

Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2015

Commission Members Present:

Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Donald Milligan	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
James Wood	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana

In Attendance:

Sign-In Sheet was blank

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission meeting was called to order. Mr. Chad Major called the roll and announced that a quorum was present. The meeting began.

Old Business

Motion was made to adopt the minutes from the January meeting as written by Mr. Butch Browning and was seconded by Mr. James Wood. No objection.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Chad Major stated that his report would be short. He reviewed some items that were discussed at the last meeting. He stated that they were going to have a handout of the budget slides for the different groups within FETI. He felt like it was a great presentation and breakdown of the different departments. Mr. Butch Browning stated that he thought it would be a great piece to forward out to people for them to get a better understanding of what their department was about and what was being done. Mr. Michael Donahue stated that the presentation was a summary of the collective work of the program managers.

The first slide showed the actual top line revenue represented to the time that the books were closed on January 31st and the second slide showed the bottom line for the same time period and the fiscal year comparison. He also stated that at this time bills were being paid out and revenue would catch up by the end of the fiscal year. The two items that stood out to him were significant changes within the HLO Marine program. Their major vendor had taken their training private so FETI was no longer benefiting from that group. FETI has been scrambling to recover that revenue. He further stated that rescue is significant because over the course of the last three years their business was predominantly USAR and now the funding was virtually at a standstill which places FETI in a conversion process.

They are picking up the private sector, rope, and confined space rescue. They are on track but there was a lot of revenue lost when the government business dried up.

Mr. Butch Browning asked for Mr. Michael Donahue to comment on the industrial. He believed that industrial was bringing in about \$2 million a year and asked if that was correct. Mr. Donahue answered that five years ago that was probably true but there have been a couple of things that have happened. They are currently bringing in around \$1.5 million which has improved over the last three years because it was lower. Mr. Donahue stated in his words the "obvious" that they had some issues with the programs and some customers were chased away. Also, the sizes of industrial fire brigades have shrunk by as much as 60%. People use to send out 60-70 people, but now they are getting response teams within the 15-18 person range.

Mr. Michael Donahue stated that they were on track to hit their budget this year of just short of \$2.5 million for all combined programs. He continued with the next slide showing the breakdown of the \$2.5 million dollar budget for all the programs. Lastly, he shared where the revenues that are generated are heading and the biggest one is the administrative building roof replacement. He commented that he hoped that this presentation helped and that there were extra copies if anyone was interested in having one.

Mr. Donald Milligan asked if they had heard anything about the projected cuts that was alluded to previously. Mr. Michael Donahue stated that Mr. Browning had just asked the same question. He stated that nothing has come down from the administration of LSU yet, but the budget will be out tomorrow and it will be dissected to see if FETI would be impacted directly or indirectly. Mr. Donald Milligan asked what could be attacked since their monies come from dedicated funds. Mr. Michael Donahue stated that the university could not attack. It would have to be the governor's office that would have the ability to make a move on the money.

He further stated that LSU recently did a series of cuts and FETI was not affected at all since their money was statutorily dedicated and FETI is revenue self-generated. They understand that there are no higher education funds that flow to FETI and that they pay their own way to keep the doors open.

Mr. Donald Milligan asked for confirmation that the government could raid the insurance funds. Mr. Butch Browning offered to answer the question. He explained that in the legislative session, they have a bill known as the suite bill. It lists pages and pages of special funds, but he does not believe fireman training ever was a victim of that. Other funds have been though including insurance rebates, fire marshal, and manufactured housing fund. One of the reasons that he believed FETI had not been touched was because there had not been a lot in the over collection fund or the surplus fund to make it noticeable. He gave an example of the administrative roof replacement. That was a surplus of monies that may be noticed because it is not seen as necessary or spent monies, but it is seen by the masses as \$250,000.

Mr. Michael Donahue commented that hopefully it would not be noticed since the bid period closed, the contract was awarded, and everything is set to go. Mr. Butch Browning stated that in the past, LSU had assessed indirect cost for doing business for firemen training, but he thinks that has all been eliminated now. Mr. Michael Donahue stated that it had not, and FETI pays currently \$171,000 per year. Mr. Butch Browning stated that LSU does have the right to re-evaluate the cost and increase the charge to FETI, but that is not really considered a cut, but a re-allocation of funds. Mr. Chad Major stated that it was just going to be a sit and wait thing to see what came from the capital. He felt that with the leadership they had right now that they were headed in the right direction.

At this time, no more questions were voiced and discussion of the Chairman's report ended.

Director's Report

Mr. Chad Major turned the floor over to Mr. Dave Casey. Mr. Casey updated the board on the new trailers. They are progressing. There are new personnel that they are working with now and he believes that they will take this on as a priority. Mr. Louis Romero asked if LSU had taken the trailers in or were they still being made. Mr. Casey stated that the replacement trailers for the field were done. The initial construction was done and they have one up in Region 2 that they are outfitting the inside. The contractor built the three tiers and the interior was being done by FETI. The interior was being laid out so that it could be changed for people going through multiple courses within FETI. The goal was for the student not to see the same scenario for every class. They would probably not be completed until late spring or summer. The emphasis for the trailers would be to support Firefighter I and local training on a regional basis. The plan was not to take it from fire station to fire station.

He mentioned the woman's dorm, but did not give an update. He commented on the hybrid classes. They expected to have some bumps in the road and issues and they had not been surprised. Articulation issues were expected. He felt that it is going well. He mentioned the meeting with the Fire Marshal in reference to the hybrid inspector. He stated that it looked very promising. They would be using the same vendor and they would be offering custom manuals that would include the Louisiana specific laws in the hard copy.

Mr. Butch Browning stated that Chief Wallis has been dealing with them on that. He stated further that it was going to be a really good thing with all the new requirements coming down for community risk reduction and the new grade schedule. They would be able to put fire departments through this class and capture all the state requirements, reporting requirements and the laws and maximize their points on the fire rating.

As a footnote, he added that there was going to be a new training component for the new rating requirements and with the online testing; it could be a new mission for FETI to use that same independent learning program for Fire Chiefs to get acclimated to the new schedule. Mr. Michael Donahue stated that the good thing about the online training was that they were not utilizing FETI dollars to develop it, but the textbook publishers were doing all of the production

work. Mr. Casey concluded the discussion on the classes and asked if there were any questions on the updates. No questions were voiced.

Mr. Casey moved to the new items in the report. He pointed out that the board had a flyer in front of them for the second annual training workshop. Last year, they had about 60 people in attendance and it was well received. The speaker was going to be the same this year for the two days, but it would be a totally different presentation. The first day would be aimed at anyone who did training for the fire department. There will be a lot of good information that can be taken away from this class. The information would be out on the HotLap newsletter hopefully that day.

He moved the discussion to the new PIAL changes. He perceived the significant change would give individual fire departments a big jump in credit for their training facilities. They would now get credit for using FETI facilities and it was not a carte blanche, all or nothing. From what he had been told, credit could be given for parts and pieces. For example, Baton Rouge could get credit for using FETI's burn building, but they had the power so they didn't need credit for that.

However, it could create a scheduling problem for FETI because a number of departments would want to get in there. He recommended that they hold multi-company drills set on particular dates since there was an additional cost to have multiple classes for small groups. Another benefit from having multiple departments meeting together was cross-pollination and looking at different ways of doing things and seeing different equipment used. He proposed for FETI to set different days throughout the month and Saturday for volunteer departments and layout the training, following the PIAL requirements.

He stated that he wasn't sure, but he thought that there should be an agreement between them and the outlying fire departments for them to receive their PIAL credit. Mr. Butch Browning stated that he believed that Louisiana should recognize a state agency as carte blanche. He stated that if it was not that way then there should be a change in the Louisiana addendum. Mr. Casey stated that it was more a question of whether the PIAL standard would require proof that the fire departments used FETI's facilities to meet PIAL requirements. He just didn't want to see anyone have any issues. Mr. Butch Browning felt that they should be seeing this when the fire departments are graded and he feels that a formal agreement between them and FETI, a state agency receiving statutory funding to provide the service, is senseless. Mr. Major stated that it really just needed to be documented that training took place on particular dates and times.

Mr. Casey stated that there were only two fire departments that had not used them previously who wanted to start now so they would be getting with them to determine their specific needs and then a fee schedule would be laid out. It wouldn't be a money making fee schedule, but a break even fee schedule. He was looking for suggestions on this. Mr. James Wood asked if there was a possibility of flexing people's work schedules so they could be off Monday and Tuesday and work only on the weekends in order to keep the cost down. Mr. Casey stated that

he didn't believe that would be a possibility because they were already understaffed in some areas, specifically maintenance. He stated that he could look at it though.

They did want to keep the cost down to the fire departments. There was a cost currently incurred for going out and doing training in the field and the cost of instructors, regular equipment pertaining to the course, etc. was included in the fee. The fee was a reimbursement of consumables. Mr. Casey stated that the only thing above this reimbursement that they had to hit the Stat Ded money for was for instructors to be there. Mr. Butch Browning stated that he thought that was what it was for.

Mr. Michael Donahue stated that the only extra fee that would be incurred was if the fire department in question was taking a course that would require, for example, medical personnel and it was being taken because of fire department choice on a night other than one when they had medical personnel present. The cost of adding any medical personnel would be passed on to the fire department. Mr. Casey does state that the fire departments are offered first the nights when all necessary personnel for the particular course being taken are there. Mr. Donald Milligan asked if the two departments in question supported the facility in certification and attended classes other than using them for training. Mr. Casey stated that they did.

He announced that they would be doing the second annual company officer leadership conference again at Eunice. It was being co-sponsored by the professional fire fighters. They were donating money to FETI to book the speaker. The agenda would be pretty much be the same as last year, other than it would be a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and it had been requested that they start a little later in the morning and get out a little earlier in the afternoon. The main speaker that they had set up is Mike Galliano. He would be doing two presentations and he was well known as one of the authors of the Air Management book. They were trying to pull in a second big name speaker but they were about \$3,500 short on the money. He stated that they were open to sponsors for this. This concluded the presentation and the discussion of the director's report.

Certification Report

Mr. Steve Gervais gave a quick update on the modular Firefighter One. The first component was set to start next week. He was set to attend that first night to discuss things and make sure that the group understood that it was a pilot program and their feedback would be of utmost importance. There were four modules so the first module may morph into something different by the time the fourth module came around. This was expected.

Hazmat ops re-test would be given today in the evening. He further stated that they could pilot the program for a limited time without having accreditation issues because they understood that there had to be some time to see if something was going to work. They did not feel that it was necessary to go through the motions if something was not working and should be pulled. Some departments have expressed interest in taking the modular testing without taking the modular training. They are currently looking into this to see if it is feasible.

He moved on to discuss the new certificate design. He stated that it is progressing and they have the new design set up. The dye, foils and embossing for the LSU seal was being created that day and he was hoping to have everything completed within the next 2-3 weeks. Once the new certificate blanks came out, the wording would be different and they would serve a dual purpose. LSU now had the permission and authority to print Pro-Board certificates. A price point was being established.

He further stated that stat sheets were supplied to everyone and they were hoping that very soon they were going to be releasing stats by parish which would be a change from the past reporting process. The pass rates from last July to January were for the most part over the 70% mark. Some testing modules were faltering slightly and he stated that he was working with the managers to identify whether it was a test bank issue or content issue. Mr. Donahue asked if there was a way to track the data for those individuals that tested through open challenge versus those who were taking courses. Mr. Steve Gervais stated that currently they could not.

Because of the current technology, many people wanted to get online materials and learn in that way as opposed to taking set classroom setting courses. He believed that this would be pushed heavier than in the past and that people could learn and get the basics of training in this way. Mr. Butch Browning noticed the pass rate for Firefighter I was very high and the some of the specialty courses were on the lower end. He felt like this spoke to the need for them to offer better specialty training.

Mr. Steve Gervais stated that Hazmat Ops has always been an issue and that they are reviewing the test bank and curriculum currently. The issue comes in when you increase classroom time for each topic then you increase cost to the organization. He commented that online materials maybe the answer to increasing the pass rate and also getting in the learning that the students need which is where piloting the different programs comes in.

Mr. Major asked if there were any questions regarding the certification report. No questions were voiced. There was no discussion.

Financial Report

Mr. Donahue stated that there was nothing new to report and there was nothing unusual that they were not aware of. Everything of importance had already been highlighted previously.

No questions were voiced. There was no discussion.

Old Business

No old business was addressed.

New Business

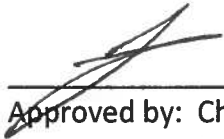
No new business was addressed.

Mr. Major asked Mr. Donald Milligan to email information on the joint conference so that everyone could book it on their calendars.


After some discussion, it was decided that the next meeting would be scheduled for March 16th, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Mr. Louis Romero asked for the dates of the leadership training conference in Eunice to be confirmed. Mr. Steve Gervais stated that it was scheduled for July 21-23.

Motion to adjourn was entertained by Chad Major and it was seconded by Louis Romero. No objection. Meeting was adjourned.



Approved by: Chad Major



Date: