

## Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting

### Official Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2013

#### Commission Members Present:

Mike Arnold	Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana (Buddha)
Dwayne Thevis	Louisiana State Fire Fighters Association
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal's Office, Committee Co-Chair

#### In Attendance:

Miranda Meynard	FETI
Christine Melancon	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Eddie Tessmer	FETI
Wayne Cruse	FETI
Donald Milligan	LSFA
Chris Harwood	FETI
Ken Fowler	FETI
Chuck Whitmer	Plaquemines Parish Fire
Dave Casey	FETI
TK Devall	FETI
Robert Hale	FETI

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission was called to order. The Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer ensued.

Before taking the roll call, it was noted that both Chairperson St. Germain and Boyd Westbrook, due to surgery, could not attend. Kenny Hunts was not in attendance. A quorum was present, allowing the minutes to become permanent record. A call for the former minutes approval was requested, since Chairperson St. Germain had not signed in it. A motion was placed by Chad Major to approve the minutes, seconded by Louis Romero, and none were opposed. It was so ordered.

#### Budget and Financial Report

Michael Donahue was asked to give the report, and made the following comments to the Committee:

"In your packet you have the financial statement for July and August. You can see where we're projecting a statutory dedicated projection of \$2.95 million which is, I believe, \$200,000 more than the prior year. The biggest expense you see to date is just the accrual of salaries and so things are coming

on; there are no issues. There's a \$49,000 debit to the plant fund for vehicles that we ordered in the last fiscal year that didn't get in. We have three Ford Explorers for regional instructors, and then at one time, for movement of some props for regional vehicles. And that's all we got today. If you notice outside, we have a little drainage issue, so we're just doing a little plumbing outdoors. Other than that – it's solid."

A question was proffered as to the position of the stat debt collections, i.e., whether the collections were on target. Mr. Donahue reiterated that no one in the state knew. The first collection arrives after the first of the year, and therefore no estimate could be taken until February - March. The first official numbers are available on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

In reply to the query "So you haven't got your first check yet?" Mr. Donahue responded, "We get one check a year, and it's always at the end of the year. LSU fronts all the money and then at the end of the year, on May 15<sup>th</sup>, we get a check and it all comes one time. So there's no collections coming in; it's one check, one time."

The information was relayed that there are actually two checks, but LSU gets [the monies ] to the organization in one check. The response from Mr. Donahue was that he would check on that information. A second question that was posed was whether the revenue estimate was still at 3.1, to which Mr. Donahue answered, "It's an even more ridiculous number than before; it's at 3.68."

Meeting with approval of the revenue estimate, Mr. Donahue added, "But in reality, last year it was 3.65 and it came in at 3.12, and so it's always over estimated by close to a half a million dollars, but there's politics involved," noting that any encouragement of funding would be greatly appreciated. If the window [time frame] closes, we lose out; the budget closes out. The critical time is March 15<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup>. Other questions and comments on finance were welcomed. Mr. Major was asked if he approved. Mr. Major agreed that the finances were in great shape, especially since the plant account was over a million dollars; two years ago it was \$49,000. Mr. Major commented, "Absolutely in great shape."

The Chairperson called for a motion to approve the financial statement. Mike Donahue gave the motion to approve the financial statement; Chad Major seconded the motion. None opposed.

#### **Director's Report**

The Chairperson commented as Director, Dave Casey, took the floor that all of the Committee were involved in the process of selection, but it certainly was an honor; the process worked, because a well-qualified person was found, emphasizing, "I told David when I first met him that I know he's capable of doing the job. I certainly hope his vision is fully embraced and he moves forward, because we're definitely in a good place. I think the process was really successful."

The Director was welcomed.

The Director mentioned that the Committee had copies of his remarks, reassuring the attendees, "This first quarter, my intent is to get out this to as many fire departments and training centers and regional associations as possible to get a better feel of what our programs are and our working boys need. We're

getting a lot of feedback, though. We need plenty of response time," but an earlier survey was enough to draw some thoughts from them. The responses were approximately 50 percent. We're trying to move forward to garner more information to see what the needs are.

### HazMat

"One of the first things coming up has caught an awful lot of people off guard. It's a globally harmonized system, and it has its materials. In a nutshell, The US and Canada have adopted a procedure that the rest of the world uses; it's different from what we usually do; we'll create a training program together ... We'll have it up on our website. You can see what the new marketing is already; it's required to have effort, so it will be in place in the summer.

"We will place it on Facebook, so people can download the information; we're going to have a downloading class available for all our classes. It's not a hard thing, but it's different. We may try to get an on-line available, too. Not everyone is using their material, but we will have downloads available for the regions briefly."

The Director was questioned as to when the change would happen. "We're not going to change it; we're not an OSHA state. We will make it our priority one and everything else [comes] after December. It's just a matter of changing." The query came, "You're saying December 1<sup>st</sup>? All markings have to change then? Is there a hybrid?" The reply was, "You'll have both for a while. They all have the new markings. ""

In answer to the question whether the changes being done were being done in the USA, the Director noted "The industry is changing from MSDS to SDS and we're teaching that on the industrial side. That's one of the basic terminologies, over there. It's just a matter of getting used to a new system. What I'm proposing to do is that we'll add it now onto our website. That will be downloaded by the fire departments, to give certified classes. [The resources] are for the local fire department with delivery taught by their local instructors. Initially, we will provide one a month. You don't have to do them. They're just an additional resource the fire departments can use. It's for working with our regionals to see what resources the local fire departments have. Most of it will be a practical type of exercise. There will be a drill that will be easy to use. The way they're all made, you won't have a lot of prep time."

Asked whether the Director thought that was a good use of time, the reply was that they hadn't really talked about it. An item was mentioned to the Director: "I don't know if you've got something planned? I know its frequency is great. Might there be a separate class altogether, dealing with Meth labs? We were used to doing one or two a month, and now we are doing two or three a week. How do we handle it? It's getting to be problematic. We have a good team, so I'm thinking about the rural areas. It's out there; it's growing. That would be tough as a handoff, but that's stuff we can get in there. We've got a two hour program we've been teaching the rural areas. It was taught to us, so maybe we can teach it to them. That would be a good resource."

The Director replied, "Where I've have been living, there's a national forest. People watch 'Breaking Bad' too much. You get a motor home in Orlando and go out to the woods. You can get in trouble so

fast. In the class we had, we sent state police. You just have to train a bunch of people to do it. " The question came, "Can you share a curriculum? Would you be willing to do that and then let our regional people go out? I mean everywhere, every week."

The Director noted, "You don't have a national fire program. That's a problem with a lot of the smaller rural hotels. They don't have neighbors. They are rural hotels. We will be adding them to this. It's not so much what comes up [on the web] as what comes down. We usually leave them up there. So it's always a good resource. You can choose the one you want. You can use it or don't use it. Or you can use it two months later. It's just a tool in the tool shed that we have available."

The Director continued, "One of the things I have heard through meetings with everybody: There is some consternation about our web site, i.e., to be able to access our website for training. Our web site is not the most friendly form; there's no doubt. We are working on it. I think we can see a very substantial change in it. Give us about nine months. It's not a quick thing, hopefully faster, but we are making some changes right now."

"If you went up to the training page before, you had to go several clicks to get down to regional schedules. That's been moved up much higher. You can go right to the training page. It's got three regions and three regional coordinators, with phone numbers, names, and emails. Below it now, you can click on the regional schedule. Two and three are up. One will be up after we have another meeting or two, but that will be [presented] the rest of the year. Several regional managers are out right now talking to their departments in their areas and starting to work on schedule for the first half of next year, too, which leads me into the information that we are working on a couple of new titles that we are bringing to you directly. Possibly next month and the first, and based on talking to our fire departments and seeing what their needs are, we have new classes coming out; we will bring those up. You should expect these in the next couple of months, and so we will have five new classes. These classes are more localized on a certain topic, and will hopefully cause some interest."

The Director went on to say, "The US government grants have not been allocated to fire departments. They would allocate funds to state training agencies. Most states don't really have a training agency, but we are in that capacity. That's not a truly competitive brand; we have to use their expectations."

"During my second interview is, 'What is your vision? What do you see as a need?' One thing is a mobile training props to allow better support out in the field in the local areas, especially for fire fighter training props. So what we are proposing for AFG is that we can go for [several], because we don't have a specific company -- we have four or five companies. We're looking to buy two. We are looking for a pre- structural training class. Let me show you: this is an actual fire prop. A flash over prop is a fire behavior prop. There's a fire in there. The features we were looking at specifically is that you don't have to go searching for rescue. If you do use thermal imaging during the day, people show up really good."

The Director added, "In firefighting skills, there's getting in and out, you get up and down the ladder, entry, you bail out of a window, something's going wrong in there. . . One feature you're looking at is the roof set prop. This manufacturer does it several other ways, so that they actually break through it"

and if you notice carefully, there's a more realistic scenario. Inside, the [capability] depends on which brand you get, and how they insulate it. This one has vertical parts, which are pretty cool and allows a lot of fire flame face. But it's very realistic. It acts real. This is not your gas prop. Nothing really against a gas prop, but this is more realistic ... more smoke. It will have separate rooms in it.

"Well, what we want to do is have two units set differently. Once you're in a training tower a couple of times, you have a pretty good idea of how it is as a training prop; with two more, we can keep it fresher. A feature you don't often see is that you can pull them side by side. So we're doing bigger things; so we'll have a bigger weekend, a much bigger burn. It's more realistic to go through doorways or hallways. It's much more realistic, and we do have enough funding in the AFG to allow us to have funding for two of those with tractors. We feel confident that this is something we could get realistically through the AFG. LSU has to match the grant on a minor scale and we have the funds to do that. Any questions or thoughts on this? Do you think this is a good thing for the fire district?"

The response was that the members thought it was a great thing. The query came, "What's the definition of a state training center? In places like Delgado and people like that...can they get into the pot?" Mr. Donahue answered briefly, "No. It has to be legislatively recognized as the single state agency, and we're the only one that fit the definition. There are actually several states that aren't going to get it."

Mr. Browning noted, "So if legislated, and the states don't have the designated training center, then they wouldn't be able to get the money at all. Wow."

The Director continued, "In some areas, there are more things than one that are authorized. If there's not one, they're not willing to pick it up; they don't want to get into it with men and labor. What's nice and -- due to a lot of work by lobbying troopers is -- you can negotiate. This is new. This is something that has not been offered and [comes] at very short notice in the AFG program."

Mr. Donahue recalled, "It didn't recognize bricks and mortar and things like that at training. That was a problem."

The Director agreed, "It allows you to buy training props. It's such a joke, because this company and a couple of others will sell you a three-story mobile prop within the AFG. To move it, you have to unbolt it. There's a very nice one in the adjacent state. It's a very nice house and they did a really nice job on it. For two years it had wheels on it. The third year they had concrete on it." The question was posed whether the equipment was for mobile props, vehicles, and personal protection.

The response from the Director was, "Actually, I don't think for personal protection. It has to be in direct support for the training mission, and they do not include training aides. We could buy infrastructure; we want to get Fire fighter I classes, but we can't. That's not allowed. But this fits very well with what we need. Some of the classes we're working with will actually use this and be better prepared for the real thing. I expect we can get more info at the NAFTD meeting in Canada and it will be altogether that way. We've got all of 30 days. Some of the new classes we work with will actually work

well with this. We've got our rough specs and we'll be working on our tractor specs in the next couple of weeks. You're not going to see really fancy paperwork.

"The trailer is pretty close to what you see there. Even between the two primary vendors, one is based in Chicago and the other is based in Phoenix, but we will try to have it flexible inside. We can have the temporary one set up and we will deliberately try to use it to see how it holds up. Now one is not insulated. We can't pay for classes. That's not allowed. Maybe we can do some training, but the way ours worked is that it was so stretched. It is better that the firefighters be prepared for the real thing. The trailer is pretty close to what you see there. The other's based in Phoenix. Since it's Insulated like this, we'll very easily get three years out of it. It was being used about every third week. Now we are not insulated. These are gas. It's a plain one [designating equipment]. "Another project is we're looking for is mobile props. We're looking for another mobile prop that we could get to the local training centers. This would be trailer-carried to the fire departments, a paned prop, so we can see how it works. These are gas-controlled; if you look at the upper left, you can see the other control station. This is a canned, operated one, operated off to the side. What we are proposing to do is to buy two controllers, multiple pans like you see. You only need one to operate at a time, but we don't want to get in a position that if something breaks, that we're out of service. So with two controllers we can run multiple pans, so those cans are provided close together. We get a surprisingly realistic canned fire, but it looks like a flammable, liquid fire. With the proper operators, you can stagger the extinguishment, and it looks quite realistic.

"Again, this should be the trailer, it's up to the Regions, and you realize additionally, with one, you're not going to see it that often. And we don't know how it will be funded next year, i.e., what the budget will be, and we don't know what is planned for later years. We think if we can buy these two right now, we can buy more in the years to come. Unfortunately, they don't give us a lot of input on what the fires will be. Once the trailers are on board, we can buy a third. So people can buy more in the following years. I think we're going to be able to do that. The cost of the cars [are] about \$85,000, but we're trying to get multiple pans and see if we need to have multiple controllers. So it will be about \$120,000 with the trailer and you have to be real careful about what you're buying with the trailer – multiple controllers. So we're going to have five pans to move around."

Mr. Browning said, "I guess maybe that's my fault. And maybe that's where we can help. Many times just getting something seems like an accomplishment, but only one is just a token in a lot of cases. Have you started putting together a plan yet of what a region should have, or what resources should be in a region? Maybe that's where we can help, in that each region needs to have this mobile equipment. Maybe we can see that soon. "

The Director returned, "Sure, we've started that, but I didn't want to bring up too much at once. We have these props that we're looking at; Wayne has come up with a very innovative process. I found two other places that have [equipment]. It's a great skill station and it allows you to do half the things you can do on this one trailer. Pretty cool. And we're working toward that, too; that's in the plan. That's what we'd like to look at in our plan. We're not really ready to piece that out yet, but we can be down the road [for] whatever resources there are that are out there.

In agreement, Mr. Browning said, "I won't speak for the crew, but I think you're on target with the field delivery. That's the biggest need -- and maybe complaints -- of the past event, so I would like to see a plan where each region has all the equipment it needs. Let's work towards trying to help -- find that, fund that. I mean, I think that would be pretty exciting." The question was put to the Committee, "Any questions, thoughts?"

The discussion moved to the introduction of new members.

The Director proffered, "I guess we're going in the right direction. These gentlemen are new to us. But first, we have Ken Fowler. Ken comes to us from South Carolina. He's had quite a bit of experience as company officer and trainer; he's been involved in response training and urban search and rescue, and he's had quite a range of experience for 25 years; he's working on his bachelor's and he's here from Region 1. Also from Region 1 is Christopher Harwood. He has a bachelor's degree, and he's ready. They're on staff in Region 1, with a lot of contacts. The Director summed his remarks up with, "And that's my report." Region 1 was identified as the Baton Rouge area and the southernmost. Region 2 was noted to be situated diagonally from Lake Charles to the City of Monroe. Region 3 was located in the northwest corner in pine country.

**Unfinished Business**

Mr. Donahue proffered that the next meeting would be scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Chief's educational symposium, and that while he and Dave would be out of the country in Halifax, Nova Scotia, they were willing to provide whatever support needed, and would still do the financial report.

To the question as to whether that meeting was scheduled in conjunction with them and their training classes, the answer was that they would provide a report.

A motion to postpone the meeting was called. The motion was made and seconded, and none were opposed. The next meeting was scheduled for October 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. in the same location.

The motion was made to adjourn, and was seconded.

Approved: Karen St. Germain Date: 10-29-13