

## Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting

### Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2014

#### Commission Members Present:

Mike Arnold	Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Karen St. Germain	Louisiana State Representative, Governor's Appointee
Boyd Westbrook	Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association
Kenny Hunts	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
Donald Milligan	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana

#### In Attendance:

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Christen Melancon	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Eddie Pyle	FETI
Dave Casey	FETI

The meeting was called to order. The members stood to pledge allegiance and for the prayer. The roll of commission members was called and a quorum declared.

Butch Browning called for the Chairman's Report.

#### Chairman's Report

Chairperson St. Germain reported that the biggest issue on the burner was to secure funding for the building on FETI property. There would be two different avenues to take. St. Germain stated that albeit the time was late for capital outlay, FETI is working with LSU to try to get an ecored system in place, so that one person can coordinate the system for LSU. The second part of that would be a discussion about placing that system through IEB (Interim Emergency Board). St. Germain remarked that the task should come through IEB because it is something important to the whole state. FETI has to consider drawing money from another source, so the funding that FETI has is not expended. Since FETI's operations are done for the public, the funding can not be considered a money maker. Chairperson St. Germain asked if there were any other discussion or any suggestions. When there were none, the report concluded.

Financial Report

Mike Donahue opened the financial report by explaining that since November and December of 2013 were cumulative, December would be the focus of the report as follows:

Through the mid year, we have spent approximately one-third or almost 40% of our budgeted allocation, but have encumbered another half a million dollars, similar to what we spent last year, so we're right on track to expend 90% of the funds as we budget. That gives us a little leeway, in the event that our collections aren't what they should be. We will get a really good estimate, approximately on April 15<sup>th</sup>, about what our collections will be. And as soon as I get that, I'll be happy to share.

St. Germain noted that a question was posed during a discussion three weeks ago in the Governor's office, inquiring where the salaries at FETI came from FETI or from LSU.

Mr. Donahue replied that the salaries were 100% FETI. Ms. St. Germain said she would need a list. Mr. Donahue responded that he would be happy to provide a list of every single employee. Mr. Donahue inquired whether they would need specific accounts; although the accounts range across different accounts, yet they were all FETI accounts. Ms. St. Germain responded that such specific information had not been requested. Mr. Donahue also asked whether they needed information on both full time employees and adjunct employees, and that since the adjunct employees were paid on an hourly basis, that list could be provided as well.

Chairperson St. Germain explained that there appeared to be no ulterior motive to the inquiry, and that it was a "where are we at now" question, in order to weigh availability to do more than less, and not to be compared with LSU.

Mr. Donahue replied that on the average and for the same type of jobs, because some jobs were not degree-required, that FETI employees are paid roughly 70% for the same job descriptions at LSU. Mr. Donahue continued, saying he was working to change that figure by having job positions re-rated.

Ms. St. Germain agreed that the Governor's office would be able to know that FETI was not really being paid on the level as LSU employees.

Mr. Donahue added that when the FETI positions were re-rated, that the new figures would be within the existing budget. As a result, FETI was not asking for more money to address that improvement.

Ms. St. Germain indicated the salaries were requested for the benefit of FETI and for no other reason.

A question came Mr. Browning as to whether the debt had been paid down.

Mr. Donahue responded that FETI not only had no debt, but that he was not aware of FETI's ever having debt. Although FETI had obligations for professional services such as trash, there was no bond against FETI anywhere. Mr. Donahue was asked whether the fire truck recently acquired was a lease and he replied that it was bought with cash and that FETI is not allowed to enter into a debt agreement. As a result, there is no debt owed.

A call was made for the Director's Report.

Director's Report

Mr. Dave Casey reported that FETI is getting good feedback on the newsletter. The dorm was set aside for right now, and that they should be able to move forward. Prompted from a member, Mr. Casey clarified that he meant the women's dorm, which is uninhabitable at this time.

In reference to the Multi-Story, we have two vendors that are qualified to do the analysis. I've started working on a Plan B, in case the analysis comes back really bad, just to have a couple of alternatives. They will work to the best of their abilities. Any questions?

Mr. Casey was asked whether he knew what the cost would be, and responded that Mid-Florida Tech in Orlando had a very similar building:

They have about the same engineers and architects our station does, but their building had worse abuse than ours. They had to cut the second and third floors out. They replaced three beams, while FETI is looking at one replacement. Their cost was at \$1.5 million dollars. In FETI's case, we could attach a new burn chamber to the building exterior.

The remark came from Butch Browning that at some point you just abandon what you have and build what you need somewhere else.

Mr. Casey responded that Plan B is used for quality galleries, and that an investment in the old building would be much less expensive than building a whole new one.

Mr. Browning explained that in his opinion:

For a million dollars, you could build a hell of a burn building, modern day. Why wouldn't you do steel? The way you all use it, you could get 15, 20 years [from it], and you probably would want to burn it down and build the building anyway. So you all don't have any money at all, to fix anything, is that where you are now? If the price is half a million dollars, you don't have that to fix it.

Recognizing that FETI didn't have a half million dollars, Mr. Donahue entered the discussion:

What we would end up doing is [that] we would deplete 70% of our emergency resources, and we're back to where we were 18 months ago. So if we had to do it by ourselves, Dave and I have discussed that we would use some modifications. [In other words] we could use it, but wouldn't burn it, and we would burn in pots or chambers outside the building, and then go floor by floor, addressing what we could and hopefully be able to budget. [We could] re-budget, take a little out of training and some other places, and throw about \$250 to 350 thousand a year at it, until we got it fixed. It would be probably a three-to-four-year project, depending on the severity of the engineers' report.

Mr. Browning remarked that his concerns comprised the following:

What I'm afraid of, is [that] with the new engineering standards . . . , you're going to spend a lot of money to get that . . . to a level where somebody's going to have to sign off to burn with the weight of the water in there. Abandoning it may be what you have to do.

Mr. Casey felt that although the new modifications should suffice, everything depended on the Board. With that in mind, FETI was planning in several different directions.

General discussion ensued, noting that the Interim Emergency Board would insist that FETI would have to wait for the next session, that appropriations would be in March, and that the issue would not be addressed until FETI had a plan. As a worst case, FETI could place chambers on the outside as a temporary fix for a few years. Remarks about the building's present condition were that portions of the building were presently out of service, the second floor ceiling is compromised and dangerous, and that there were 18 x 18 inch concrete spaulding areas, six inches deep, that were falling. The consensus was that the costs were largely unknown.

The discussion proceeded to classes for fire training. Mr. Casey described his plans:

We're going to build a fire behavior and furnish the room with dry walls and with donated Goodwill furnishing and other entities. We'll remain outside to see how the fire progresses through the various stages. We'll only have two rooms, so we will have to keep the groups small.

For a forcible entry prop, we will use salvaged doors and windows. Students will get to break an actual window and doors to simulate real life training. Most schools teach that you're going to have fire venting and with this prop the students can experience the venting first hand. So far, these are all very inexpensive and so we're going to internalize. It starts the smoke in the high part of the ceiling. It's very easy, very low tech, and much less likely to burn down than the single story building.

We'll have a little preview at the beginning of each class. Included in the preview, [we practice] planning before the fire, [teaching] to know your capabilities and ventilation. We'll be [contacting] a number of people for their input in approaching fires, [and will have] some fire trainer workshops and some fire workshops for company officers. So we're planning on doing those, using actual instructor training. And that's my report.

Comments were made that the local fire departments were requesting classes, and that FETI is attempting to educate communities via the newsletters. Talking to people was considered to be the most influential approach. A call was made for any old business.

#### Old Business

A discussion was launched to set the place and time for the next meeting. It was decided that the next meeting would be held at the PFFALA meeting in Houma on February 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be no meeting in March and the Commission will meet again in April and decide at that time where they would meet in May. The Chiefs' association meeting will be in April 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>. April 24<sup>th</sup> is a Thursday, and the meeting would be in Lake Charles. The consensus was that it is important to attend all three Chief's Association meetings to represent good communication.

A query was posed as to how well the industrial programs were functioning.

Mr. Donahue replied:

Actually we're very, very good. All of our fixed expenses are covered for the remainder of the year, so from anything that we make, we will put close to 30% on projects and things that need to be done, so we're doing well.

Elaborating, Mr. Donahue noted:

On the industrial side, we projected to do a little over a million dollars between now and June 30<sup>th</sup>, and that's just on the fire brigade. I think Kathe has about \$200,000 bucks scheduled for the rescue program. I think Eddie has another \$30,000 to \$40,000 coming in for medical, and then Hazmat has another additional \$100,000 to \$125,000. So it will be a good year for the revenue.

We're spending more money this year to do address infrastructure projects, and we're dispensing it as we go, but I think conservatively that we should be able to net \$200,000. We're doing at least \$200,000 on capital infrastructure, so we're funding that exclusively out of the self-generating funds.

A call was made for any further old business. Having none, a motion was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn.

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Approved by: Rep. Karen St. Germain

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Date: