

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2016**

**Commission Members Present:**

Charlie Metcalf	Louisiana State Firemen's Association
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Martino Latino	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Brian Castille	Louisiana State Firemen's Association

**Commission Members Absent:**

Karen St. Germain	Governor's Appointee
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
James Wood	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana

**In Attendance:**

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Christine Melancon	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Eddie Tessmer	FETI
Wayne Cruse	FETI
Kevin Fontenot	FETI
Dave Casey	FETI
Steve Gervais	FETI
Keith Bennett	FETI

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission was called to order by Mr. Metcalf. He called the roll; a quorum was present. The meeting began.

Invocation was led by Mr. Kenn Fontenot.

Pledge of Allegiance

**Chairman's Report**

Mr. Major was absent from the meeting. No report was reviewed.

**Director's Report**

Mr. Casey presented his report. He noted that they had suffered a cut of \$267,000 for this fiscal year and at this point, they were reviewing the impact of this even though at this stage there was not much they could do about it except absorb it. There would be no classes cancelled. Changing the tuition rates and re-costing the classes had been discussed. Currently, everyone was pretty much on hold until they saw what the new budget year would bring.

Mr. Metcalf asked what they were looking at having to hold up that had been in the plans. Mr. Casey stated that these items included some replacement items that needed to be purchased and some class revisions. Mr. Metcalf was concerned about being hit with more cuts in the future. Mr. Browning stated that the current cuts were related to balancing the state budget. The subject of TOPS had a lot of people upset, but most agreed that it was above and beyond what government should be doing. So if they had to prioritize then cutting TOPS was better than cutting healthcare, etc.

The real question would be if legislature came back for special session and they should know that by that afternoon. If they came back then the cuts would stand. Mr. Donahue asked if the legislative pieces related to statutory dedications were getting any traction. Mr. Browning stated that he had spoken to Jay Morris and that would not be going to bill. Mr. Metcalf asked if there were any other questions on the budget.

Mr. Castille brought up the subject of the raise in class prices. Mr. Casey stated that they were going to be raising them, but there was a process to go through to get that accomplished. They had to go through their own process first and then go to campus for an approval. They would be careful though with the increases. Due to budgetary concerns, he has not provided the letter regarding the recruit academy tuition.

Mr. Casey then gave an update on the women's dorm. The bids had been awarded and permits had been obtained. The general contractor had ordered the building that had been discussed previously. It should be in and ready for occupancy before halfway through the next class. There was a female enrolled in the next class so in the meantime, LSU would be providing her with a dorm and it would not cost FETI any additional funds to make that happen.

Mr. Casey moved on to discuss the AFG updates. AFG did not allow brick and mortar for a state training academy, but they had given the approval for the new modular burn rooms; two burn rooms and a nice hallway. There was an L hallway and a T corner. They would not be allowed to burn on the second floor at all and the third floor was very limited. It would be mainly for smoke and fire behavior. It was a new type of construction with panel, wood, and insulation. They were currently just waiting to hear from purchasing on these. Also under AFG funding was some additional SCBA's. They were out for bid. PPE had been ordered. A 20 ft. Class A structural mobile prop was also out for bid. It would be similar to the 40 ft. but with a more robust liner. They were also waiting on purchasing and were going to bid on new window and forcible entry door props. There was a specific way they wanted them constructed so that did narrow the panel of bidders.

Mr. Casey then updated them on the pickup trucks. Currently, it was with the division of property management with the state. The person who was overseeing the bid wanted specifics of what was being towed with the vehicles so pictures of the trailers had to be sent in. Mr. Casey understood that this particular individual was trying to get out of expanding the state fleet in any way. Mr. Donahue clarified that there would not be an expansion in the fleet at all. They would surplus two vehicles to get two vehicles. However, the individual in charge of this was directing LSU that in order to get these two vehicles in question then two vehicles of like kind had to be surplus vehicles. That had never been the case before so LSU was pushing back hard because no

one wanted this kind of stipulation to be in effect. They felt that it would be resolved in 2-3 weeks.

Mr. Casey then informed the board that Bobby Strozier had retired and up until yesterday they had been “frozen”. But now they had been released and were able to hire a replacement.

The strategic planning group had had several meetings at this point and they were ready to present their first set of recommendations to the commission. Mr. Casey turned the floor over to Kenn Fontenot. He gave an overview of the group itself and stated that he was just a facilitator for their meetings. The major issue that had been addressed at the recent meeting was whether or not the portion of the four tier program would be a certification or a qualification.

There was some healthy discussion and it was finally decided that it would be a qualification since it was not the full course. They were aware that many departments used this as their only training, and they could not stop them from doing this. It was also agreed that something was better than nothing. However, they still could not certify an individual if they did not complete the course in its entirety. There were several options of getting the complete Fire Fighter one. The fire departments could hold their own academy, as well as in-house. Several departments could go together and hold it at a central location, too.

There was a lot of discussion regarding the level of instructor for the third tier. It was decided that the instructor should be at least Fire Fighter Two, Instructor One, or qualified as a LITCO which is an instructional technique company officer of Louisiana. This would ensure that as the student moved up they would be receiving the appropriate level of instructor as well. Mr. Casey gave an overview on some different parameters of the curriculum for some of the volunteer departments trying to get training for the volunteers. Their goal was to make it more accessible. He was aware that the strategic planning group report was a lot of reading but he did encourage the commission to accept it under recommendation and before the next meeting, read it and come up with a determination. They were trying to clearly define roles of interior and exterior fire fighters and make sure that the individual was effectively trained to fill those roles. If they were not, then safety and liability were the issues that would be faced. This concluded the discussion of the strategic planning group report.

Motion was made by Mr. Browning to take the strategic planning group report under advisement and second was made by Mr. Castille. No further discussion.

#### **MOTION PASSED.**

Mr. Metcalf asked if there were any questions regarding the director’s report. None were voiced. This concluded the presentation of the director’s report.

#### **Certification Report**

Mr. Steve Gervais presented his report. He began by going over the price adjustment that was approved some time ago. The letter was drafted and signed by the CAC chair, the director, and himself. The first notice of the price adjustment was sent through the February HotLap Newsletter that was sent out electronically. It was now posted on the website on the main page

and they were now printing up hard copies which would be sent by postal mail. They were hoping to have those out in the next month or so. July 1 would be the effective date.

The IFSAC site visit was conducted March 1-3. There had been some good outcomes and some recommendations for improvement. Out of 28 levels, 26 were recommended for full accreditation. Two of them were set as conditional with some minor resolutions that would need to take place. Both issues at this time had been resolved and they should have full accreditation for all 28 levels by the end of this month when he attended the IFSAC conference.

He then updated the board on the new grading software. They were out of the trial mode. They were fully operational. It was expanding their exam questions, tester and demographic analysis abilities.

Next, he moved on to discuss the lead evaluator workshop. They were going to try to have the half day for the lead evaluator in conjunction with the CAC meeting in the fall. Their workshop was on March 23. There were a total of 122 participants, 99 existing and 23 new. He commended the new evaluators because they had to go through such a rigorous application process this time and they only had 7 days to do it.

He then gave an overview of what they had done. They had reviewed new requirements for lead evaluators. They had presentation done for instructors and lead evaluators which was done by John Schaffer. It had worked out and no bad reviews on it had been received. There was an issue with the web portal, but it was in the process of being resolved. He then reported that as of March 31, they had administered 6,027 exams. For perspective, in all of 2015, they had administered 5,241 exams.

Mr. Metcalf asked why they were about to lose the web portal. Mr. Steve explained that LSU would be doing away with their outside servers and they would then come under LSU IT. It would be a process to make that switch and get the portal back up and running under LSU. However, there were other options such as a chain email option and the cloud environment as well. They would be reviewing all the pros and cons and make the best choice to serve everyone's needs.

Some discussion ensued regarding the ability to access transcripts. Mr. Steve stated that they were working on a solution and if a formal hard copy transcript was required by various departments then there would be a program cost for that. Mr. Donahue added that the entire reason that the old system was going away was because it was against the law to have a social security driven public portal. It put them at a huge liability and security risk to have this type of site. Mr. Browning asked why the social couldn't be just removed and this issue fixed with the current site. Ms. Loree stated that historical data initially obtained could not be altered. It was the way the system was built. Mr. Donahue commented that eventually it would go to driver's license as the identifier. More discussion went on regarding this topic. There was a company that they were considering to use to do everything, but there was a cost for this. So they wanted to truly find out how important it was to the fire chiefs. Everyone agreed that all options were worth exploring.

Mr. Metcalf asked if there were any questions regarding the certification report. None were voiced. This concluded the presentation of the certification report.

**Financial Report**

Mr. Donahue presented his report. He stated the biggest number they needed to look at was the FETI statutory dedication. Their run rate was approximately \$260,000 behind last year. If they continued spending as they were doing now, that would zero them out at the \$265,000 cut. He congratulated everyone for reviewing practices and seeing what they could do to be more efficient. On the industrial side, they were doing things a little different than they had in the past. In the past, they had run lean and mean and not run any improvements, but he had made a decision that they would now spend as they went because he didn't want any large account balances sticking out there anywhere.

Mr. Metcalf asked if there were any questions regarding the financial report. None were voiced. This ended the presentation of the financial report.

**Old Business**

No old business was addressed.

**New Business**

No new business was addressed.

Mr. Steve added that he had just received the email that they were fully accredited now.

The next meeting was scheduled for May 18, 2016 at 10am at FETI.

Motion to adjourn was entertained by Mr. Metcalf. Motion was made by Mr. Castille and Mr. Latino seconded the motion. No objections were voiced. Meeting was adjourned.

Approved by: ~~Chad Major~~ C. Metcalf  
Charlie Metcalf

Date: 5/18/16