



Kent Appelhans, Chair
Mark Marchetta, Vice Chair

Dr. Carol Cunningham, State Medical Director

FIREFIGHTER & FIRE SAFETY INSPECTOR TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE

State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services

Minutes

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Committee Meeting Date and Location: Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at the ODPS 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.

II. Roll Call

- a. Committee Members Present: Timothy Thomas (Chair), Dudley Wright (Vice Chair), TJ Cullison, Jeremy Guenther, and Zachary Wolfe
- b. Committee Members Absent: Bill Mastroianni
- c. DPS and EMS Staff Members Present: Rob Wagoner, Ted Kienzle, Doug Orahod and Jayn Mayton
- d. Public Present: Mr. Belcher, Mr. Feldman, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Glessner, Mr. Morrison, State Fire Marshal Reardon, SFM Code Enforcement Chief Alan Smith, Mr. J. Smith, Mr. Starrett

III. Open Forum

No discussions were brought forward.

IV. Review and Approval of the Firefighter & Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2021

The meeting minutes from the September 14, 2021 Firefighter Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee meeting were reviewed. There were no changes.

MOTION: Motion to approve the Firefighter Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee meeting minutes from September 14, 2021 with no changes. Vice Chair Wright – First. Mr. Guenther – Second. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

V. Executive Director Wagoner Report

Executive Director Wagoner welcomed State Fire Marshal Reardon to the Committee. The Division of EMS is working closely with the State Fire Marshal's office on the upcoming Hall of Fame awards. Everyone concerned is looking forward to this exciting event later next spring.

Chief Burke resigned as Fire and EMS Chief of Education and Training. The posting for his position closed on November 4, 2021.

Executive Director Wagoner provided an update on the work that continues in evaluating NFPA 1041 in terms of Instructor I and II levels of certification. While the Division of EMS has been working feverishly, this project will take a slow and methodical path forward. First, breaking apart the rules to deal with the certification of Instructor I and II, as well as those who currently have Instructor credentials, is complex. In addition, there are procedural requirements which require particular focus. Mr. Joe Kirk and Ms. Beverly Cooper are working closely with the DEMS staff, which continues to make progress.

Due to a recent unauthorized access event in the State's printers, all the printing at multiple agencies was brought to a standstill. While this did not affect the Division of EMS directly, it led to the formation of a plan to replace the printing and mailing of certification credentials with electronic certifications. The ODPS IT department is currently reviewing this plan, which has several interesting features. The credentials can be sorted and printed on a local printer by an individual or by an agency. Such individual or agency may want to print a list of all their certified personnel, or to sort that information by data elements, such as expiration dates, CE requirements, etc. In addition, a QR code could provide a prospective employer with a past record of the certification holder, allowing immediate verification of credentials. This will make it more convenient to immediately verify credentials. Executive Director Wagoner asked for questions on this process.

There was a question as to whether the new system will be able to notify those departments with which a certificate holder claims affiliation. Executive Director Wagoner advised he would take that question to the IT department to check on whether this can be implemented.

ACTION: *Take question to IT department: will the system be able to identify those departments a firefighter has listed as being associated with as part of the electronic certification process? Assigned to Executive Director Wagoner.*

Another affiliation question was, "how will the primary and secondary associations be identified, especially if there is more than one secondary association?" Executive Director Wagoner answered that there will only be one primary and one secondary association, and an unlimited number of associations beyond that.

The final topic of Executive Director Wagoner's report was regarding the Senate Bill 21 (Stroke Bill). He reminded the committee that the last round of review of guidelines are due back November 15. The EMFTS Board will review the final guidelines for approval during their December 15 meeting. By law, those guidelines must be published on the Division of EMS website on December 20. By March 20, 2022 every EMS agency in the state and the medical directors are required to update their acute stroke guidelines and submit a copy of this update to the Division of EMS, which is required by Senate Bill 21 to post on its website.

VI. State Fire Marshal Report

Mr. Jack Smith gave the floor to Fire Marshal Reardon. Marshal Reardon provided details on the revamped Ohio Fire Service Hall of Fame and Fire Awards program. The categories and the nature of the awards remain the same, but the event itself will be a higher profile event. The biggest changes are the venue and the presentation, with the event moving to the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) ballroom. The presentation will include videotaping of all the awardees, where they tell their own story. The larger venue will allow more people from the recipients' communities to attend. COSI's proximity to the State House will hopefully encourage more legislators to attend.

Marshal Reardon reported that the State Fire Marshal's office recently submitted to the Office of Budget and Management a 30.2 million dollar capital improvement plan for the marshal's office and the fire academy. Legislation approval will be required, as it will be the biggest investment that the facility has seen since it was built in the 1970's. There is also some funding available to use. Marshal Reardon acknowledged Chief Smith and his team, who creatively put together a list of twelve different projects to submit.

Proposed fireworks legislation was not passed by the Ohio General Assembly in 2020. This meant that in January fireworks legislation negotiations started all over again. Marshal Reardon recounted the many months it took to conclude the negotiations and procedural aspects of the final fireworks bill, signed by Governor DeWine in early November, 2021. Marshal Reardon shared some of the incidents that firefighters dealt with while enforcing fireworks restrictions during the course of the summer. In spite of fire hazards, the hobbyists and fireworks industries are well funded and well organized. Code Enforcement Chief Smith related that there was significant enforcement of the code against illegal fireworks during the week of the 4th of July. During that time period there were 34 burn reports.

Marshal Reardon reported that the COVID pandemic has changed the way courses are being taught at the fire academy. During COVID so far, the academy has graduated four firefighter and EMT classes. The change to online courses necessitated by COVID has been very popular, especially with the volunteer community. They typically do not have the time to come to the academy. Hybrid courses have also been developed where students do some classwork online, then come to the academy for the rest of the training. These online options will continue.

The Fire Marshal's Office and the Division of EMS are directing attention to the condition of recruitment and retention in the volunteer firefighter field. With an average age of 55, volunteer firefighters are leaving fire departments quickly, and they are not getting replaced. This trend is concerning for the future of the many smaller communities which depend on volunteers.

As there were no additional questions for Marshal Reardon, he concluded his report.

VII. Ohio Fire Organizations Reports

Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors (OSFSI)

As Mr. Linn was not in attendance, Mr. Belcher presented the OSFSI report. The Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors will be returning to the National Fire Academy for the Ohio Weekend in 2022. The dates for the event are June 25 and 26. More details will be provided as they are determined.

Other

There were no other reports.

VIII. DEMS Fire Education Report

Ohio Hall of Fame Fire Service & Ohio Fire Awards

The votes for the recipients of the Ohio Hall of Fame awards will take place at the end of the meeting.

IX. Old Business: Volunteer Firefighter

Mr. Kienzle remarked that there has been nothing to add to the topic of volunteer firefighter since the last meeting. Executive Director Wagoner stated that the Division of EMS was originally scheduled to give a presentation at the FCA conference in Lima, Ohio. When the conference was changed from a two-day conference to a one-day conference, the Division of EMS' presentation was removed. It is expected that the Division will be working with them in the future. Marshal Reardon heard the FCA reduced their conference in order to change their focus from volunteer firefighters to combined certifications.

Mr. Jack Smith added that he attended the North American Fire Training Directors conference, which is the Canadian and national fire training trade association. They discussed the initiative by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to draw a distinction between Ohio's exterior fire ground support firefighter versus FFI training which allows firefighters to go into a live fire environment. Although there has not been any additional progress on the matter to date, that initiative is still alive and in committee.

X. New Business

Unaffiliated Firefighter

Mr. Kienzle brought the committee's attention to a dilemma that occurs when an unaffiliated firefighter's renewal certification CEs are audited by the State of Ohio. As they have no fire chief of firefighter program director affiliation to sign off on the CEs, they are at a serious disadvantage in passing the audit. The number of unaffiliated firefighters in Ohio numbers over 3,000. Mr. Kienzle posed the question, "Is there any way that an unaffiliated firefighter would be able to utilize a charter or Commission on Accreditation for Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE) certified website?"

Chair Thomas posed the question of whether the solution lies in something that already exists, such as connecting them with certified training centers already in existence, at the time they are due to be certified; or does something new need to be developed, such as creating a refresher class for the non-affiliated.

In the ensuing discussion, numerous concerns regarding the unaffiliated firefighters were identified. With a critical shortage of volunteer firefighters, would the unaffiliated firefighters be likely candidates to step into the volunteer role? Are they still competent if they are only renewing their certifications without remaining active? Executive Director Wagoner summed up the problem by asking, "What is in the best interest of the safety of the firefighters and the public they serve? How do we accomplish

that while stopping a hemorrhage of firefighters now and prevent a problem ten years from now?" Chief Thomas felt that the discussion presented interesting avenues to pursue, and an action item to continue researching the issue was created.

Action Item: *Continue to look into the data of the 3,000 unaffiliated firefighters for opportunities to pursue regarding recruitment and retention, and CE options for VFF: certified training centers and other options. Assigned to Division of EMS staff.*

XI. Jack Smith Ohio Fire Academy Fire Safety Inspector Practical Skill Changes

Mr. Jack Smith and Chief Adam Smith of the Ohio Fire Academy reported that they have seen a trend in calls from fire departments as well as the communities in which they serve. These callers complain of inconsistencies in code enforcement by Fire Safety Inspectors. After careful consideration, they believe that these inconsistencies stem from problems in the testing process of the Fire Safety Inspector courses.

First, a lack of an answer key creates inconsistencies in what charters are accepting as answers for practical skills, causing a wild west atmosphere across the state. There are new inspectors that are shutting down businesses because of a lack of knowledge in using the enforcement tool. Mr. Orahood asked to clarify if they were only referring to just the grading of the practical skills, and not any issues with the written test. Mr. Jack Smith and Chief Adam Smith responded that it is actually both areas, in the writing and grading of the tests. As examples in the written exam, they felt the open book portion of the written exam is completely redundant. The test could be only closed book, and the fire code portion which is currently the open book, could become part of the practical skills.

Executive Director Wagoner compared an answer key for grading with a scoring rubric. In a scoring rubric, if there are multiple violations in a picture, each violation is worth a certain percent. If there are five violations and the student finds three, that is 60%.

The last concern was that some calculations are difficult, if not impossible to figure because some of the information is not complete. Therefore, the evaluators are finding themselves adding information, which could be crossing the line into coaching or contaminating the testing process. Giving the students the actual measurements would teach them how to calculate those areas.

It was agreed that assuring competence might require a major overhaul of the test design. The first step is to put together a committee and figure out where the problems are. All feedback must be evaluated, and there must be a single fix for everybody.

ACTION ITEM: *Put together a committee and look into the issues discussed regarding code enforcement, JPR skills. Assigned to Mr. Kienzle.*

ACTION ITEM: *Send an email to the charters that teach the fire inspector and get some feedback on the pluses and minuses of the JPRs. Assigned to Mr. Kienzle.*

XII. Review the proposed amendments to Chapter 4765-23 rules, to be filed with JCARR

Ms. Cooper sent three fire rule packets to the committee members, in order to apprise them of what the Division of EMS is doing in the fire rules. All of the fire rule chapters are due for their five-year review. Those will be filed before October 1, 2022. Ms. Cooper stated that a couple of rules are

being finished up; for example, for reciprocity, the applicant is now required to send in an FBI background check. Still under consideration is the committee's Chapter 23, Disciplinary Actions. If there are any questions to the amendments that are being proposed, please contact me at ems.rules@dps.ohio.gov (DPS EMS Rules link). Packet B lists Chapter 23, Disciplinary Actions, with Chapter 10, Complaints from EMS. This is an attempt to get the two rules more synced-up so that discipline and complaints are more similar for both sides.

XIII. Hall of Fame Awards

Chair Thomas noted the substantial number of nominations that were submitted this year. When discussing the voting procedures, the visitors chose to leave the room voluntarily. Chair Thomas then gave instructions for filling out the paper ballots. The committee members were to write "abstain" on names where there may have been a conflict. The recipients were elected and the names will be announced at the same time as the State Fire Marshal's office will be announcing their recipients for the Fire Service Hall of Fame Awards.

XIV. Adjournment

The subcommittee meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Guenther

Second: Mr. Wolfe

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 11, 2022

Ohio Department of Public Safety
The Shipley Building, Conf. Rm. 1106
1970 West Broad Street
Columbus, OH

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.