



Kent Appelhans, Chair  
Mark Marchetta, Sr., Vice Chair

Dr. Carol Cunningham, State Medical Director

## FIREFIGHTER & FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE

STATE BOARD OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL, FIRE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

### MINUTES

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

**Committee Meeting Date and Location:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022, the Shipley Building, Conference Room 1106, 1970 W. Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43223

#### I. Welcome – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.  
The members and visitors introduced themselves.

#### II. Roll Call

- a. Committee Members Present: Timothy Thomas (Chair), TJ Cullison, Jeremy Guenther, and Zachary Wolfe
- b. Committee Members Absent: Dudley Wright (Vice Chair), and , Bill Mastroianni
- c. DPS and EMS Staff Members Present: Rob Wagoner, Ted Kienzle, Doug Orahoad and Jayn Mayton
- d. Public Present: Mr. Feldman, Mr. Glessner, Mr. Linn, Mr. J. Smith

#### III. Open Forum

No discussions were brought forward.

#### IV. Review and Approval of the Firefighter & Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of November 9, 2021

The meeting minutes from the Firefighter & Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of November 9, 2021 were approved with no changes.

**MOTION:** *Motion to approve the Firefighter Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee meeting minutes from November 9, 2021 with no changes.* Mr. Wolfe – First. Mr. Guenther – Second. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

**V. Executive Director Wagoner Report**

Executive Director Wagoner brought to the committee's attention the Department of Public Safety's COVID policy concerning mask protocol, and the law in place requiring public meetings which makes it impossible to hold EMFTS Board committee meetings virtually. He then informed the committee of Division of EMS staff vacancies, and asked for patience when needed while there is a shortage of staff.

In the American Rescue Plan Act, funds totaling \$250 million have been earmarked for law enforcement and EMS and Fire first responders. Resiliency, including mental health care of first responders, is included in possible uses of the funds. Once the Act has been approved by the General Assembly, complete information will be distributed by the Division of EMS. Grants will be available to EMS and Fire agencies through the Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Chair Thomas reported that there is a newly released guidance document, for which a resolution must be adopted, in which the monies given to a township, up to \$10 million dollars, is counted as lost revenue and frees it up for any use. The Fire Marshal's Office received dollars directly from the federal government, thereby having no interruption caused by any such state hurdle.

There is an upcoming presentation to be given jointly with the Ohio Division of EMS and the State Fire Marshal's office regarding human trafficking. The event is projected for March, 2022. Maria Bush, the Department of Public Safety's state anti-trafficking representative, is preparing a free webinar to educate the public about this message.

There is a state government committee seeking to eliminate all state requirements for firefighter certification continuing education, making them just local requirements, among other similar recommendations. Executive Director Wagoner and others have testified before the committee, and submitted written testimony against these recommendations to explain the multiple and complex adverse impacts these changes would have on interoperability, safety issues, and so forth. They successfully defended all but the piece regarding the state requirement for firefighter continuing education. The members of the committee are being asked to make their organizations aware of, and lobby against this initiative, if they have strong feelings about it.

The EMS Star of Life nomination packet just posted to the [ems.ohio.gov](https://ems.ohio.gov) website. This year there will be two ceremonies due to the cancellation of the event in 2020. On May 18, 2022 there will be a ceremony for emergency runs in 2019. The presentation for awards for runs during 2020 and 2021 will be made on November 2, 2022.

As there were no questions, Executive Director Wagoner concluded his report.

**VI. State Fire Marshal Report – Jack Smith**

Mr. Smith updated the committee members on the status of staffing issues at the State Fire Marshal's office. Multiple positions are still open, exacerbated by the backlog at Human Resources' due to a Covid-related hiring freeze. More staff will also be required to help implement and regulate the new fireworks legislation.

Mr. Smith announced that the Fire Academy's course schedule and catalog are now available. The classes will continue with online and campus hybrid classes. A volunteer officer class is being piloted which meets the JPRs for Fire Officer I. It does not meet the prerequisites of FF II and Instructor, so is not a pathway to Fire Officer II, III or IV. It is available to any certification level.

Progress is being made on the Certified Fire Safety Inspector skill sheets. There was a delay due to employees being out with Covid.

Mr. Smith is a member of the North American Fire Training Directors (NAFTD) trade association. He provided information for the committee's awareness and discussion regarding an initiative being pursued by NAFTD addressing the validation of test questions. NAFTD is considering establishing a working group to validate all of the publishers' test questions, and create its own test banks to be used among all the state fire academies. The security of the shared test banks is one of the first concerns; for example, how would a breach of security in South Dakota affect all the test banks? An automated system which shuffles answers provides some level of security. In response to questions, Mr. Smith said that the first tests to be looked at will be FFI, FFII and Instructor, and the platforms being reviewed will be Jones & Bartlett and IMFTSA primarily. He welcomed phone calls and emails for other questions, concerns or interest in being involved.

## **VII. Ohio Fire Organizations Reports**

### **Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI) – Jeremy Linn**

Mr. Linn followed up Mr. Belcher's presentation last month about OSFSI's participation in the upcoming National Fire Academy Ohio Weekend on June 25 and 26, 2022. More details will be provided as they are determined.

#### **Other**

No other groups were represented for a presentation.

## **VIII. DEMS Fire Education Report**

### **Ohio Hall of Fame Fire Service & Ohio Fire Awards**

Chief Thomas reinforced that information regarding the selection of the Hall of Fame recipients is confidential and not to be shared. Ms. Mayton and Mr. Wagoner updated the committee on the progress on the 2021-2022 HOF event format. It will be live streamed, and space is limited so please let Ms. Mayton know if you would like to attend.

## **IX. Old Business**

### **Volunteer Firefighter**

Mr. Kienzle is still receiving inquiries about whether Volunteers are able to enter a burning building. The Fire Chief has the option of doing the 11 standards of NFPA 1403.

Chief Thomas mentioned that there is funding for classes to get FFI and FF II.

Mr. Smith mentioned that the NAFTD group has discussed ways to reduce some of the test anxiety and still test cognitively. Some states have had success in their rural areas, or with a demographic with less computer aptitude, by moving test questions into the practical skills environment, and putting them in more of a technical skills format. Chief Thomas agreed that an avenue to eliminate some test anxiety has good potential.

**Action Item:** *Continue with updates on the Volunteer Firefighter curriculum. - Assigned to Mr. Kienzle*

### **Unaffiliated Firefighter**

Chair Thomas defined the primary goals of the effort to track and identify unaffiliated firefighters as: 1) to determine the reasons for the unaffiliated status, and 2) to direct those who are willing to get back to being an active firefighter with an affiliation to an agency who needs firefighters. Mr. Kienzle added that the Division of EMS has an additional goal of making sure firefighters don't lose their certification unnecessarily during the audit process.

Mr. Kienzle explained that the Division of EMS generates a daily report through its IT division that just focuses on firefighter affiliation. Getting accurate numbers is the first step to lowering those numbers. Starting in October of 2021, a notification to all fire certificate holders has been sent via gov delivery, advising them to update their affiliation on the EMS system. Between October and January, the monthly number of unaffiliated firefighters has fluctuated from a base of 3,082 up to 3,139. The Division of EMS is seeking to determine the reasons for so many unaffiliated firefighters.

Suggestions as to possible reasons for an unaffiliated status were: the fact that it isn't mandatory to declare an affiliation; a change in status due to retirement or taking another job within a charter, such as a teacher; a high school student who is certified but not yet affiliated; and/or a member of a fire brigade in a private company.

As to why an unaffiliated status might lead to an audited firefighter losing his/her certification during the audit process, Mr. Kienzle explained that when firefighters are audited, they are required to have their CE training signed off by their Fire Chief on their audit response form. There are currently only two agencies whose program directors will regularly sign off on the CE of an audited unaffiliated firefighter, the Ohio Fire Academy (when the firefighter has taken the national 24/7 online courses) and Cuyahoga Community College. Some audited firefighters have asked program directors other than these two to sign off on their CEs, with varying results. When a firefighter's CEs cannot be validated by a program director, that individual's audit goes to Investigations for further research.

Executive Director Wagoner inquired whether a workgroup should be created to determine the reasons for unaffiliated statuses. Mr. Smith suggested the Code Enforcement staff of the Fire Marshal's office might be able to help coordinate research on the subject.

**Action Item:** *Look into the best way to determine the reasons for firefighters having an unaffiliated status, perhaps by establishing a workgroup, and commence the analysis. – Assigned to Mr. Kienzle.*

### **OFA FSI Practical Skill Changes**

Chief Thomas shared a photo he took when in a store the other day to illustrate how one photo can hold more than one violation. Pictures like this are being shown on tests, where the violations are easily identified, but when new inspectors see this in the real world, they overreact, and could even threaten to close the store. Mr. Smith expressed the opinion that this picture has some good features that make it a useful Job Performance Requirement (JPR) picture.

Executive Director Wagoner stated that test items should be evaluated according to the frequency of occurrence and the life safety risk, and that he and Deputy Director Jennings developed an assessment for the HRO and FSI test items using those two criteria. Thirteen subject matter experts utilize this assessment, which should provide data about what should be tested as a JPR and what should just be learned as a JPR. The assessment also is helping to determine how to reflect a more real world situation.

The open book JPR section of a test could threaten a test's security, because students may use electronic devices and other materials they bring into the testing environment to answer open book questions. The hope is to redevelop the tests so that the 100 questions in the FSI closed book portion would be adequate for certification. The JPRs can be left to education and practical analysis within the local jurisdiction. Deputy Director Jennings added that the results of this assessment will be analyzed in February and will lead them to the next step.

Mr. Smith suggested that the Code Enforcement section of the State Fire Marshal's office could help develop the practical skills piece of testing, and provide it as a resource to the charters to ensure consistency across the state in teaching the JPRs.

**Action Item:** *Analyze the data from the JPR testing assessment and present the analysis to the March FFFSI Training Subcommittee meeting. – Assigned to the Division of EMS staff*

**Review the proposed amendments to Chapter 4765-23 (Disciplinary Actions) Rules, to be filed with JCARR**

The proposed amendments in this agenda item were distributed by email to the members of the committee. There were no questions.

**X. New Business**

**HRO and FSI examination update**

There was nothing to discuss under this agenda item.

**XI. Other**

Matt Wells, Education Program Specialist at Ohio Department of Education, created a PowerPoint entitled, "OAC and Fire Instructor Changes". He could not attend the meeting, so Mr. Kienzle briefly presented the PowerPoint.

The changes addressed in the PowerPoint will be to OAC 4765-21 Fire Service Instructor and to 4765-24 Fire Charters. The work on these changes started at the end of 2021 and must be completed by August for the renewal process. The effective date will be in December 2022.

Mr. Kienzle brought the members' attention to the changes to the NFPA 1403 (2018) 4.7.2 Live Fire Instructor. He highly recommended that the committee members read that section, which contains useful information.

**XII. Adjournment**

The subcommittee meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Motion: Mr. Guenther

Second: Mr. Cullison

**Next meeting:**

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Ohio Department of Public Safety

The Shipley Building, Conf. Rm. 1106

1970 West Broad Street

Columbus, OH 43218

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.