

**FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COORDINATING BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION**

**April 4, 2013**

<b>Present:</b>	James Ball	<b>Absent:</b>	David Gorman
	Joseph Bertholic		
	John Chartier		
	James Gumbley		
	Brian Jackvony		
	Scott Kettelle		
	Timothy McLaughlin		
	Jay Petrillo		
	David Sayles		
	Mark St. Pierre		
	Howard Tighe		
	Mark Vincent		
	John Woodard		

Open Session of the Fire Education and Training Coordinating Board was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by Chairperson Kettelle.

The normal agenda was suspended in order to accommodate special guests from the Department of Public Safety, Colonel Steven G. O'Donnell, Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred K. Hill, and Captain Brian K. Casilli. They were invited at our request regarding the decision as to why the Fire Academy Director's position was re-posted.

Lieutenant Colonel Hill explains how different agencies have come under the authority of the Public Safety model back in 2007, and the Colonel was designated as the appointing authority for all public safety agencies. In doing so, a lot of the selection processes and hiring processes have been revamped, but have tried to maintain consistencies with their old process.

It was their understanding that the Director's position process was that the Fire Education and Training Coordinating Board would recommend 3 candidates and by legislation the Fire Marshal was the appointing authority. Again, as of 2007, the Colonel is the appointing authority. The Department of Public Safety's revision of this process is to be transparent and is able to defend such process if challenged. Once the three candidates are recommended, they go on to the oral board process. They have facilitated an oral board process at which time the Marshal or any of the Directors would be on that panel. Once their final recommendation is made, it is then the Colonel's decision. That is how every agency's hiring process is handled within the Department of Public Safety. Transparency is vital.

When DPS received the three names, one of the three pulled out almost immediately and the DPS asked for the fourth person in place and did not know that only these three candidates were recommended. While contacting the other individuals involved, a second individual dropped out, which left only one viable candidate. DPS does not select the last one because he is the last one standing. DPS requires three to vet.

The Director's position has been reposted and the responses have been turned over to Chairperson Kettelle and DPS will expedite the process until we have a new Director in place.

The matter of the legislature piece is explained by Colonel O'Donnell. The process is that if it is fire related and Marshal Chartier feels strongly about it and would like to testify, then it is discussed further between the Colonel and the Governor; and then it moves forward from there. Ultimately, it is the Governor's decision as to whether or not Marshal Chartier can testify on matters. Marshal Chartier is the voice for the Fire Marshal's Office, everything goes through him. Media matters are handled through the Department of Public Safety.

Clarification on RI General Law, 23.28.2.1, Chain of Command under Fire Safety - Fire Education Training & Coordinating Board, to the State Fire Marshal, to the Lt. Colonel, Department of Public Safety.

Guest Ronald N. Gagnon, P.E., Chief, Office of Customer and Technical Assistance, Department of Environmental Management addresses the use of Training Foam at the Exeter Training Facility. Makes reference to the 2008 permit request states in the sixth bullet, "No fire suppression foam is proposed to be used at the Academy," which falls under the hazardous materials and permit condition.

After a tour of the training facility and comparing it with marina requirements under the new EPA water quality rules, marinas are required to collect, contain and treat all wash water. With the system already in place, a 10,000 gallon tank, have the runoff stored and with a 5,000 gallon maximum output from several trainings in a day, have it collected and treated within 24 hours, pump it out and have it offsite in case of rain to prevent any overflow into the sensitive surrounding area, wet lands and aquifer. We need to have a new MSDS sheets with the new technology of the components of today's foam.

The foam is diluted when used. Is there a way to test the runoff to determine if it is hazardous to the surrounding environment? What is the cost for treatment and removal? Total self-contained, closed system would be recommended. It has not been determined who will be supplying the foam for any training on site. Is liquid soap detergent an acceptable replacement for the foam? What is the Town of Exeter's opinion on the use of training foam?

Good neighbor and credibility of the Rhode Island Fire Academy should be held up and the Academy should be up front with our intentions to use training foam and the steps that we are taking to keep the environment clean and safe. We are trying to utilize training foam in the most appropriate and environmentally safe manner. There are other departments in the state who are training with foam and not taking the proper precautions. We need to obtain more information on the MSDS sheets and the newer technology of training foam components; as well as informing Exeter of our intentions.

(Discussion)

**Motion made and approved** to accept the Minutes from last month's meeting.

After an 11 month absence, retired Chief Sayles requested the last six months of minutes to review.

## MARSHAL'S REPORT:

Last Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, met with members of Department of Public Safety and Capitol Projects to go over the review for the engineering proposals for Phase 2 of the Academy. There were only five bidders. We are in the process of completing that final review and the bidders must pass a final score of 55 points on a grading schedule. If you have more than 55 points, you are deemed "qualified" and they will open the financial bid. This is strictly reviewing their proposals and their qualification, not how much they want for the project.

Once you become qualified, then they factor in the pricing and some will begin the de-scoping process and award it. We should have a name for purchasing by May for the engineering part.

There were a lot of different ideas and suggestions other than what RGB had in their conceptual. One company gave an extra 2,000 square feet in the building and we will see if they can produce that with the existing budget. DOA's long-term plan is to turn over all property to the Fire Academy between this existing building and Job Corp. Demolition of the old buildings is to take place starting next month. It was deemed by numerous engineers that it would be more cost effective to demolish and rebuild instead of trying to renovate them. The National Guard wanted to use the building and demolish it and then the Academy would use it as a rumble pile. However, the top of the building is re-enforced steel and they don't have equipment big enough to accomplish it. There is \$3 million in initiatives capitol's budget for demolition of those buildings and grading of the land and plant grass for the time being.

There is still a desire with the DPS to consolidate their municipal police academy with the Fire Academy after Phase 2 is complete. An environmental concern is something that they may face with the Town of Exeter when dealing with the range's lead and noise issues.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Albert Heroux, Training Officer, and I attended an excellent course on Traffic Incident Management conducted by the Federal Highway Administration. It dealt with safe operations on the highway, which included police, fire, EMS, and tow operators and how everyone should work together. They gave us a sample course outline. They will issue certificates from the Department of Transportation. I think it would be an excellent course for the Academy to offer. I am not sure on the procedure going forward to adopt a course.

Historically the course is presented, reviewed and endorsed. You, as the acting Director, you've reviewed it and are in support of it, unless someone here has an objection to it, we can entertain a motion to place that on our calendar with opportunities. It then is a coordination effort between you and Tina.

(Discussion)

The Fire Academy adopted a Strategic (five-year) Plan two years ago and within that plan it calls for expanding to the higher levels in our existing programs. Since that time it has superficially been put in the hands of the program coordinators and there has been no official direction. There are the issues of time and funding for these people to write the programs. This has been a challenge in the past. With a new Director on board, hopefully, some of those initiatives can get off the ground.

(Discussion)

**Motion made and approved** to adopt the Federal Highway Safety Administration's Program into the Academy's curriculum after the Board has had an opportunity to review the course materials at next month's meeting. Chief Gumbley will disseminate the course curriculum to the Board members before next month's meeting.

(Discussion)

P. O. Requests for Instructors' cannot be submitted until the program is completed. There will be a meeting schedule between myself, Tina, Colleen and Captain Casilli on how we can better facilitate the process of instructor payment. Currently it is six weeks before a P. O. has been issued and then another couple of weeks before checks are issued.

(Discussion)

Fire Code Update (3 day class) is demand driven with a minimum of 10 members; contact Scott Caron for more information.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The legislation for Instructor Insurance was submitted to the house leadership, senate leadership and a hearing date is scheduled for April 11th. Paul Valetta notified all interested parties as well as the Fire Marshal.

(Discussion)

Open Enrollment FF-1 & FF-2 surveys to all Fire Chiefs will be sent out shortly. Chief Gumbley requests all survey responses come back to him. Cost of programs discussed.

(Discussion)

**Motion made and approved** to charge students based on the minimum student count per program.

Chief Jackvony and Jay Petrillo will collaborate on Woonsocket's Challenge Process and will report their progress to the Board at next month's meeting.

(Discussion)

Jay Petrillo reports on the Skill Evaluator's Train-the-Trainer program. Twelve instructors were contacted after a review of all RIFA Instructor files to vet the most experienced instructors and it is the hope to have several new skills evaluators trained by the fall. This will be vital when conducting Woonsocket's Challenge Process.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

RI Fire Chiefs Foundation acquired a SAFER Grant (\$975,000) retention and training of volunteer and combined firefighter departments. We are planning on running two Firefighter

Level 1 programs, with a maximum number total of 50 candidates, for the next four years in September. This money will pay for turnout gear, physicals, travel back and forth to the academy, funding for days off work. We would like to have a class lectures held in Albion (25 students) and another in Union (25 students) to cover the northern and southern part of the state. The Fire Chiefs Foundation will be selecting the students and the departments will be paying for their members to attend the program. The Fire Chiefs Foundation will compensate the departments for their turnout gear and other items after their members successfully complete the program.

(Discussion)

At the Rhode Island Instructors' Association meeting a question was brought up about Firefighter Level 2's test bank does not have any Building Construction questions on the exam. Chief John McKenna will obtain some Building Construction questions from the IFSTA Essentials of Firefighting, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition textbook and the Firefighter Level 1's test bank and have those added to the Firefighter Level 2 test bank for future selection on exams.

(Discussion)

Battalion Chief Vieira brought up the point at that same meeting that the textbook IFSTA Essentials of Firefighting – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, with the same book cover, does not necessarily contain the same literature inside; namely, Chapters 21, 22, 23. It was discussed that maybe we could examine, review and consider the possibility of utilizing Jones & Bartlett textbooks in the future. The representative is very willing to meet and provide some free materials.

(Discussion)

Is there any available money in the Fire Chiefs' Foundation to provide a speaker for some Professional Development in following with the Rhode Island Fire Academy's Strategic Plan for members of the Rhode Island Instructors' Association? Chief McLaughlin requested that this request be sent to him in writing and he will bring it to the next meeting.

Albert Heroux, Training Officer, will send a letter of thanks and appreciation to David Hart and Atlantic Elevator South for the generous donation of the elevator doors to be used as props at the Exeter Training Facility.

With the increase of HMO-40 programs, the Academy is in need of more HMO-40 coordinators. Scott Murray is already a Firefighter Level 1 & 2 coordinator and Frank Colantonio has been a RIFA instructor since 1998 with extensive training and certifications in HMO-40 and HMT-80 Train-the-Training programs.

**Motion made and approved** to support Scott Murray and Frank Colantonio as HMO-40 coordinators.

Feedback continues to be voiced regarding a possible change to the HMO-40 component of Firefighter Level 1 ProBoard Program. Could a program be created to meet the requirements of ProBoard, Chapters 5 (Core) Sections 6.2 (Personal Protective Equipment) and 6.6 (Product Control) from NFPA 472. These are the prerequisites for the Firefighter Level 1 as required by NFPA 1001 Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications. The Technical Committee of

NFPA feels that the requirement for at least that level of knowledge is critical for firefighter safety. The ProBoard is not a standards development organization so it is not in a position to change that requirement.

(Discussion)

A subcommittee was suggested to review what could be done to cover the necessary information and still maintain ProBoard accreditation. We will address this matter with our HazMat Instructors and see if there is a solution.

Albert Heroux, Training Officer, expresses his view on programs conducted using “in house” instructors and other facilities used for Rhode Island Fire Academy’s accredited curriculum practicals outside of the Exeter Training Facility. All departments who conduct in-house RIFA programs that have practicals attached must be conducted at the Rhode Island Fire Academy’s Training Facility.

(Discussion)

**Motion made and approved** to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.