

Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2014

Commission Members Present:

Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal (Proxy- Dan Wallis)
Michael Donahue	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
Charlie Metcalf	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
Donald Milligan	Louisiana State Firefighters Association
James Wood	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana

In Attendance:

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Carey King	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Christine Melancon	FETI
Eddie Pyle	FETI
Eddie Tessmer	FETI
Clay Crain	FETI
Rusty Lenard	FETI
C. Keith Bennett	FETI
Ed Smith	Baton Rouge

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission were called to order. The prayer was given by Mr. Charlie Metcalf. The pledge was led by Mr. Dan Wallis. Mr. Chad Major called the roll and announced that a quorum was present. The meeting was ready to start.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Major stated that there was a prop demonstration given after the last meeting which would be addressed by Director Casey in his report. The floor was given to Director Casey to present his report.

Director's Report

Mr. Casey began his presentation. He stated that his notes were sent to each member at Donald Milligan's request prior to the meeting. There were no updates since it was sent out. The weekend mini school went well. The lead evaluator workshop was held in Pine Country and some work was received from it. Steve Gervais was out on the road today. The construction on the trailers was going well even though they were difficult to see in the pictures. The bid was awarded for the gas props and Class A would close during the first business week of January. There was no new word out on the women's dorm campus. The meeting about the blended learning format with Jones & Bartlett went very good and they are making considerable progress on rolling that out. There was a phone and video meeting and they went over the props being put

in for AFG which were submitted and the deadline was a week ago last Friday. Kathe Jones took the lead getting all the information gathered, put together, and submitted. A burn prop was requested for out back. The intent was not to replace the burned building. It would still be fixed, but at least it would carry them through for some time. In time, it could be picked up and moved down the road by truckload to another location. It was the first time that AFG was allowing brick and mortar. Mr. Casey stated that it was at their own request that they considered doing a fixed prop instead of a mobile one.

Chad Major responded that since it was their own suggestion that they should get priority on that. Mr. Casey answered that he did bring that up to them.

The two new items PIAL Standards and they laid out what they were working on, Fire Fighter 1, Fire Officer, and the blended learning. It all fit very nicely. They would love to say that it was all planned and integrated, but it will work quite well. Expect the initial work for certifications office due to the bonus points that would be available now for certified inspectors. Mr. Casey stated that they had already started working on a highline version of the course. Instead of coming into a live classroom multiple days here and there, and online program would be taken and then a two day live class would be attended either here or Pine Country. They were working with the state fire marshal to coordinate this. The state fire marshal's concern is that the existing program is not Louisiana specific, it's generic. The online version would be Louisiana specific and include Louisiana codes and requirements, state fire marshal procedures and APL references and information. This would be the easiest of the three programs to implement. However, they are pushing forward with Fire Fighter 1 and Fire Officer 1.

James Wood asked if there was a target date on the programs being completed.

Mr. Casey stated that they were actually using part of the Fire Fighter 1 next month. There would be a partial roll out in Avoyelles. They planned to have a more expansive version of it in the late spring. It is anticipated that the whole program for the Fire Fighter would be out for the summer. They are also looking for late spring for the Fire Officer to be up and running. There would be a pilot class for that and an invitation would be put out for it. The big difference in the Fire Officer versus the inspector is the NFPA standard has a huge amount of local information that they can't teach because they don't know all about how their department works, but when the chief designee signs off on the specific information on all departments, the NFPA standards would be met better than the present standing. Their accreditation requirements would be filled better as well. Once the 1's are going, then they will begin to work on the 2's.

Mr. Casey then stated that he did have a quick report from Steve Gervais, certifications office. There were 24 people in attendance at the Northern Region meeting. Nate, Steve, and Mr. Casey went up there and gave presentations. They had 7 new evaluators. There was really nice feedback from the people that were there. They had some open dialogue time, just going over processes, and procedures. Steve had been working on automating some of the forms and documentation. They have progressed from an officer having to input data five times to only once and it shares it which is a big help. They are working on a few more of these steps to make life easier for fire fighters and fire departments trying to do the documentation.

Mr. Casey shared that the ProBoard folks would arrive on Monday. He explained that their accreditation does come through ProBoard. He continued to explain that ProBoard gives a self-analysis tool to go through everything they are going to look for. They had already found a few things that needed to be tweaked such as procedures, documentation, etc., but nothing really significant. The ProBoard exit interview was planned for Wednesday afternoon. Several CAC people were invited to be there to answer questions. No issues were anticipated.

For next year, Mr. Casey and Steve would be working on having a more regional delivery for testing with a more robust schedule so that travel can be reduced and convenience for testing is available. At the next meeting, there would be a more detailed report available on how the ProBoard went and some of the revisions to the certification process as they are working internally with the CAC.

Mr. Major opened up the meeting to questions from the audience. There were none. Donald Milligan asked if everyone liked getting the reports before the meeting. The group in attendance agreed that they did. He responded that they would repeat that in the future.

Mr. Milligan stated that he saw in his folder some training figures and asked if that included any municipal training.

Mr. Casey stated that it included regional training, but did not include classes like the 40 hour investigator class or other similar classes. It was strictly regional training delivered at no cost to the department.

Mr. Milligan responded that he saw those numbers and he likes to see what industrial is doing. He wasn't sure if that was possible or not. He queries if they were monitoring training from one to the other. If so, he would like to see numbers on that.

Chad Major stated that on the next report that we can show all the Municipal and then when it comes to the industrial side, one of their managers would put that together.

Mr. Dave Casey mentioned that there is a significant change in the PIAL standard which is not in effect yet. The ability for a local fire department to get credit for a training center while using their facility is important. Presently, the departments can get credit, but they have to be there 18 hours per person per year. Mr. Casey discussed this with Chief Albert. Currently, they have proposed to have Nick schedule a couple of drills during the month for departments to sign up. Some have been very successful.

Over the next year, they, along with West Baton Rouge, are trying to angle toward specific programs that would generate credit and meet the requirements. It was also discussed about opening up to other departments. The only concern was making sure that they were not overwhelmed and that they still were able to train their own people adequately and at a company level which is a PIAL standard and requirement for opening up to other departments. Mr. Casey believed that this could be accomplished easily. There have only been a couple of departments that have asked so far.

Chad Major posed a question that was also brought up at the last meeting. He asked when a tuition increase should be anticipated. Mr. Casey asked if he means for the recruit groups or across the board. Chad Major believed that the initial question was in regards to the recruit groups and then was changed to include all other. Mr. Casey stated that the cost for the I-series and other classes are being worked on. The plan was to wait until everybody's fiscal year changed and then notifications would be sent regarding changes. Over the next few months, they will meet with the fire chiefs who utilize them and go over that. There was an added request to do EMT and that has been costed out. Interest would be assessed before moving forward.

Chad Major agreed that interest should be assessed. He suggested that if possible could he be informed of additional training costs in the future so that he can budget appropriately ahead of time. Mr. Casey answered that that is why they were planning to meet with the fire chiefs regarding this. They have also been considering adding Driver Operator. The curriculum standards recently changed which requires some updates.

Chad Major opened up the meeting to questions from the audience. There were none. He then called for the financial report.

Financial Report

Mr. Donahue gave the report on the budget and financials.

Mr. Donahue stated that the November spreadsheet was sent out to everyone. Chad Major asked if there were any more questions.

Donald Milligan stated that he had a few questions. First, he asked if the amount showing on the Plant fund was excess money from year to year.

Mr. Donahue responded that it was unspent revenue from the statutory dedicated funds. Second, he asked how many years it had taken to build the amount that was there. Mr. Donahue stated that it had taken three years. However, when reviewing the track record it was not an even reach to get to the million dollars. They had started out three years ago with \$49,000 and increased by \$250,000 and then increased it by \$500,000. Last year, it was increased by less than \$60,000.

He stated he was not prepared with details but he could generalize with the biggest reason for such dramatic increased was adjustments in full time positions and then vacant full time positions. For example, at one time, there was no director salary being charged to it nor were there managers or regional coordinators in Region 2. This was about \$300,000 in salary expenses we did not have before. If the municipal schools run as they did last year, they would be on target to do approximately \$0 to negative. The Plant fund would have to be drawn from because of expenses that were not incurred in prior years. At this time, there was not a mechanism that intentionally budgeted to add additional money. Every dime that is brought in is spent.

Donald Milligan asked if the self-generated fund was listed correctly at \$2.5 million. Mr. Donahue stated that that was an annual projected amount. Donald Milligan stated that the report

was listing them at roughly a million short of the projection. Mr. Donahue explained that the amount listed was an annual projection not year to date.

Donald Milligan asked for an explanation of services listed on the budget. Michael Donahue asked Loree to clarify professional services for Donald. Loree explained that it included contracting services for work to be done, consulting work, or things of that nature.

Donald Milligan asked if Delgado and Webster Parish were a flow-through process from the legislature, through us then out. Chad Major explained that the mandate of the legislature was a \$75,000 per entity. Michael Donahue added further that there was \$70,000 for the Pine Country facility, \$70,000 for the Webster Parish School Board District, and \$70,000 for Delgado. They are allowed to spend the \$70,000 allocated for Pine Country and the other ones are just an LSU flow-through. Charlie Metcalf commented that he had an understanding of the process that happens through Webster Parish and Pine Country and asked if it was the same for Delgado. He also asked if they sent instructors to them.

Michael Donahue stated that it did not have anything to do with FETI. It dealt with Delgado and how they chose to spend their money and their relationship with the legislature. FETI had no administrative oversight of how they money was spent.

Charlie Metcalf asked for some history on how Delgado came into the 2% money. Chad Major stated that it was just politics. He remembered when it passed with unanimous vote. At the time it was requested, FETI's request was for a million dollar so they really couldn't argue with Delgado receiving that funding.

Michael Donahue added that there was a general fund authorization to FETI. He was unsure how it was calculated. The first year it was approximately \$350,000 and it ran concurrently for four years. The maximum it reached was \$980,000 and then it was discontinued 4 or 5 years ago.

Old Business

Chad Major stated that he should have asked about the tuition increase during the old business section. Michael Donahue brings up the revenue self-generated report. It was brought up at the last meeting but postponed because of the length of the last meeting. The managers had prepared the report for this meeting.

While the managers were preparing to present their reports, Chad Major asked Loree to add a new line item, New Business, to their agenda. Sometimes there was a quorum present and at other times there was not, so a new business item would be introduced at the present meeting and then be discussed and / or voted on at the subsequent meeting. He stated that when the notices were given out for the upcoming meeting, those items would be listed under old business and everyone would know what was coming up.

The presentation of the revenue self-generated reports began.

Eddie Tessmer, manager over the industrial program, presented his report. He stated that he was also over the fire extinguisher certification program and the Marine fire program. Basically, he explained the industrial programs dealt with the facilities seen along the river, the chemical industry, paper mills, etc. Customers have been coming from South Louisiana, Texas and other states. They are back to being in the national spotlight as in the past 20 or 30 years ago. The largest classes offered are open fire brigade refreshers. Different companies book 1-2 day training sessions which combine lectures, discussions, tabletops, and live fire exercised. The industrial fire school is a 3 day school that is set up and it has become more popular. Helicopter landing officer is another class that is given through the fire program in congruence with Shell, offshore, and over in Robert. It has been being given since 2007. Currently, they are running about 16 courses a year with 10-20 guys in each class. Student totals have continued to rise over the last few years. In 2008-2010, there was a little bit of a drop off. After re-evaluating the program and making changes, it is being re-introduced to customers, new and old. Showed a slide with revenues and balances that are left over.

The totals have remained the same for the past 2 years, but a decent increase over the past 4-5 years. There have been different expenses leftover amounts each year because the same expenses are not incurred each year. Expenses differ. Clients enjoy the convenience and close location. They are trying to improve their business practices, bringing clients in and what they do for their clients. Also, reinvestment and improving props is another way to improve business practice. Just like with anything else, if the customer does not like the program and tools and training offered, they will go somewhere else which could threaten the program. They strive to be thorough. Sometimes, it is difficult to be competitive because there are some training programs with lower costs, but the training is not as complete. He opened the floor for any questions. None were voiced.

Eddie Pyle, director of the Emergency Medical Services training program, presented a description of their services. The most popular courses they provide are Basic Life Support for healthcare providers and the EMT. Student totals are climbing every year. The challenge the program faces is operating on a deficit which is being addressed by re-costing their programs. Re-costing was effectively done for the EMT course and the Emergency Medical Responder course, formally known as First Responder. A brand new course will be offered in the spring called Advanced EMT. Program strengths are that they have very good classed with highly experienced instructional staff. All instructors were full time paramedics with 10-15 years of experience. The EMS coordinator, Mr. Bankston, has at least 30 years of experience and almost that many years as an EMS instructor.

Eddie stated that their fees are reasonable. It was asked what the current fees were. Eddie Pyle states that EMR is currently \$450. EMT is \$1,000 and advanced EMT is \$1,500. Competition is high because there are over 600 instructors in the state. Several of the ambulance companies offer it for free to their employees. Business and industry are different and they are hoping to capitalize on that market. Chad Major asked if the bureau was considering re-certifying instructors to ensure the same up to date instruction was being taught and that the quality of instruction was there. Eddie Pyle stated that they recently to the fire marshal's office and one of the ways they anticipate "culling the herd" so to speak is to require all instructors to take the national registry exam at whatever level they intend to teach at. Chad Major stated that he does

not feel like it will be a good way to determine certification. Some individuals may be great at being a paramedic and recertifying, but may not be instructor material at all.

Eddie Pyle stated that their instructors must be certified Instructor II and are actually monitored and evaluated also. The bureau is going to address this from a quality improvement standpoint. They are planning on re-visiting the QIM program which is the Quality Improvement Program where they actually send out bureau staff and evaluate people. He opened the floor for any questions. None were voiced.

Keith Bennett, Hazmat programs manager, introduced himself and presented the report. The main courses offered are the 40 hour tech class and refresher, team leader, Hazmat and general emergency response. Student totals have grown quite a bit over the last few years. Continued growth has been seen and the projections are good for this year. Finances have also increased. In 2010, gross dollars were a little over \$100,000 and loss 98K. Changes were made. Presently in the last quarter, they have already hit \$101,000. They should end the year around \$150,000 after the first half of the fiscal year. There has been a lot of investments. New Level A suits, new SCBA's, and new props have been purchased. Also, a designated classroom has been added.

Program strengths include having a prime location in the LSU corridor and industry is booming in South Louisiana. Businesses are expanding. There is now a dedicated permanent classroom set up with props. They also have the ability to travel and teach. They just got back from Salt Lake City and have plans to travel to Tennessee and Kentucky. There are new courses under development such as Advanced Hazmat and Hazmat Evolutions. Cheaper competition hurts them sometimes, but sometimes it helps. Sometimes the quality of the competition's classes is not up to par and does not meet audit requirements. He opened the floor for questions. None were voiced.

Kathe Jones, manager of the Rescue program, presented her report. She stated the most requested courses are heavy industrial classes. Rope Confined Spaces is the initial 40 hour class and refreshers are available. Presently, industrial workers are the major clients for this program. Municipal comes in second and military comes in third. Technical rescue is the focus and have moved away from the USAR classes. More classes are being taught, but with less numbers and that is with one full time instructor. The numbers, \$530,000, are definitely a reflection of the USAR classes with the dwindling balance being a lot of money going back into the program. Even though USAR is not being taught anymore, money is still being spent on it because a huge cache of equipment has to be maintained both for the possibility of teaching those classes again as it comes back on the national stage or potentially using it as a state asset. Strengths are definitely our instructors. There is one full time instructor from Northern Alabama who was ready to retire and we hired in October. He lends significantly credibility to the program. There are also a part time instructors who is municipal based through the state and also several national instructors who are pulled from different locations depending on it if is for technical or USAR. Ability to travel is a major benefit. Most of the competition does not have the ability to travel.

One good thing that they all offer throughout the self-generating program is a one stop shop. Many of the clients will come in and do two days of fire, two days of rescue, one day of Hazmat,

and one day of EMS. It works out well for their clients and meets their needs. There is some cheap competition. There is some brand loyalty in cheaper competition which can be a threat. For example, some companies only use Roco or TEEEX. Another threat is that props available to them for technical rescue have not been updated in at least 14 years. So there have been requests for purchasing new props, making small changes over time, or sandblasting/painting current ones.

Quite a bit of self-generating money is used for the facility. There are some instances where municipal money is used but it is all specific for the municipal program. They are moving forward in the field by continued improvements, new prop development, and work force development.

She stated that she and Keith would be going to D.C. for a professional sales seminar so they can move forward with a facility and a "brand" that knows what they are doing. The goal is not to sit back and let peoples come to them, but go out and bring people in. They want to develop a brand of who they are so they will be known clearly by clients. She comments that Mr. Michael Donahue would have to be involved with them driving toward a definite plant for going out and getting in touch with the client and sharing what they have to offer.

Donald Milligan asked that since the rescue program is losing money, are they looking at adjusting costs. Ms. Jones responds that the loss of money in recent years goes back to two issues. One of which is the need to pay a quality instructor in a topic that is so specialized. For two years in a row, she had Corey Miller who left and went to private industry, one full time instructor for a short time who left and went to Exxon which cost a lot of cash. Michael Donahue asked why and requested that she explain that. He also asked how she replacing the hours that she lost.

Ms. Jones responded that since she only has one full time instructor then she had to bring in part time instructors from Missouri, South Carolina, Florida, and Alabama because those were the only guys that could be here for an entire 40 hour class. As well, some of the money is being put back into the props because it is desperately needed whether the collateral is there or not. For example, there were issues last fiscal year with the scaffold tower that are just now getting fixed. Ms. Jones also comments that she does not think that raising the price would be beneficial at this time. She opened the floor for questions. None were voiced.

Mr. Donahue addressed the Commission and asked if this met their needs for industrial numbers. He also asked if they would like a copy of the handout or presentation. Mr. Donahue summarizes the process for those in attendance. It started approximately 3 1/2 years ago where we met with a group of the clients that they had at the time. Some people were on the fence and said, "One more thing happens at LSU and I'll never be back." Some people just based on proximity or the fact that they graduated at LSU said, "We wish you would fix it, but we are still coming back."

He believes the major issues have been outlined. Half of the props that were available were built prior to 1980. You can only do so many evolutions on those props. Some of the props have been altered to serve dual purposes. For example, some props operate by going from propane

vapor to liquid vapor. They are in the process of re-engineering nozzles so that liquid propane and diesel shoot out of the same nozzle. Also, major investments right now are on low emissions props. Currently, a prop with 15 different evolutions on it is on the big LP field and after alterations will be five times as large and multiple evolutions can be performed on it. Mr. Donahue stated that they are working with Eddie and his group closely. Instead of standing a student in front of a prop and saying, "Fight this fire", the teaching will be more scenario-based with multiple props involved in the same thing and offering multiple dynamics.

Donald Milligan believes that a strong industrial side helps the municipal. Eddie Tessmer stated that in the LP project they are building more of what they used to have such as the trailer park and LPG tank. Now they have the ability to train the municipal guys and use props that they can get something out of. Mr. Dan Wallis spoke out and stated that this was his first opportunity to sit on the commission. He said he was pleased and that it was refreshing to see that the administrators of this fine establishment were using unique and innovative methods in sending their senior staff to sales training. They are looking at doing something similar at the Fire Marshal's office. He commented that the day of state and municipal government sitting back and expecting money to just come to them was long gone. He feels that they have to compete daily with industry with people who are wanting our jobs. He is tired of hearing, "Do more with less." He recognizes it is a challenge and it takes innovative folks.

Chad Major reflects on the past of several years, the state they were in, and the financial woes they were facing. Their organization is 1,000 miles from there. As the result of all the meetings we have held, they recognized that it will not get where it needs to be overnight. However, we have come a long way over a short time span. Rebranding and improving the props is important. He also asked if they have a 1,3,5 year plan that identifies the issues we have and for those clients who left because of various reasons have they been contacted to come see the new and improved programs. Mr. Donahue stated that they have reached out. They are members of different organizations and they are invited to various meetings. Keith attends every Bramas and Gamma meeting. Keith's group does free training sessions at the annual conferences for those folks and part of that outreach is saying, "We are different so come on back." He stated also that they have a 3 year plan, but not a 5 year plan because they are still in the process of fixing things that are broken. They will soon spend \$230,000 on the admin roof. The first engineering report came out on it 1979 that said the roof should be replaced. For 25 years we have been slapping tar on it. So until they can get past the point of fixing the emergencies, then they won't plan further into the future.


Next year, another brand new industrial prop will come online. It will be bought pre-manufactured and it will be a 48 ft. container for a marine engine fire that will be a simulated roll-over. The three year plan is to build a prop. The full time labor is not involved in building the props. It is the industrial people who work on their off hours when they are not training with us to construct the props that mirror closely what they see in their own facilities. A prop is built over a three year period, but every three years, they will be buying a pre-manufactured prop. As well, old props will have to be decommissioned over time or totally redesigned for today's environment.

Chad feels like there are many processes that are reactive and slow things down which is why he asked if there was a future plan in place. He feels that all the problems should be identified and should be prioritized and planned out. Mr. Donahue stated that each program has a different cost structure. He stated there is not so much of a plan in place as broad ideas. Hopefully within the next three years, there will be a lot more detail. He does not believe that they have even gotten close to realizing the increase their customer base which is why it is time to do professional sales training and sales management programs so that they treat every client the same beforehand, during, and after. That is part of the branding of LSU. When they come to see them, it is the whole package.

Dan Wallis feels that that will merge over into the municipal side. He feels that sales training is huge. Donald Milligan stated that since the commission sits here he feels like they need more knowledge and also need to be more involved. This will give them information that they can share with their groups and across the state. Mr. Donahue added for the commission that 65% of the revenue is received during a 3 month period. They are addressing this issue. Dave is designing "Fire Fighter Recovery Transport". This will allow the students to be in an air conditioned environment as they move to/from the props. As well, part of the plan for three years from now maybe that FETI may be open at night. Our biggest constraint is the fuel oil separator. We can only accommodate so many people on the field at a time. Mr. Donahue stated that if there were any further questions that they could be emailed or presented to them.

Dave Casey asked if the certification report could be added to the standing agenda. Chad approved it being added as a standing agenda item. Chad asked for the next meeting date to be decided. After some discussion, it was decided that the next meeting would be held on January 23, 2015 after lunch in conjunction with the equipment show.

Motion to adjourn was made by Chad Major. No objection. Meeting was adjourned.


Approved by: Chad Major

Date: 2.26.15