

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
October 9, 2014**

**Commission Members Present:**

Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Martin Latino	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Charlie Metcalf	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
Donald Milligan	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
James Woods	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana (called-in)
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana (called-in)

**In Attendance:**

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Merrick Tessiv	St. Tammany Parish Fire District #4
Donald Bock	LFCA
Robert P. Benoit	Lafayette Fire Department
Raymond Ledoux	Church Point Volunteer Fire Department
Devin Dedon	Lafourche Fire District #3
Kully Griffin	Lafourche Fire District #3
Myles Rouse	Lafourche Fire District #3
James Montez	Lafourche Fire District #3
Jim Cooper	Ascension Parish FPD #3
Adam Cline	LFCA President
Mike Labruzzo	David Crockett Fire Department
Richard Barker, Jr.	HUFC #2
Jacques Picou	LFCA
Ken Himel	Chief, Bayou Cane Fire Department
Russell DiSalvo Jr	Coteau / LFCA

[Recording began after meeting started]

**Director's Report**

Mr. Casey announced that there will be a CAC meeting next Wednesday in Lafayette. They are starting to go through the question banks and do some revisions, mainly where they are seeing errors or things that are not worded as clearly as they could be. They are also evaluating some poor-performing items. Mr. Casey went on to explain that the NFPA standards have rolled and it is just time for maintenance, so they are working through those.

FETI was awarded the AFG funding in the ninth round, so they did get the funding for the two mobile props they requested. One is a big, class A structural prop, which will give them a lot of flexibility. It has a crank-up second floor window and wall to let them do a lot of the evolutions and ventilation. The class B has a B fuel sedan and allows them to do pans and different bleak type props. FETI is progressing with the purchasing of those items. The B prop is at purchasing right now and they should hear back in the

next week about that one. The A is about a week behind the B. That should be going out soon too. The A prop has a lot of different manufacturers that can make it. The B prop, after talking to a lot of folks who have them, there were a lot of very negative comments made about a couple of the vendors that they are trying to avoid. They will see how it goes.

Mr. Casey also stated that he met with the North American Fire Training directors two weeks ago and were able to ask them about who had what props and what was working well. They got some good feedback on that.

They were funded \$316,000 for the 2 mobile props. Both of them have surprisingly short delivery times. Once they are bid and the bids are awarded, they should be delivered within 90 to 120 days, and it actually might be quicker depending on what else is going on, so that is a good thing.

Chad Major inquired about the other trucks and transports FETI had applied for recently.

Mr. Casey replied that FETI had applied for 2 transports, but at the time they didn't have guidelines drawn up for states. FETI was awarded \$6,000 toward updating their trucks. It makes the cost \$6,000 less per truck. Originally they were talking with the vendors to see if they could do an F750 and pull a 30-foot class A prop and not trip the CDL, but it has come back that it will trip the CDL. Since they are going to trip the CDL, there is no price difference between the 30 and 40. They were going to have to do all sorts of special stuff to lighten up the 30. Therefore, FETI has decided to go with the standard 40. They will just buy one truck to pull the class B prop and will use their existing tow vehicle for the bigger 40-footer.

Mr. Casey moved onto structural analysis. He spoke with representative St. Germain earlier in the day and she will be talking to FETI's campus person, Ken Cortay, to make sure that LSU has received all of the required documents to go to committee and request an emergency appropriation of approximately \$500,000. That will not cover all of the repairs, but LSU FETI will cover the difference. There are a couple of different ideas on how it can be done the most economically. By far, the least expensive will be to put an exterior addition on the existing prop and repair the existing prop so they are structurally sound. They can use that for the stairs, hallways, and that sort of thing and then add 2 attached, external burn rooms.

What appears to be the least expensive and is the most common method being used in North America right now, is a concrete-slab-concrete-column construction that looks just like a parking garage with block walls. The block walls are somewhat sacrificial. The burn rooms would be lined. In terms of timing, we have to wait to make sure it goes through the committee. A question was raised about which committee it would go through, and they concluded that it was probably the inter-emergency board that the emergency capital outlay would go to. Per Michael Donahue, the shortfall will be paid by FETI.

Mr. Casey continued and said that once gets it through committee, they can move ahead and get the architects lined up. LSU would want to use the engineering firm that did the analysis. They are the largest and most common one in the US and Canada right now, so they have the strongest pedigree for doing this.

Chad Major raised a question about how much of a shortfall FETI would have to cover. Mr. Casey responded with:

“Worst case is \$250,000, but one of the engineering firms thinks it could be \$75,000 less than that, maybe a little bit more. They said the key is going to be the floor. They need to repair or redo a beam in there, but the original pricing was done to bring it up to a burn room status. If we don’t bring it up to a burn room status it will be less expensive. Also, one of the involved engineers really does not feel the entire floor needs to be replaced, but in good faith they have to give the worst case. He said if they don’t have to replace the whole floor, just the beam and only that one section that is the most severely damaged, that will bring the price down significantly.”

James Woods asked questions about the addition and repairs to the prop. Specifically, he wanted to know whether the funding would bring the building back to burn status, what the building would be made of, and its size.

Mr. Casey responded by saying that the existing building would not be brought to burn status. The repairs will bring the existing building to structural soundness and add a section toward the current dorms that will include a hallway, 2 burn rooms on one floor, and another one below it.

Butch Browning clarified that we are building a masonry building.

This will be a concrete addition. It is the length of the current, 3-story portion, which should be 30 feet. It lines up, because one of the two back windows will become a doorway on one floor where a small hallway goes into two separate burn rooms, which is nice because it gives them a hallway exercise, which FETI does not have now. The other one just opens up into a bigger burn room, so they will have 3 separate burn rooms. The building will have exterior direct access, interior access, window access. It should provide a little more flexibility than the previous building. FETI had a really nice building and the only portion that is bad is just one part of one floor, but unfortunately it is load bearing.

Michael Donahue asked if they could burn on the first and third floors after the structural repairs were done. Mr. Casey responded that it could not be done without lining it, and they cannot line the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> floors because of the weight limit. It would be over the weight bearing capability of the building.

The architects really feel that with this repair and a few repairs for some maintenance issues, FETI should be able to easily get 50 years out of the new building, and 25 or 30 years out of the existing building, and that was probably a conservative estimate.

Butch Browning indicated that he agreed this was a more cost-effective way to do it. Mr. Browning also said that he thought it was a smart way to do it. Keeping the fire all on one side.

Mr. Casey stated that they are allowed right now [to conduct] stealth on the third floor. FETI can do things like fire behavior burns, or very minor burns in that small shielded crib. It puts a bit of heat out, but if you stood up right next to it, you would be fine. You are not going to do any damage to your reflective decals, much less yourself, so FETI is still using it for that.

FETI does have another prop outside that they have built since the committee was last there. It is a temporary prop. It is not going to last a very long time since it is a shipping container. FETI is still having good, aggressive class A fires of a pretty consequential size.

Mr. Casey skipped to Item 6 - the Halifax prop. FETI has been getting great feedback on that. FETI has been getting more and more fire departments asking to come out and do that, because, as one of the

captain's said, "you don't get to see a flashover, when we get there it's already happened, so to see it in a fully furnished room develop from a small fire and go into a full size flash over." He said that it was really very educational, very visual, and you could see it better. One of the comments from the firefighters that had been around for a while seeing it, said that "you read it in a book, you might see it in a video, but when you get to see it live and in color and you get to move around and be able to see it from the outside... it really comes to home in understanding how that works." It goes right up to flashover, even though it's open on one wall. It's surprising. People have been very happy with it.

Mr. Casey moved on to item 8. FETI had a recruit academy users' group meeting for the first time in a very long time. They had excellent feedback and great participation. There are 34 fire departments that FETI rarely does academy for and the vast majority were present. The participants made a couple requests of FETI and they were also advised that the class has not been "re-costed" in a very long time. Mr. Casey said the participants were all on board and understood that there will be a price increase for the next budget year.

One concern that was actually addressed in the class before last is that the participants are getting a lot more fire fighting time. This last class we tried out something new. The orientation that was normally held on the first Monday was instead held on a Tuesday, the week before class starts. This gives the fire departments a few days to grab another air pack if they need, if the PPE fails inspection, which is not common, but it happens, they have time to recoup. If a participant fails the capability test they have another chance to take it on that Thursday before class starts and that way when they come to the first day of class on Monday, they can really hit the ground running. FETI had very good feedback from the chiefs on that.

A discussion began about the current and proposed costs associated with the rookie school. Mr. Donahue replied that the 14 week class currently costs \$2,500 per recruit, \$3,500 for a non-affiliated recruit, and \$5,000 for someone from out-of-state. Those costs do not include an evening meal. With the last class, FETI's real cost was just a little over \$8,000. FETI is probably going to increase the costs to \$4,500 per recruit and \$8,000 for out-of-state participants beginning the next budget year, which would start July 1, 2015 and would in essence be for the Fall recruit class that starts in September.

Mr. Casey indicated that a lot of the chiefs were okay with the increase, but reminded the group that the training includes FF1, FF2, and Driver-Operator. A good point of reference is Texas A&M. To take recruit school there, not including a dormitory or food, the cost is \$10,000. As FETI is doing their pricing, they are comparing themselves mainly to the southern band; if you go up to the northeast it skews it too far.

Louis Romero inquired if we have a set date on when we will raise the tuition to which Dave replied we have not sent the notice out yet but the plan is for the following budget year. We are leaning towards July 1 fiscal year. It would go into effect with the Fall Recruit class that starts in September.

Mr. Casey said that one of the things he asked the departments about, that would allow FETI not to raise the price as much, was if they could separate the driver-operator from the class. However, the majority of the chiefs wanted it to stay and be included during the initial training, and FETI complied. One other request FETI received was for a conjoined EMT class, so that when participants finish the fire school, they would go straight into EMT training. FETI has the costs for that and will provide them to the departments. In response to questions about the EMT class structure and enrollment, Mr. Casey added that it would be an optional, full-time EMT class that they would likely offer only once per year, but

participants in any of the three training classes that year would be allowed to participate. Michael Donahue elaborated that the class will be limited to less than 30 people, but would run back to back with academy. Mr. Casey has gotten authorization from LSU to allow FETI to use the trailer dorm for the class. FETI can't use it any other time. It has to be part of a recruit class, so as long as the EMT course is bumped up right against it, even those that were not coming out of the graduating recruit class, but were within one of the other two classes, they could go back in and bunk and the department could save that hotel cost.

In response to a question about the reason they were limited on when they could use the dormitories, Mr. Donahue answered that there are no open dormitories anywhere at LSU. It probably does not meet some of the existing codes that LSU has for housing. The participants also have to be enrolled in a program that is more than 7 days, because FETI is not authorized to collect fees per day.

Mr. Casey added that even though we'd offer that on the schedule once a year, if you're one of the participating departments and you had somebody who wanted to go through the accelerated program, you can do that, on a space available basis. He was not sure they will get enough participation to do it, but it was one of the requests, so they are going to tell everyone the schedule and what it costs and to please let them know if they want to be scheduled for the January class. They will set it up and see how it flies. Mr. Casey said he had done this at the Florida State fire college and theirs did not fly initially, but they are now doing it two of their three classes per year. They are also hitting a major retirement binge over there, so they may need it more than here at this point. It was a request of a majority of the folks though, so they are going to give it a shot and see how it goes.

Mr. Casey moved onto the new items. Mr. Casey announced that on the upcoming Sunday, FETI will offer the class called "Know Your Smoke: The Dangers of Smoke Exposure". Firefighters are over 100% more likely to get certain kinds of cancer than the general population, so this class goes over a lot of the protection. There are some new studies on how we use our PPE, which seems to be causing us some harm. The class will go over that a little bit, but FETI will follow-up more on that. FETI has over 100 people signed up for the Sunday class, which is funded with grant money. Mr. Casey added that the company that is paying for a lot of the course is paying for lunch too. One of the scarier parts of the class is that they are going to take small pieces and parts of the materials that firefighters see in an average, every day burn, and they are going to burn it with their monitoring equipment and show you where you can have a small 3x3 piece of stuff found in a normal house and hit IDLH levels. The attendees will all get a lot of information on a jump drive that they can take back to their station.

FETI has met with the different associations on current topics and ideas. The main one was the regional one-day schools. They are looking at moving toward a more regional approach with the one-day weekenders and moving them off the campuses, so that it is not a big drive for participants to get to them. The classes would be all over the state. Look for a lot of stuff that can be used for the Firefighter 1 programs. FETI is working with two departments on different ends of the state and they will be the pilot programs. FETI will let the committee know how it goes. Mr. Casey believes it will improve attendance.

Both the maze and survival props became un-roadworthy. They both died of old age. The replacements will be a different configuration. The new maze changes and allows for a lot of different arrangements. The plan is that FETI will do a rotation once and then bring it back to one of the campuses. When they bring it back out it will be in a very different configuration. Purchasing just approved it and said we will be out to bid on the replacements next week.

Dennis O'Neil from the National Fire Academy has requested FETI work with them on a new program. The new program is below the executive fire officer, it is called the managing fire officer program. FETI actually offers two of the four year programs now, and will expand that and put it into a bigger package. The National Fire Academy wants FETI to deliver the executive leadership series, which they already do around the state. The Managing Change class has not been offered much, but they are re-writing it, so FETI is waiting for the new one to come out. Then it is a 2 year program at the NFA and it only requires one research paper. It does not require a bachelor's degree like the executive fire officer and initially, at least not for the first three years, it does not require an AA or an AS, but after that it will. FETI is going to meet with the constituent groups during their meetings and will also talk about it more at the Saturday meeting.

Mr. Casey asked if anyone had any thoughts, questions, or concerns. No replies.

Mr. Casey came to the "Year in Review" portion of the report and indicated that the attendees knew about all of the issues listed in the report. He moved on to discuss the plans for next year.

FETI is trying to expand HotLap use. Mr. Casey believes they have about 1,100 users right now, but they are pushing the instructors to try to get people signed up for that. That's the easiest way for FETI to get the word out about classes, safety, etc.

Mr. Casey reported that FETI is getting good feedback on the newsletter. FETI gets a report each month from Constant Contact that tells them how many times each bulleted item has been opened. The average has been three times higher than the norm for a government or educational newsletter.

FETI is still soliciting ideas for the HotLap. They are going to add one additional interactive item per month on there.

Mr. Casey went on to say that they are getting good feedback on the training guides.

FETI is already working with the local fire departments' trainers and they have completed their instructor workshop. They will send out the date for the trainer workshop soon, but the workshop will be held before the Christmas holiday. They are trying to provide more information for the local firefighter trainers, so they can spend less time getting things prepared and researched. They are trying to give the trainers more pre-prepared materials that they can use. They do not have to use them; it just gives the trainers more tools in their toolbox.

FETI has a meeting coming up in the next few weeks with Jones and Bartlett about the blended learning Fire Officer 1. Mr. Casey believes the new version of Fire Officer 1 will be very popular, because it is truly blended learning with a mentorship.

Mr. Casey described the new version of the course by stating the following:

As of today, FETI is tied for having the shortest training in the United States going toward certification. The longest is 273 hours and FETI is at 40 hours. We are going to try for the first pod class this winter, where FETI will meet online and tell the participants about the class. From there, they will have classes online using the Jones Bartlett platform. They will have the ability to customize it to include any state specific material needed to complete Fire Officer 1. It is not just an online class though. At mid-terms and finals they will meet with their pod, which is made up of one instructor and four other students. The participants will go around the table and discuss scenarios and situations. Everyone is expected to come

in prepared. One of the things FETI has not been able to cover is the local material that is required under the standard. FETI goes over the generics, but this will bring in the task book and allow the participants to work with locals, whoever the fire chief chooses, and go over their department information. By the time they are done, they will have their whole book completed. They will also know everyone in their pod and be able to contact them. They will take 2 trips to the pod, in addition to the live online meetings. The pods are not campus-based; they are wherever the people are. FETI will be soliciting people for the pilot class, but it will probably be February before the pilot comes out. This will be a stronger course, and the people who come out of it will probably do better on the test, and have a better handle on things when they come out.

FETI is looking at doing something similar with Firefighter 1. There are several ways they can do it, including the traditional way. With any of the blended learning courses, they are trying to set it up so the participants will have a mentor to work with within their department. They would have a mentor at the department that FETI would provide training for. The more difficult training aspects, like hose lays and ladder evolutions, would be done in a more formal class setting. FETI is working with their friends in Alabama who are doing something similar.

Two big things come out of the change. First, we are going to do quarterly testing for people who are participating in this method. By quarterly testing, they can break up their test so that as you complete each of the four modules you take the state exam on that module. When you complete all four, you get your state IFSAC certification. There is not one overall final exam. Pro-board approved it already for Alabama. FETI has asked about it as well, and, unofficially they said they did not see any problems with it, but FETI still has to apply.

FETI sent two people to the South Carolina Thermal Imaging School and they came back amazed by the class, so FETI will soon be offering a similar 3-day class. FETI has hired the lead instructor part-time and South Carolina has offered to come down and help do it the first time. The course is very practical, under adverse conditions, and under very realistic conditions. They are going to start by offering the class once per year and see what the response is. South Carolina only does their course once per year and they limit it to 120 people, but they said it fills up fast. If FETI has high demand, they may do one in the north and one in the south.

In terms of the topical seminars, FETI is looking at doing a firefighter survival skills class called "When Things Go Bad". It is a tremendous class and very practical. There is a lot of information that the students can take home to their departments.

One of Mr. Casey's big concerns when he was interviewed was that FETI's instructors were not accredited to do live fire training. Mr. Casey has set a goal to get them all certified within the next year. They have it tentatively planned for April. They had an option of going through two different routes. One route was through the International Society of Fire Service Instructors, but it was going to cost \$550 per person to use the book Mr. Casey wrote and the class he wrote. Mr. Casey has been able to acquire several of their instructors and instructors he has worked with from five different states to teach the pilot classes. IFSAC will accredit the course, so FETI can have their own course. The intent is that they will have it as a three-block course: an adjunct course, a trainer course, and an applied structure course. FETI will offer it internally initially. FETI has to offer it once and see the results, before IFSAC will accredit it. Once that is done, they intend to offer the class at both the Pine Country and FETI campus on a demand basis. Mr. Casey is working with ISFSI to see if they will honor FETI's class to count toward the

ISOT, so that avenue would be available to participants if they go through the program. Several states have adopted the ISFSI.

Butch Browning asked if the committee could get a report every meeting on the classes that were offered, sorted by parish. Mr. Casey replied that they would do that. James Woods said that he would be satisfied with an annual report of the class totals. Donald Milligan stated that he would like at least a quarterly report on class totals.

Mr. Casey added that the new HOTLap would have some important information about new training materials. There is a big, new training portal and there will be FEMA money coming in for HazMat training on things that are very pertinent to Louisiana.

#### Financial Report

Mr. Donahue gave the report on the budget and financials.

Mr. Donahue reviewed the financials on the document labeled "Final" and dated June 30, 2014. FETI's statutorily dedicated collection was \$3,141,000, which was an increase of just over \$67,000 over the prior year. There was a contribution of \$64,000 deposited in the plant account, so our current plant fund is now at \$1.1million and that is going to take a bit of a hit this year. This is going to be a big year for capital, and maintenance and repairs for FETI. FETI is estimating that \$550,000 will be spent to fix things that need to be fixed.

Mr. Donahue provided a short laundry list of some of the expenses that will be incurred this year.

- \$250,000 will be needed for the multi-story. While they are hopeful that the project will cost less than the estimate, the state requires that they turnover the match funds immediately upon the state allocating their portion of the funds. Once all of the expenses have been paid, if there is any balance leftover, it will be returned to FETI.
- The administrative building's roof will undergo asbestos abatement and roof replacement.
- Fuel/Oil Separator 5 year clean out.
- A major electrical upgrade is planned for the recruit academy.
- A new women's dormitory will be put in. It is a portable trailer that can house four females.

For many of the expenses listed, half of the funding is coming from FETI's municipal accounts, and their industrial accounts are paying the other half. However, the electrical upgrade to the recruit academy will be paid 100% by the municipal accounts.

Mr. Browning clarified that the \$1.1million fund, was strictly municipal funds, which led to a discussion about the separation of the municipal and industrial funds and the cost-sharing between them. FETI is trying to rebuild their industrial base, but they have to invest money back into industrial to accomplish that goal. Butch Browning stated that he knows that [municipal] benefited many years ago by making a profit on industrial. He said as we move forward, we have always enjoyed the profit of industrial so we don't have to raise prices. Most of FETI's deliveries are off the main BR campus so once the Industrial program is back to bringing in \$3 million when it was good he would hope that the center which was built for firefighters will see their fund growing. Butch stated that some very valuable training was funded by Industrial in the past. Per Butch, the costs were not shared between Municipal and Industrial in the past. Michael invited anyone to come sit down and take a look at the plan going forward. He further stated that it takes investments from both sides of the business. Otherwise, people don't come

out and spend money resulting in no money and no one benefits. We have developed a fund balance specifically ear-marked to do projects on the Industrial side. James Woods stated that while in the coast guard in 1998 that most of the plants were coming to LSU and by the time he left in 2010 they were going to other training facilities. Donald Milligan stated that we need to better understand how costs are split like with the separator. Michael Donahue explained that FETI has chosen to do their cost-sharing based on revenues, which has been the most advantageous method for the municipal side. The alternative would have been to do it based on the total number of students trained which would have resulted in municipal paying a significant amount more than industrial. The committee would like an overview of the plan for industrial. Butch Browning said that he doesn't want to see two different budgets for municipal and industrial. In the past, Industry trained with FETI with the understanding that their money helps the fire service. Michael Donahue explained that there is one budget and they roll up together. They are divided by the accounts supported by tax dollars and those that are self-generating that are not supported by tax dollars. Michael Donahue asked that the committee members email him the types of information they would like to see in the overview.

Charlie Metcalf raised the question about the difference between the Webster Parish Education Center and the Pine Country Education District. Michael Donahue indicated that there is a state allocation to Webster Parish and they pay for certain things for Pine Country. There is also a direct allocation to Pine Country of \$70,000. The other money goes directly to Webster Parish and they determine how it will be spent at Pine Country and they own the building. Pine Country brought in \$100,000 dollars of revenue this year and we are building industrial props there. Pine Country is about a year away from being 100% self-sufficient, so it can stand on its own. Calumet now does all its training at Pine Country now and have made several donations.

Michael stated that if we build the industrial side up then municipal will definitely benefit.

Loree Ramezan mentioned that FETI used to have a finance sub-committee, so if the committee members are interested in re-establishing that, they can stop by FETI any time to go over the financials. Michael Donahue added that Boyd Westbrook and Kenny Hunts were on the sub-committee. HE explained that the balance sheet can be difficult to review.

Butch Browning made a motion to approve the financial report and it was seconded by Charlie Metcalf.

Butch Browning moved on to the old business of setting meeting dates. Donald Milligan stated that the legislation requires that the committee meet once a month. They were originally scheduling them for the second Thursday of each month at 2:00pm unless there was a fire service conference or meeting and then the meeting would coincide with the meeting/conference. The next meeting was scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. All of the approved meetings are listed on the website and on the Division of Administration's list of Board and Committees.

Donald Milligan asked about when we elect our chairperson. Michael pointed out that the legislation is written so that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson can only serve a one-year term, so they are about a year overdue on electing a new person for each position. Butch Browning asked to put this on the agenda for next meeting.

Butch opened up the meeting to questions from the audience. There were no questions and the meeting was adjourned.

  
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Approved by: Chad Major

12-11-14  
Date: