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Major seconded the motion. No objections were voiced. Meeting was adjourned.

Approved by: Chad Major

Date: