

Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting

Official Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2013

Commission Members Present:

Karen St. Germain	Chair
Mike Arnold	Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Kenny Hunt	Louisiana State Firemen's Association
Donald Milligan	Louisiana State Firemen's Association
Louis Romero	Professional Fire Fighters Association of Louisiana

In Attendance:

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Christine Melancon	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Eddie Pyle	FETI
Eddie Tessmer	FETI
Wayne Cruse	FETI
TK Devall	FETI

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission was called to order. Chairman St. Germain called the roll and announced that with six in a quorum, the meeting was ready to start. There were no minutes, from the last meeting, because there was no quorum.

Chairman's Report

Chair St. Germain introduced the report by announcing, "I would like to put on the record that I would like a subcommittee soon to talk about legislation, whatever we decide to put forward as a commission. We discussed the CDL, so that may be something we need to do. We'll decide later who's available."

The Chair queried as to whether the group has legislation to be done.

Mr. Donahue responded, "I have to check with LSU. Dave has been talking to Karen and Butch about some things."

Chair St. Germain replied, "We need to discuss it. I didn't ask anybody to be prepared today. I just wanted to put it on the radar, so we can file and talk about it early. Next year's going to be open to any type of legislation except fiscal, which means a lot of bills will be filed, and I don't want us to be last."

The Chair continued, "We're planning on making sure that by January we have a whole lot wrapped up for the January board meeting -- that's on January 18th -- so we can finalize everything, i.e., we can know what's going on, we can move on it, and help everybody to do what we need to do. A lot of legislation will be passed. We can decide whatever we need or don't need, and you can take it to the Board. That's the Chairman's Report."

The Chairman called for the Financial Budget Report.

Financial Budget Report

Michael Donahue presented the Financial Report stating, "The data are attached in the packet. There are expenditures to date, but no unusual expenditures. You will see subset categories in there. There was some question about the funding stream for the stat debt, and the information's in here. LSU gets one drop a year, between May and June 15th. All the money comes in at one time. Here's a little flow chart. The self-generated money comes in throughout the year. It looks like this, as seen in the handout. It's as simple as we could make it."

Mr. Donahue further explained, "The homeowners' insurance is paid to insurance companies, who then forward the appropriate receipts to the Department of Insurance, who forwards it to the Treasury, and then we get a check from the Treasury after the books are closed. That would be somewhere between mid-March to the first of June and it's been as late as June 15th. Right now, we are treated differently than a fire district that gets multiple draws. The fire districts draw last year's collections, and we draw the current year's collections. Butch thought there were possibly two. There have been questions from time to time: "How are the collections coming?" I can't answer that question, because until the homeowners start paying their insurance bills, nobody knows. It changes yearly, and for the fire service, it's done on the last of the year, so it's solid -- you know what you're getting. The money that we receive in June will be from the collections that come in with insurance bills, due as of Dec. 31st. There's no account to date that holds any money for us. It's as soon as it comes in, i.e., LSU is reimbursed for all the checks that they have written on behalf of FETI."

To the question, "So you get reimbursed after?" Mr. Donahue replied, "After, that's correct. So the money doesn't go into account; we spend it. When the money comes in, LSU is reimbursed throughout the fiscal year until our expenditure is culminated. LSU bankrolls FETI until the money arrives, and then they pay themselves back."

The question was posed, "What is the 2%? We don't get 2%?" to which Mike Donahue responded, "No - - we get a quarter of 1%."

A second question was presented, "The \$70,000.00, when does that come in?"

Mr. Donahue answered, "That comes in at the same time, and it is 70, 70, and 70. It's 70 to the Webster Parish Education District, 70 to Pine Country, and then 70 comes to us as just a flow-through to go straight to Delgado."

Chairperson St. Germain noted, "I like the flow chart. Are there any other questions? No? Could we have the Director's Report?"

Director's Report

Director Dave Casey detailed, "The first item is our list serv. Our intent is to start that. If you look at either stream, you'll see. We talked about average downloads; the downloads are up. We had an amazing amount of hits in one day. Two organizations I know used these for a long time. They monitor us for kickbacks, to make sure there's no span. One nice thing is that you can forward your data and all of it follows. It's a really nice set-up. It works on your mobile device just fine, but we have different things on there. Also, you can put a tab up on our website, which takes you right to it. There they are: things we've been talking about -- the Power Point, the lesson plan.

Something must be going right, because it sure stirred up some interest. The comments are coming in fast and furious. They're not blessed by EEO; they're not participating, but it's in there, under a five minute brief, just a quick reminder of some things. It's a little lengthy, but it's just one page. After we finished and we were ready to send it out, two more things came in -- one was a class for training officers. Had that arrived two hours later, we would be sending it out next month. If we were obliged to wait until the next edition, we would have no openings. We have to be brief, so when you see something come in, you'll know that's something that should be checked.

"We're happy the list serv is up. We're getting a good response. People seem to like it. A lot of folks don't know quite a lot that's occurring. That may be that there's nothing on an email list, because it's stuck in somebody's desk or whatever. We can send out those notices. We're not going to drive anybody crazy with too much, but when a posting goes over, it is significant and of value. So that's that. Any questions?"

Director Casey recognized Kenny Hunts, saying "Kenny, I appreciate your comments."

Mr. Hunts replied, "I appreciate the hard work. The GHS system is getting here quickly, and I've got a number of people asking me about it. The resources are there. We just need to make it happen. That thing's taken off; I like that."

Director Casey responded, "Ken Fowler, one of our new instructors, put that together. He wound up with too much material for one week, so we have a second part coming out as well. He did a really nice job cutting through the placards. The new class he made is a really simple class to teach. It seems a lot smoother to audit, so we'll have that up, too. While we're talking about the web, know that we're still working on next year's schedule. We have a few parishes we need to contact to give these men just what they want. Everything that's happening right now is on the website. We are telling departments to opt in with anything they do. Check and see what the neighbors are doing. Before, a department couldn't do it—now, they can. If you have people who need a specific class or whatever's going on in your department, let us know – we need help with that. Everything that's going on now is not just a big PR class. We have a lot of activity; if we can be more collaborative, then we'll have everything. You'll find the scope of activity is now a lot easier to view."

Director Casey continued, "The AFG was held up while the government was shut down, but they came back to do what they could very quickly; we know this, because we've been working all along to meet expectations. We met with several vendors; we met with one today by Webex. We've met with three others so far, in order to get their input. We found a big pickup truck about 30 ft. long, a class A. The truck puts a clothesline in and out of the window in order to pull the victim out. It's got a fire room in there, so the truck allows a lot of flexibility in the arrangement of things. It has a ladder, which provides a lot of opportunities to get in and out of a window on the second floor. It's got a fire rope in there. You

can make a re-configurative wall inside it, so you can get to the fire, or we can move a door to the other side.

“We’ll have that wrapped up as far as the proposals. We’re going to get them from our meetings. Next week they will return with a budgetary quote, so I hope you all know we have this down pat. It’s why we applied to AFG for Monday. The feds have allocated up to \$500,000 for our state. It’s not competitive; we’re not competing against another agency for our state. We have to go through the grand process, so we have real insight in that process. They’re giving us just \$500,000, but thankfully, we have someone. EMG Grand is our project. It took a big bite. The training process was the main impetus this year, according to the web center.

The query was immediate: “This is our main focus, but we’re not allowed?”

The Director responded, “And we don’t have six people that are lined up, yet. So we can see how that goes. We have to go ahead and do it. You just can’t submit the request, because they won’t let you. We’ll see what happens. We have a bus rescue coming up. We received emails from the municipal schools, and there was a good response. They liked it.

Finishing his report, the Director explained, “We’ve got a lot of classes. We sent out a lot of emails. We haven’t determined the cause of the low attendance, especially when looking at how high the evaluations were. I don’t know what happened. If anything, the biggest thing we received was negativism, i.e., we need to do more. We’re actually doing quite a few right now. We did the extrication off campus. but getting the attendance? I don’t know whether it’s because of the season, but it could be because it’s October, football, -- the holidays.”

Chairperson St. Germain offered, “It could be all that. It could also be that it’s just starting to roll and people are beginning to believe that now there are things happening and things they can participate in with a schedule. It won’t take long to -- excuse the expression -- ‘catch fire.’”

The Director noted, “I’m hoping the list serv will get a better notice. It will be on your phone. We received the emails from the municipal schools with a very good response. We tried to send out a few notices, but we haven’t determined as yet why there was a lower attendance. We had talked a little bit two meetings ago that the FDA council was making some very significant changes to HASMAT requirements. They basically wanted to make a brand new firefighter HASMAT tax, which would just about double Firefighter One. We belong to the North American Fire Training Directors in all the states. The acronym really intervened on this. Say the right words and applied the right pressure, and they mostly backed down tremendously. If anything, the pendulum’s swung the other way. Make sure you check it on the website and spend your two cents. We’ll see what happens.

The Director continued, “They spoke the language a little bit on the terminology on BNA appropriate. So it looks like it will be OK. It’s still worthwhile to drop a line on the website and they will post it. Not knowing our rules of procedure here, we can take a very short field trip across the street after we adjourn the meeting. Our building has issues. It has some damage that appears to be significant and needs to be further looked into. For the age of the building, we have done incredibly well. but I think we have two issues. We have a structural beam up overhead that I’m going to show you that may be structurally compromised. On the third floor, there were some products placed there over a few years, where some channels were cut and some conduits were put into there and now it’s where the conduit has fallen, and the concrete is failing. You’re actually on the second floor, but it’s the ceiling of the second, as well as the floor of the third. What I recommend is to have a structural engineer come out

here every few years for a structural analysis. I can't find any record of that. It may have been done. I just can't find it and the folks that are here now don't know where the record might be located."

"So, we're going to have that done. Our structural engineers from LSU will come out. I thought it was very important that we get somebody that specializes in this. If you have a regular structural engineer look at it, they going to be more conservative, because they don't know. They will be more worried or may actually have us spend more money than we really need to spend. Right now, I have an email out to all the North American Fire Training Directors, asking who they would recommend. You not going to believe it -- out of all of them, only two names came back. They give you five days for reviews. They might give you three days for recommendations. There is one I've worked with couple of times. We've given out information over campus; we've got an RFP draft advertising. Whichever one they pick places us in good shape. The company will get a full analysis for the building and tell us what we have to do and if we should continue to use the second floor. That said, the company will come back, and tell us what needs to be done. Both companies are in Virginia, but these both have Louisiana tickets. I thought that was interesting. They work here in state, so at least we'll have a local company.

"The company will perform a structural analysis before pouring the concrete, fill in the holes, and then we'll get a report. It will be in the new year; I suspect that come March, we'll have a really good idea and until then, we'll put out orders. A part of the problem is where people have been burning. Some departments have been burning on the floor. You can't do that. I'll put out notes that you can't do that. We have specific cribs for training with the electrocribs set. We are mitigating as far as we can in order to limit further damage. We'll do the fires, no problem; we can work with the commanders, the leading instructors; we can do all that. We will have two officers here to watch over the facilities. One is a safety officer, for no other reason than to watch over the troops. When you are done with other business and ready, we can take a quick walk over there. Black on black is really hard to see. Part of it is old damage, but some of it is new."

One attendee commented that during the interview process, one instructor had provided a tour, noting that there were just metal walls with stuff flaking off the ceiling, and that you could see iron where you shouldn't see iron.

Mr. Donahue added, "The bad news is everywhere you see something flake, there is reinforcement rebar, so steam and rust are following back to where you can't see it; the implications are that it's like the tip of the iceberg."

Director Casey responded, "The bad news is no matter what they come back with is not cheap."

Mr. Donahue estimated, "Hundreds and thousands of dollars."

Chair St. Germain concluded, "And we're going to have a discussion on that. OK. The next thing on the agenda is Old Business."

Old Business

An attendee addressed Chairman St. Germain, "Without your knowledge, we've had some meetings, and we discussed moving this commission meeting to a bi-monthly meeting, instead of a monthly one. Our meetings are getting shorter, and we have less business. Everybody's got a lot to do, especially this time of year. From our discussions, we think that it would be easier for those who travel long distances and who want to continue to have meetings here, to meet every other month. Then we could gauge it: If we need more, then we can move it back. If we need to meet less, than we can go to quarterly, or

whatever we need to do. We're at a point now, where the amount of business that comes to us is reduced, and it's time to make a change."

The Chair responded, "I think that's obvious, and I'm glad you had those discussions. I know that going forward, if we need to have a meeting quickly for some reason, then that's not a problem, either."

Michael Donahue cautioned that although he could provide copies, wouldn't the members probably need to address the matter legislatively, noting: "The way the legislation is written, it does say a monthly meeting is required."

The Chair replied, "There's no per diem on this Board. We can fix it statutorily, and we will not have a problem. We could start January to have the meetings bi-monthly and then call special meetings within a seven-day notice. We could do that."

Mr. Donahue queried, "Does that require legislation? Can the boards and commissions do that?"

The Chair replied, "We can go ahead and do that for now, and then we'll have that intent on our minutes, and then we can figure out from there; we don't have to do it legislatively."

Michael Donahue made a motion to place the intent on the minutes.

The Chair noted, "I think that the legislature members are going to be really happy that we have gotten through the last few years of meetings and really accomplished a lot."

A comment came in response to the discussion: "I would hope that if we have to do any legislation or any verbiage, that we put in there that this commission decides on its own the amount of time that's needed for meetings, so we can adjust ourselves, and we don't have to come back and do something else."

Chair St. Germain responded, "Since all of you are firemen except Michael and I, I think that we can structure the legislation to where it centers around you, and that's what it's supposed to do -- so it's accomplished a great deal thus far. I would say between your regular duties and holidays and all the parades you have to watch over, we'll go for the second Thursday in January. Would that be too complicated?"

After some discussion, it was decided that 1:00 p.m. on January 9th would be the next meeting.

The members agreed that at the next meeting on February 6th, the time could be changed if needed.

Mr. Donahue reminded, "We are now required to post all our meeting and agendas on a governmental website. It's on "Boards and Commissions," so if you ever want to go back and look something up, it's all posted right there -- after Karen signs off on it, of course."

The Chair remarked, "Any other issues?"

The query came that the members had talked about being able to phone in for meetings, and what the possibilities might be for that.

Mr. Donahue responded, "It's certainly acceptable to phone in for meetings."

The Chair agreed, "So that when we have these issues where somebody can't make it, they can still be in it, because of logistics."

Michael Donahue offered, "We just need to know ahead of time, because we have to set up. This room doesn't have a good speaker capability. When Loree gets back, we can determine whether or not we can move the equipment and set something up; if we need to, we can use speaker phones. The conference room has it, and we could spend the money in here. It shouldn't be but \$1000 to \$1500 bucks to wire something so people can do that."

The consensus of the attendees was that the ability to call by phone and be accounted present at the meeting would serve as a good addition to future meetings.

Michael Donahue cautioned, "And in the event that we don't vote, you can certainly send a delegate any time you want -- but they couldn't vote, since they're not an active member."

The Chair responded, "But they could on the phone," to which Mr. Donahue agreed, "An individual can vote on the phone, yes."

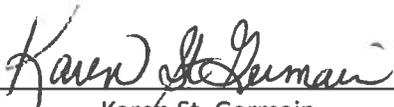
A remark was added that the option would be there for special meetings as well.

Mr. Donahue presented to the members that by January, he would have a proposal and a price to proceed with wiring the meeting room.

Chairperson St. Germain inquired if there were any other discussions. There were none.

The question was posed, "Any objections?"

Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved: 
Karen St. Germain

Date: 1/9/14