



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**

**Meeting of July 14, 2021**

### **MINUTES**

**Committee Meeting Location:** The Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association Annual Conference, Hilton Columbus at Easton, 3900 Chagrin Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43219, Room: The Juniper B & C

**I. Welcome – Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

a. Committee Members Present: Timothy Thomas (Chair); TJ Cullison; Jeremy Guenther; Bill Mastroianni; and Phil McLean

b. Committee Members Absent: Dudley Wright (Vice Chair)

c. DPS and EMS Staff Members Present: Rob Wagoner, Aaron Jennings, James Burke, Ted Kienzle; and Jayn Mayton

d. Public Present: Tim Feldman, Brad French, Dick Glessner, Jeremy S. Linn, Tim Morrison, Jeff Orphal, Mike Raymond, Jack Smith, Don Sweigert, Dallas Terrell

**III. Open Forum**

Chair Thomas welcomed all in attendance to the first in-person meeting for quite some time, and the first meeting at the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association Annual Conference. The members of the subcommittee and EMS staff introduced themselves to the visitors. Upon receiving no topics for the open forum, Chair Thomas continued with the next agenda topic.

**IV. Review and approval of the Firefighter & Fire Safety Inspector Subcommittee Meeting minutes of May 11, 2021**

The meeting minutes from the May 11, 2021 Firefighter Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee meeting were reviewed and approved.

---

***MOTION: Motion to approve the Firefighter Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee meeting minutes from May 11, 2021.*** Mr. Cullison – First. Mr. Guenther – Second. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

---

V. **Executive Director Wagoner report**

Executive Director Wagoner first recognized retired Executive Director Mel House and congratulated him on receiving the OFCA's Distinguished Service Award.

He then brought to the committee members and visitors' attention the fact that House Bill 404 (HB404) sunsetted July 1, 2021, thus restoring in-person meetings. In addition, the credentials of individuals who received an extension under HB404 expired on July 1<sup>st</sup>. In June the staff of the Division of EMS made calls to 4,564 individuals, or 65% of those whose certifications were due to expire. The total number of those individuals may impact retention as well.

Many training programs and charters have found action training systems to be advantageous for improving pass rates in education for FFI and FFII. That access has been renewed through June 30, 2022 for 23 interactive courses for the FF I series, 10 interactive courses for the FF II series and 10 interactive courses for the vehicle extrication series.

The matter of HB21 was also brought to the group's attention. It is known as the stroke bill, and becomes effective on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It will require the Division of EMS to assemble a representative group of hospital and other personnel who deal with stroke patients to review current care stroke protocols and recommend guidelines for the care of acute stroke patients. The updated guidelines will be published on the EMS website by the end of the year, and every agency in the state will be required by law to work with their medical director and their own local protocols to make sure they are in compliance with those updated guidelines, by March, 2022. In addition, agencies will be required to submit their final approved protocols to the Division of EMS, which will be published on its website for public access. He urged everyone to take a look at the information on HB21 at [ems.ohio.gov](http://ems.ohio.gov).

Regarding the matter of HB151, expanding the practice setting of EMS providers under the COVID pandemic, the current budget bill continues this until October 1, 2022. EMS personnel are permitted to work in the Emergency Department and as they are moving patients from one floor to another. Hospital personnel shortages are requiring hospitals to backfill with EMS personnel in any setting, provided there is direct oversight by the medical director, or by an advanced practice nurse or assistant. Under the current budget bill there are provisions for agencies whose personnel needs may be impacted.

The return of DEMS staff to the office full time is slowly phasing in, and open positions continue to be filled. In September a number of programs are coming on board. Site visits are will continue in a virtual environment, with face-to-face meetings arranged on an as-needed basis. Public meetings such as the EMFTS Board's and its committee meetings must meet the requirements by law of meeting in-person only.

The last item reported concerned the work with Marshall Reardon and his office to increase the ranks of volunteer firefighters. Executive Director Wagoner thanked Mr. Orphal, Program Director of Apollo Career Center, for Apollo's work in particular. Finding a way that a VFF can enter a burning structure is a big part of that effort. Every day in the state of Ohio, a VFF faces violating state law when they have to enter a burning building because there are not enough people in the department trained at the FFI or FFII level. The Division of EMS has provided helpful data on recruitment, retention, and education towards this effort.

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

Chief Thomas thanked the Division of EMS for all of the support in the past months and commended the staff on keeping things moving forward.

**VI. State Fire Marshal Report**

Mr. Smith remarked that the Fire Academy is back to classes in person and online, with 26 of the 90 classes being offered online. Online classes will continue throughout the rest of this year, both weekdays and weekends. The Academy's plan for next year is to return to more in-person classes for those who may find that online environment too much of a challenge. There are currently seven to eight hybrid classes. There is a backlog created by COVID and that is clearing. Plans are underway for 2022.

The Fire Marshal's office has recently been very involved with the fireworks legislation.

As there were no questions, Mr. Smith concluded his report.

**VII. Ohio Fire Organizations Reports - Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI)**

Chief Thomas recognized Jeremy Linn as the newly elected president of OSFSI, and the organization's representative to the subcommittee. Mr. Linn has been involved with OSFSI for ten years, as a regional director and a most recently as vice president. He is also a program director at Clark State, works full time at the Springfield Fire Division, and is a champion of the fire service and instruction in general.

Mr. Linn reported that in 2022, the Ohio Academy will participate at the National Fire Academy event. After ongoing participation for about 40 years, there has been a two-year pause due to COVID. The days scheduled for 2022 are June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. OSFSI will have 200 seats available.

Instead of presenting trainings at the October OFA conference this year, there is a possibility that OSFSI may host regional trainings at charters throughout the state.

As there were no questions, Mr. Linn concluded his report.

**VIII. DEMS Fire Education Report**

Mr. Burke reported that the education staff continues to work with charters across the state to help navigate COVID-related restrictions.

He pointed out that the sunseting of HB404 has affected what can be taught virtually. As far as the continued virtual training, he encouraged those who experience disruptions to their training to contact the Division of EMS for assistance. The staff has become adept at using technology and working within the confines of the OAC to find applicable solutions. Other

online services developed during this time include meeting online with new program directors within their first day or two, thereby speeding up their understanding of the processes required for their job. Online meetings are available for all program directors or agencies when needed on short notice.

The June meeting of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Instructor Training committee approved amendments to OAC 4765-20-10 and 4765-21-09, dealing with reciprocity for firefighter and fire instructor certificates. When they go into effect, they will require an applicant for reciprocity who has not resided in the state for the five years immediately preceding the application to submit an FBI background check.

Returning to the topic of the volunteer firefighter force, Mr. Burke spoke about the pilot program created by the Division of EMS, which streamlined the curriculum in order to get as much necessary information as possible into the 36 hours permitted. VFF charters are also encouraged to take advantage of the action trainings, which are videos that can be assigned out of class to further their education. This format also helps those who learn better through video than out of a book.

Mr. Burke than asked Mr. Kienzle to discuss ongoing pilot programs.

Mr. Kienzle discussed the three programs that have been running the VFF pilot program since early 2020. Apollo Career Center has completed six courses, with cumulative scores of almost 90% per time, a very good result. Wellstone is the second program, and their demographics have been a little bit harder to keep people coming back if they don't pass the first type of test. They are at 66% first time, and only 73% per time cumulative. The third package is Newton Township. They also completed six courses, with the first-time pass rate of 62. They are still working on the development of that program. The third time cumulative is 86%, which is not bad. Mr. Kienzle expressed interest in hearing the progress from the Tri-County Career Center.

Mr. Burke encouraged other who would like to see the pilot program, even if they are not sure they want to use it, to contact him or Mr. Kienzle, and it will be provided.

The pass rates currently for all of the programs are:

Volunteer: first time pass rate 70%, overall third time accumulative 83%;  
FFI: first time pass rate 73%, overall third time accumulative 90%;  
FFI transition: first time pass rate is 82%, overall third time accumulative is 93%  
FFII transition: first time pass rate is 86%, overall third time accumulative is 95%  
FFI & II: first time pass rate is 79%, overall third time accumulative is 89%

He noted there has been a rise in pass rate scores across the state. The EMS education staff is constantly trying to make education easier by revising and updating wherever possible. Many of these changes originated with suggestions by charters, showing how crucial it is that charters reach out to the EMS education staff to let them know what is working and what is not. If it can be changed, they will work on it, and if it cannot, it may have to do with the OAC, which may have to be changed first. Mr. Burke listed some other recent examples of improvements: course objective sign-offs sheets, whose total page number was cut down from 54 pages to 4; updating the student registration side of the EMS database, and updating the proctor side of the EMS database. Program directors are urged to get students in the

database once a class is started. If they encounter a “not eligible” response, that student has been stopped by new safeguards built into it addressing out-of-state prerequisites. This happens frequently for the instructor course, because out-of-state time is not recognized by the system, although it is accepted as long as it is pre-approved. Pre-approval is easily done when a student is entered at the start of a course, but is more problematic at the end of the course. Regarding the new additions on the proctor side of the database, there is now a drop-down for approved new proctors, who will then get an email.

Mr. Burke concluded his report by reinforcing how much the relationship with all the charters and programs is appreciated by the Division of EMS, which continues to foster that relationship.

**IX. Old Business**

There were no further comments under old business.

**X. New Business**

Mr. McLean gave a report on the activities of the Ohio State Firefighters’ Association. He notified the participants of the Monday seminars which are offered in collaboration with staff from the Division of EMS. Typically, a couple of hours of instructor updates are offered, along with some fire instructor CE or inspector CE. Mr. McLean expressed an interest in reaching out to the Apollo Career Center about hosting a class there. This was agreed to by Mr. Orphal of the Apollo Career Center.

Chief Thomas commented regarding the changes in training of the volunteer force. He reiterated that the goal is to ensure the safety of the volunteer firefighters within the constraints of the 36 hours required by law. Making further types of training available outside of those 36 hours is intended to give them adequate training so that the volunteer force will be the well-trained firefighters all communities deserve. Changes that require modifying laws are very time consuming and will require patience. He commented that the collaboration between the Division of EMS and charter schools has produced concrete results, and encouraged those with questions or complaints to reach out to the DEMS for answers or solutions.

**XI. Recap of Action Items**

There were no action items.

**XII. Call for Questions**

Chief Thomas called for any further questions. There was a request to have an update on the discussion that has been going on for several years about the Instructor I and Instructor II situation. Mr. Burke responded that it is a three-pronged approach, requiring about 30 OAC rules revisions, IT changes to the database to add another certification, and creating a new curriculum. The timeline is to have the rule changes out by the end of this year for review by instructors and program directors, when they will be requested to comment upon them. Once those are approved, there will be a year-long implementation before schools will have requirements to meet. We are also trying to streamline all processes for EMS and fire in tandem.

Executive Director Wagoner added that right now every time we go through a rule change there is a law currently on the books requiring that for every exclusionary language such as must, shall or will that is added in, two other instances of exclusionary language must be removed.

A second question from the visitors was asked. The speaker has three people on the fire department who are instructors, who have masters' degrees with teaching degrees. Would that substitute for the Fire II requirement? Mr. Burke responded that currently a masters' degree in teaching is required to substitute, but there is a workgroup looking at other degrees that may be applicable as well. That will be made available to the public once it has gone through the workgroup and committee process and a resolution is reached to make it as streamlined as possible.

**XIII. Adjournment**

Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

**Next meeting:**

**Tuesday, September 14, 2021  
Ohio Department of Public Safety  
The Shipley Building, Conf. Rm. 1107  
1970 West Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43218**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**