

# Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Location: FETA, 6868 Nicholson Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70820;  
Medical Classroom.

Date: Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Time: 10:00 am

- 1) Call to order at 10:09 am
- 2) Pledge and prayer
- 3) Roll Call: See attached sheet
- 4) Adopt minutes from previous meeting(s)
  - a. Motion made by Bryan Adams and second by Louis Romero.
    - i. Motion Passed
- 5) Chief's report
  - a. See attached Chief's Report
  - b. We have now delivered more 40-hour classes this year than we did last year, and we still have several on the schedule for this year.
  - c. Discussion was held on the run time that is required for the recruit academy.
    - i. Ken Fowler: Our only real qualification for a recruit to attend the academy is to run a mile and half in less than 16 minutes. Our time is a lot higher than other academies. This is the only requirement to attend. You do get two attempts. One on day one and another a few days later.

Chad Major: Baton Rouge's run time is 12 minutes, but they must achieve this through progression in the academy not necessarily on Day one.

Louis Romero: We send recruits here to teach them everything. Some people just don't know how to run. They

teach them how to eat better, muscle building...everything. I feel we should extend it. This kid missed it by 30 seconds.

Ken Fowler: Chief where do you draw that line? Is it 30 seconds and then they are 31 seconds over?

Louis Romero: I understand that, but if he is giving it his all are we going to wash him out because of the run. I can tell you I have some in my department that can run 5 miles, but when it comes to firefighting, they're not that great. I have nonrunners that can out work them on a fire scene.

Chad Major: It's a process of conditioning throughout the academy but throughout the academy they must show progress the whole time. They may come in and they can't make the run, but throughout the progression of the academy they improve and can make the run by the completion of the academy.

Dan Wallis: Ken I would recommend we do an industry evaluation and see what they are doing. I don't want to be more restrictive than other agencies. I know other outside agencies such as POST or the military you must prepare yourself before. You know up front what it will be, but I know times are different now. You are having difficulty finding people to work. Ken you are attending the Director's conference why don't you bring this up for discussion there and find out and see if the standard has changed. We did look at having professionals come in and do a pre academy assessment on everyone to give a baseline on everyone. It was too expensive, but we may need to skinny it down and do something to help find underlining issues that they aren't aware of.

Brian Lindberg: What is the standard in place for? Is it there to say you did it or just for liability purposes? Are they doing physicals beforehand?

Ken Fowler: The departments are doing the physicals beforehand now. We get a letter from their Doctor saying they're physically fit. We have had some questions about the physical as there is a difference between a general physical and the NFPA physical. Where do we draw the line on what we accept? Some physicals are very in depth, and some are just from the local Doctor checking blood pressure and stuff like that.

Louis Romero: Most of your career staff recruits are coming with the NFPA physical as it is a requirement to enter the FRS.

Brian Lindberg: The only requirements you have for the academy is the physical and a run time, correct?

Ken Fowler: Yes, that is all that they're required to complete. We do a simulated agility course but it's not a pass/fail. All we require is a percentage of increased improvement throughout the academy.

Louis Romero: Other than the run, everything is a baseline, and they need to show improvement. What I would like to see is you get them in on Day 1 document the time as a baseline; then in week 4 do it again and have them show improvement. In week 8 do the same thing and continue that trend. By the time for graduation, you must make it under the 16 minutes.

Ken Himel: Our academy requirement is very similar to what is laid out here today. What we have done is we do a circuit and that is where the time factors in. We combine all the times into the circuit and that's where the time comes into play. That way

you can be slower in the mile but excel in the skills and make it up.

Russell Di Salvo: Is this a one-time problem or how often does them not making the run and you're out happen?

Ken Fowler: Every academy just about. There is usually one or two that don't make it.

Brian Lindberg: I'm not against the standard, I just want to know how you came up with it.

Chad Major: You are told upfront what is expected by the end of the academy. To graduate you need to pass everything.

Louis Romero: My department would spend all the money upfront to do the physicals, drug screens and all to have them come here and fail the run. We have now established at my department they have to pass our course and run before we send them here.

Dan Wallis: Why don't you see what the industry standard is and report back to the commission on what you find next month. We will develop the policy based off that.

- ii. We are on pace to deliver more classes to more students and are doing it with less staff and money. Would we love to increase the numbers more yes, but we are about at our max till we get more staffing to deliver those classes.
- iii. Ken Himel: Is there anything on the horizon to bring some of the IMT Training you need here?

Dan Wallis: We have one going on this week. We had one last month and there will be more coming up.

Louis Romero: How about the Instructor I class? It has been on the website for a while TBA. A bunch of the classes are labeled like this.

Ken Fowler: If it says TBD, we don't have one scheduled for this year. We are currently working on the 2023 schedule. If you have enough people, I'm not against running another one this year.

- iv. Had a meeting about another grant opportunity through Louisiana Clean Energy. We are discussing a 650,000.00 grant to build the only EV training site in the nation for firefighter response. Would have some charging station mockups, and potential an Electrical Vehicle Prop.

6) Industrial report

- a. See Attached Chief's Report #8
  - i. They're in line to bring up the only prop that is currently down. The processing plant is really close to being back up and running again.

7) Certification report

- a. See attached Chief's Report #4
- b. When building the Live Fire Instructor and Live Fire Instructor in Charge class we took the volunteer fire service in mind and separated the two. You can take them as an 8-hour and 32-hour course or both together in a 40-hour course. We can be creative with how we offer them. We will run an in-house pilot for the first two classes to work the bugs out prior to launching them.
- c. The Vehicle Extrication Certification isn't only a want it is also a need. They currently have only two states that can offer USAR Technical Rescue Specialists Certification, and I want us to be the third. This is the last step needed to apply for that.
- d. Brian Lindberg: On the rope rescue certification would those that have 1 and 2 be grandfathered in with the awareness, operations, and technician.

Ken Fowler: It will always be good. If you want to update to the new standard, we will accept them for you to just test out on the three new levels.

Brian Lindberg: What is the future thought in certification for swift water?

Ken Fowler: This certification is different than IFSAC and ProBoard. There is currently only one person that offers a certification for that in the State, but it isn't ProBoard or IFSAC. I don't know the answer, but I will find out if that is something we can do.

8) Financial/budget report:

a. See attached Income Report.

9) Chairman report:

a. Bryan Adams: Would ask that the leaders of the 3 divisions be here so if we have questions, they're here to answer them directly. This report was very informative but if we did have questions, we could get live feedback if they were here.

Chad Major: It would be Ken as the municipal, an industrial person, certification person, and whoever is doing the financials.

10) Old Business:

a. Dan Wallis: Can you give us an update on the Workforce development project?

Ken Fowler: The last I heard was everything is look promising. I think it's just a matter of dotting the I's and crossing the T's. Ashley was able to change the structure of the process because there is two different pots of monies. If it goes right, we will add 800,000.00 straight in the budget that has to be used to offset the cost of things. We would be able to run 3 recruit academies of 30 people at no cost to the departments. We are looking at offering EMT, EMR and refresher courses at no cost to the departments. If that happens, we will have to come up with qualifications and guidelines for how this all will work out with the free students.

b. Update on advertising for the Director's position:

- i. Dan Wallis: The Superintendent's position is now on the third submittal to civil service because it keeps coming back as a classified position. We continue to dispute that because the law reads the position is appointed by the Fire Marshal and approved by the Commission. I feel that as a classified position it would expand your applicant pool but may diminish the oversight from this Commission. Civil Service keeps saying it should be a 4<sup>th</sup> Deputy Chief Position, but it was the wishes of this Commission to keep it appointed.

Louis Romero: Can we get the current Org Chart for FETA as it stands?

Dan Wallis: You can have FETA's Org Chart but the Fire Marshal is going through a Reorganization currently and isn't ready. It hasn't been approved by Civil Service yet, but you can get it.

Bryan Adams: If I remember correctly, we must approve before those positions are official.

Dan Wallis: You are correct. They must approve the number of positions first because if we don't have the financial backing it won't exist. Once we get the number of positions then we can make changes if there is something the commission doesn't like or wants to go in another direction with the breakdown.

Bryan Adams: Back to the original question I believe we need to leave it as an appointed position. If we must wait and make changes in the upcoming session let's do it.

Louis Romero: Based off of the region map sent out last week it looks like Region 4 has a manager now because Opie's name is on it.

Ken Fowler: No that's just an area of responsibility. TK is the manager. He is covering Region's 1 & 4.

Louis Romero: Last year at this time we couldn't do anything but now that the Fire Marshal is in charge, I understand TK has been in charge for 3 years now, and Region 4 is without a manager. He can't do Regions 1 and 4 work because someone will lack.

Dan Wallis: We are evaluating the manager positions. We are trying to get more boots on the ground and have managers over more than 1 person. We currently don't have the authority to hire any classified position yet. We can only do Temporary job appointments. Let me ask this question: What is Region 4 not getting without a manager?

Louis Romero: Calls not being returned for weeks at a time; classes not being scheduled. TK is doing a good job but there is only so much time in the day.

Ken Fowler: In the new Org Chart the thought process is to have 2 Area's rather than the current 4 Regions approach. We would have a manager of the North and one for the South with four instructors under them.

Louis Romero: If I wanted to schedule a class today do I call Opie? I was told that a Chief was told by Opie they had to call TK to schedule classes.

Ken Fowler: Yes. He can and we will get that addressed.



- ii. Bryan Adams: I would like to set up something with Erin and the Parish Attorneys because Jefferson Parish has already invested and will invest about 4 million dollars total to improve our facility. They are about to expand the facility. We have a rail car prop coming like the one in Texas A&M and will be the only one in the state. I really want to get those conversations started because I know they will be lengthy as we move forward with regionalization.
- iii. Louis Romero: Last November we broke into sub committee's when are they going to start meeting.

Chad Major: I don't have that in front of me, but all the sub committees have chairpersons. I will gather that and report back.

- iv. Chad Major: Last meeting you were meeting with the Colonel about offering janitorial services out here. Is there a way we can use inmates?

Dan Wallis: We put it out for bid and only got one bid back, so I met with the Colonel, and he is 100% on board. We have them creating the positions now. It wouldn't be inmates but those that have been released. We would have to do some employee training. Mr. Sam Joubert will be over the facilities moving forward.

- v. Louis Romero: Do we have an update on the modular building?

Ken Fowler: There was issues with the one in Livingston Parish with State law.

Dan Wallis: I can speak on that. When a modular building changes occupancy types it is required to be certified by our office. It must go back to the factory to have this completed.

Once the vendor found out about that information they were out. I think we have another option.

Ken Fowler: We are working on two or three vendors they are talking to, but I believe it is down to one. I can't quote the price, but it appears we would build one with classroom, bunkroom, kitchen area, and a common area.

- 11) New business:
  - a. None
- 12) Next meeting date October 18<sup>th</sup> at the Renaissance Hotel.
- 13) Adjourn
  - a. Motion by Bryan Adams and seconded by Brian Lindberg.
    - i. Motion Passed