

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2015**

**Commission Members Present:**

Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal (arrived at 13:30)
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 (arrived at 13:40)
Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Martino Latino	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association

**In Attendance:**

Carey King	FETI
Eddie Pyle	FETI
Carrie-Anne Carpenter	FETI
David Coco	FETI
Wayne Cruse	FETI

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission was called to order. The prayer was given by Mr. Charlie Metcalf. The pledge was led by Mr. Louis Romero. Mr. Chad Major called the roll and announced that a quorum was present. The meeting began. Michael Donahue suggested that they take care of voting on the minutes.

**Old Business**

Motion was made to adopt the minutes from the December meeting by Mr. Michael Donahue and was seconded by Mr. Donald Milligan. No objection.

**Chairman's Report**

Mr. Chad Major stated that he did not have anything new to report. He recapped a few things that happened at the last meeting. There was a quorum present, they viewed slideshows and presentations by each individual division of FETI to show what they were currently doing and the direction they were heading in, and the current meeting was scheduled. He commented that there was some discussion made in regards to the commissioners who were absent at the previous meeting and did not get to see the presentations.

Mr. Donahue believed that they discussed getting a copy of all the presentations to the commissioners who were not able to attend the last meeting, but he stated he was not sure if it was in the packet. Mr. Chad Major believed that it was extremely beneficial to see every department broken down. He also stated that he was hearing less talk about FETI not meeting status quo so he feels like that means they are doing a good job. Mr. Donahue commented that there should be a colored slide deck, but did not see it. He stated that he would find it.

**Director's Report**

Mr. Dave Casey started by giving a few updates. The bid had been awarded for the Class A props and for the Class B props. The company that received the bid for the mobile A prop which was the trailer, a mobile burning building was a new company we have not seen before. It should be in and completed by June. He then discussed their ProBoard accreditation.

They were awarded their ProBoard accreditation at the recent Congress meeting. He gave explanation of the process. He thought that if they did all the paperwork and ProBoard was happy with it, then you would just get certified, but apparently once the paperwork is completed, it would go to a formal vote. There were people there that did not get approved. After discussing and talking with representatives from other states, he stated that FETI was nowhere near the top, but they were nowhere near the bottom either.

They were in the middle and received some input from other agencies which would alter how they did some things in the future. He further stated that there were several official findings by the ProBoard, but they were not surprised by anything listed. They were aware they were not tracking their question performance like they were required to do. The computer equipment will be adjusted to do that and a couple of inexpensive purchases would have to be made. Dave Casey asked Steve Gervais if there were any other findings. Steve Gervais stated that the Officer 3 was not re-accredited due to an issue stemming from the way they conducted the practical evaluation for that level. There was a transition from when it was originally developed. The practical evaluation has morphed into another concept and methodology simply because of time constraints of the evaluation. He stated that they had not noted that change.

The issue with Officer 3 would simply be a change of methodology form that they would have to submit which in turn would require ProBoard to award the accreditation for Officer 3 to FETI. Dave Casey stated that they had been re-approved and the ProBoard accreditation would carry for a term of five years. The intel that was gleaned from other various agencies was informative and helpful. They were able to bounce ideas off of them. It was a lot of give and take. He mentioned Nate and Christen for all their hard work. Based on the seniority of FETI personnel which were all new, ProBoard was impressed that FETI was able to provide everything they asked for when they asked for it.

He stated that there were two new trailers outside that he would like everyone to look at after the meeting. They came out really nice. Pro Pull, a company there in town, did them. They were taller than the old ones. They had three fixed floors in them and then all the insides could be adjusted and they were working on that. Originally, they had a survivor trailer and a maze. The new items were better and could be adjusted to give more options. It would take them a few months to get them out on the road. The new trailers would be very useful for the Firefighter 1 programs.

He changed the topic to the women's dorm, the area that they had been hearing about for the past year and half. He asked everyone working how they liked it out there. He stated that they had been working with someone on campus all this time and they had kept hitting roadblocks and red tape, but that would hopefully be changing pretty quickly because the person they had been dealing with was no longer there. The new person in charge did not seem to see the same amount of obstructions. The architects

have been hired and they had plans which have already been approved by the state fire marshal. They needed FETI's electric grid. There was progress and they would be going to bid on that very directly. The intent was that they would have it for the next recruit class and it would be ready to go.

Dave Casey goes on to discuss the blended or hybrid learning format for Firefighter 1 and the Fire Officer I program. Progress was being made. Presently, they were planning on two online versions for Firefighter 1. One would be synchronous and the other asynchronous. He explained that synchronous was when you had a volunteer fire department or a couple of departments and they did their online classes, then their practical skills in the classroom setting. Their intent with the mobile props and the trailers was to come in regionally on Saturdays and give the volunteers a chance to sign off on skills that maybe the departments didn't have the props and materials to do. The process included the skill drills where they put them in live smoke and worked with them. They would also do skill sign offs and testing on a regional basis.

This had been a big change and should meet people's needs really well. It was fitting nicely with the new PIAL standards. The mentored version is different. It seemed to be a standing problem for most of the smaller departments or volunteer combinations, because it was hard to do training with them. This new system was based on an old volunteer fire department program that used to be used in the 70's.

New trainees would be assigned a mentor. The mentor would take them through a vast majority of JPR's and the 1001 Standard. They would have the online access for the classroom portion, but it would allow you to do a classroom for 1-4 people without killing your department. And then they would be there on the weekend to help with the props that the local department may not have. It facilitated a much more convenient and easy way of training even though the course is still difficult. In order to achieve this, they would be beginning a new class that would be associated with the National Fire Academy 12 Hr course. That organization had done away with the class so FETI took it and revised it to today's standards.

In a nutshell, it is for company officers to teach their crew and for the class to teach this program. So they would be made familiar with how to navigate to the online component, how to use the taskbooks, student safety, and tactical training. The new version is about 16 hours and now the NFA has asked for their revised program on this to use again because they are now impressed with it. The partial pilot is going on right now and should be completely ready by midyear at the latest. The partial pilot at Avoyelles is a standard traditional instructor led class, but online components are being tried.

There is a second pilot scheduled in Vermillion Parish which will be more electronic. They are going to try to do several pilots so they can de-bug all aspects of the program. ProBoard had no issues with it and FETI would be bringing them up to date shortly. ProBoard would have to officially vote on it to incorporate it. Dave Casey opened the floor for any questions. Donald Milligan asked if they were allowing pilots to test awareness and ops which is nothing different than testing in the modules. Dave Casey stated that his groups should be able to. Steve Gervais stated that they should emphasize the term pilot because there are repercussions if it is not emphasized.

Currently, ProBoard approves the methodology. The problem would come in if we started doing module testing outside of a pilot without giving them the proper paperwork that indicated a different methodology of testing. It would jeopardize their accreditation. Donald Milligan commented that once the pilot was polished and cleared, everyone would have the options. Steve Gervais stated that there would be some caveats and that they just spoke with the CAC about the same thing. The fire chiefs are

excited about the long training being put into smaller sections. There was a question posed by the CAC in regards to the costing. The program would still cost the same because the preparation was the same.

Steve Gervais explained that if it improved the pass rate, it would be a great investment. Currently, they were following the Jones and Bartlett textbook for this particular pilot project. It is being taught in sections and instead of a 100 question test at the end of the whole class, the students are being tested with a 25 question test and practical skills testing at the end of each of the four modules. The practical skills testing must be passed before proceeding to the written exams. At the end of the four modules, all the scores would be combined and if everything was successful, and the score was 70% or higher on all four modules, then the student would earn a Firefighter 1 certification.

They may change some of the modules because that is the purpose of a pilot, to see what is working and what is not. The pass rate is expected to improve because some students do learn better in smaller sections and there is less anxiety. ProBoard does require though that the course remain the same no matter how it is split up.

Michael Donahue asked what would happen if the student failed the first module test. Steve Gervais stated that the normal process would be followed. Currently, if a test is failed, the student can retake the test. The same protocol would be followed if the test was failed a second time only with a 90 day probation period. The student would be allowed to continue with the training for module 2, 3, and 4, but would not be allowed to test until they completed the first test with a passing grade. Butch Browning asked if it was possible that if a student failed the first module and continued with training if he could actually come to LSU and retake his test or take the one large test on all his training at once. Steve Gervais stated that it had not been addressed, but he would say yes that that would be possible if the student had met all the requirements and all the practical skills were completed.

Steve Gervais stated that splitting the class into these sections could also assist in other scenarios such as a student not completing because of extenuating circumstances. Butch Browning asked what the pass rate for the conventional Firefighter 1 test was currently. Steve Gervais stated that he was unsure about that right now. Wayne Cruse stated that when you combine the recruits from various schools and the volunteers, the average pass rate is about 70%. In years past, it was higher because you could just come in and take your test and not prepare for it. The pass ratio is important and Wayne Cruse feels that it will increase, but the focus is more on retention. The only problem with doing the Firefighter 1 out in the state is that the retention rate is not always reliable because it is difficult to keep those people encouraged to stay in there and keep going with the training.

Butch Browning commented that for people who do have extenuating issues then there would be a timeframe determined by the CAC which could be one year or a different time period. Dave Casey stated that there were a couple of safety nets as well for individuals who face, for example, deployment or job issues. The individual could also move into the asynchronous mentor program. He mentioned that the test given at LSU was not a ProBoard test. It was through LSU and was accredited by IFSAC and ProBoard, but not actually distributed by them.

Butch Browning asked if the tests were gotten from a test bank. Dave Casey stated that they bought them and developed and revised them with the help of the CAC. He stated that in the past, the instructors have had an open platform to use what textbooks that they wanted to, but it makes it more difficult to test. For the pilot, they are dedicated to one textbook which is a new way of doing things. They are cleaning up the current test and the new one through the new vendor who is less expensive

will be Jones and Bartlett specific. The old test was aligned with all the textbooks so there were many questions and information on the tests that the students had never been taught. An open platform on textbooks is not as difficult to achieve for Firefighter 1, but almost impossible once the student goes into Fire Officer 1.

Martin Latino stated that in the past, Ops was the most failed test and if you looked at it now, you would see that that text had gone through the most metamorphosis. Dave Casey stated that another issue might be that for one of the tests there were two study guides out there for the students and they were based on old books. Right now, the course is set up to fit everywhere from New York to Crowley. That is too broad. He stated that what would help Ops and other programs most was to write objectives for the JPR's and say specifically what needed to be done. Other states had done this and they had come up with 60 JPR's in an objective format. They were run through a group and determinations were made, times were set and opportunities to try it were made.

He feels that the individual instructors and students should have this information right up front. FETI does not teach to the test. The students have to know all the information provided because all the information is important to the job they will be doing. Donald Milligan feels that regardless if they pass or fail, the students are better trained than when they came in. Steve Gervais stated that no matter if there is a 100% passing or failure rate, FETI is going to be in contact to find out from those students their perspective on what went well or what went wrong.

Butch Browning asked how many hours the actual class was. Dave Casey stated that the actual in class time, instructor led was about 64 hours. Butch Browning commended the staff for this initiative and stated that it is going to be beneficial for sending people fully trained into the dangerous situations they face. He feels that volunteers are given equipment that they are not being trained to use and they will never be trained if they are expected to go to an academy. Dave Casey stated that having the two different versions would provide options and flexibility. Dave Casey stated that he understands that they are biting off a lot to chew all at once, but they are also working on an online Fire Officer and Fire Inspector course.

The Fire Officer is the next one that would be put out. The results would be two class sessions which would help keep expenses down, but it would give a more qualified person when they were finished. Once the students completed the first class, they would get the online code to navigate the website. Videos and PowerPoint could be added which would be state specific. After that, there would be pods set up where the need was the greatest to perform practical skills training which can also be done on Saturdays. At the second class, the students would bring their task books because those would have to be completed for certification. After the second class, the certification exam would be taken. This type of class would give a much better oriented person to their agency. The first one is in February and another one in March. These would be in parts and pieces because they were trying them out.

Dave Casey moves the discussion to the NFPA 1021 standard. And he asked the group what they would like to see in addition to this. At this time, it has been very well done, but it does not have anything that is Louisiana specific in it. He knows they are discussing and adding the regional mutual pacts at the company officer level only and the state emergency response plan. He stated that he gave a survey to everyone that was performed by Hotlap. He added that if there was anything that they wanted to have added to it, please be specific and send him an email. He stated that it was going to be nice to tailor the two day classes to fit different people's needs.

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

### **Certification Report**

Steve Gervais stated he did not have an agenda. He started by giving some stats. In the last six months, July 1<sup>st</sup> - December 31<sup>st</sup>, there had been a total of 3,388 tests that were administered. 183 were industrial and 3,025 were municipal. 2,449 had passing scores. 72.3% had an average score of 73.2%. The other issues stemmed from just having a lot of new things happening right now. The electronic transition and the certification office now have a new test request form in Adobe pdf fillable format that allows the user to use electronic signature if they choose to and they can automatically email it or print and fax or scan and email it. The efficiency concept is great.

The internal test management system had been being toyed around with and is going quite well. When a test is requested by a person, the database saves the person's information and creates and stores a roster for that individual. It saves all their information for class sign in, etc. The shining star of the electronic department is the grade reports and result reports. In the past, the policy stated timeframe for getting certificates and results was four weeks. It is still the same for receiving paper copies, but now after piloting the program last year, they are hoping to get results electronically back to students within 5-7 days. They are working on getting more electronic based. The next step will be to get a web based interface which will lead to more efficiency and more information available to candidates and training officers.

Butch Browning asked if under that concept could that be an option for testing at an assessment center. Steve Gervais stated that the answer to that was yes and no. He used Sylvan as an example which is very expensive. There are other options available such as Pearson View. The test banks would be there in the computer for them via electronic connection. There would be a process for registration that would authorize the student to take that particular test. Of course, there would be a fee. Florida is actually doing this. The center fee is around \$30-35 which is reasonable because Sylvan can be up to \$100. The tests are timed and monitored by a person employed by the center. He is not sure how the departments would take the extra cost, but the advantage is that it is convenient and can be taken at any time.

He pointed out that Florida does not even do any testing themselves. It is all done electronically through Pearson View and they get \$15 per test which goes under an application fee. Butch Browning asked how many employees were actually travelling to perform testing. He stated that there was himself, Nate, and Christen full time, and there are a lot of proctors that were paid by the hour and usually a test didn't go any longer than 3-4 hours depending on their drive. He stated that they were trying to regionalize testing centers and these sites could be scheduled with small time lapse in between. The goal is to get as much state coverage as possible every month and then be able to have some availability there. If someone missed a class, they would have some other options. They were trying to get away from travelling back to a location for a few people who missed a test. The ProBoard is forcing their hands to become more diligent in knowing the resources available to them.

Butch Browning asked if they were still accommodating people who were willing to come to them if they needed their certification in a week. Steve Gervais stated that they were. He also stated that he was pro online testing, but they have to make sure that they have the resources available and the right infrastructure in place. Dave Casey commented that there are many strings attached with their

accreditation. They are trying to make the online resources more efficient. The set up for outside testing centers can be expensive.

If Pearson View is used, they would already have their questions built in the question bank. They would just need to be reviewed to make sure they were correct and lined up with their curriculum. Other centers would be more expensive because they would have to build their question bank from scratch. His only concern is the expense. Butch Browning stated that if it was available it could be an option for the person who needed something right now. He stated that if they were able to offload an expense, they might not need to charge anything for a test and those monies could be diverted to be used for other things within the trade school.

Steve Gervais commented that in the past, the biggest complaint had been that certification didn't support itself. Dave Casey stated that they were still in the black right now, but not by a lot. Butch Browning suggested that a deal could be struck with Baton Rouge, Metairie, and Shreveport for an assessment center and if it's affordable, then that might take off as an option. Steve Gervais stated that he did look at Florida and their success may be based on the number of users, but they did go completely statewide with outside center testing and it ended up being cost efficient for them. Steve Gervais did not have the information, but they would be looking into it for the modular testing.

Steve Gervais mentioned some items that came out of the CAC meeting that morning. There was a debate over the hazardous materials technician and currently the way certification stood with that. Through previous administrations, Chemistry A & B were pre-requisites for Hazmat techs. There has been a lot of discussion about that and he stated that the issue resurfaced last October and came to a head today to determine what the course of action would be. The CAC did decide to remove Chemistry A & B as a prerequisite for Hazmat technician simply because the standard did not require chemistry. The standard stated that the tech must have a basic knowledge of Chemistry which most students already have. It is not to say that some chemistry component would not come in the future, before tech or after or even included in the training program itself. That may not be for the CAC to decide. It may be for the Hazmat team, the state police, etc. Just by the nature of demand, chemistry may be put back in.

Lastly, Steve Gervais stated that they recently had an issue with their blank certificates. The template and design was held by a company that went out of business. The local printing company was able to do their best to redesign close to what they had and not infringe on any copyrights. The border will still be the gold leaf foil similar to what they have now. They are going to embed the "Carrol L. Herring Fire & Emergency Training Institute" in the gold foil during the printing process for extra security against forgery.

The biggest changes would be the removal of the LSU seal watermark and the relocation of it as a small graphic and the addition in the printing process of an embossed gold LSU seal which previously was hand stamped on each sheet in their office. Prominent wording changes included the removal of IFSAC from the blank so that they could print either IFSAC or ProBoard certificates on their own. They are working on the pricing.

Michael Donahue asked what the annual fee to ProBoard and IFSAC was. Steve Gervais stated that ProBoard was around \$2,300 and IFSAC was a little bit more. Michael Donahue asked if there was a charge per certificate as well. Steve Gervais stated that they did and for IFSAC, they received a certain number of seals with their fee and any extras have to be paid for. He explained that with ProBoard, it

was a \$15 charge each time and if it was over 10 applications at one time then it would be reduced to \$10. When they started printing their own, there would still be a \$5 administrative fee for ProBoard and whatever FETI charges on top of the \$5 would be theirs to keep. He also stated that even though they charge, ProBoard does cover the cost of all his conferences that he attends hotel and travel expenses while IFSAC does not. Each organization gives its perks just in different ways.

Louis Romero asked for clarification on the certifications. He asked if there were two tests for IFSAC and ProBoard certifications. Steve Gervais stated that it was one set of classes and training, one test, but an extra fee for the extra certification for either ProBoard or IFSAC. Steve Gervais stated the cost of the new printing job for 5,000 certificates which is one run would be about 61 cents per blank certificate. It is a onetime fee per run and they are ready to go to press.

Dave Casey notes that ProBoard has been discussed a great deal at their meeting because of their recent accreditation. He reassures everyone that they are not shifting to ProBoard from IFSAC. They are only expanding the opportunities of people coming through the program so they can pick up either certification. He is going to be sending a letter to Chief Albert to take to the different groups in regards to this matter of importance. They were told that with PIAL, they don't recognize ProBoard because ISO doesn't recognize ProBoard which is not true. ISO doesn't recognize ProBoard or IFSAC either and he has that in writing from ISO. So all they are asking for is under normal ISO, that they refer back to state recognized certifications.

Butch Browning feels that it is not even an ISO issue, but a Louisiana addendum. Steve Gervais wondered if it is because they did not have ProBoard back when all of that happened. James Wood stated there is a blurb in the rules that they are to consider other accredited training and also paying the extra to get both IFSAC and ProBoard certifications makes it more flexible and portable for crossing state lines. Butch Browning clarified that the issue lies with PIAL not ISO and he does have the letter from ISO stating that they do not endorse or recognize IFSAC or ProBoard, but only the NFPA standard as certified by the state entity. Steve Gervais stated that he hopes that PIAL will entertain that and he does not feel that the state will shift primarily to ProBoard, but it is an issue for people who are retiring in one state and then coming to Louisiana and it is starting to pose an issue. Michael Donahue stated that for whatever reason the industrial clients choose ProBoard and the DOD pushes IFSAC. The state pushes ProBoard though. At one time, Louisiana was a ProBoard state, but then they went to IFSAC because it was cheaper.

Chad Major asked if there were any more questions. No more questions were voiced and the discussion ended.

### **Financial Report**

Michael Donahue stated that the December financials were attached and included in their packets. There were no unusual spikes in revenue or expenses and it was a standard December. At the next meeting, he stated that they would present the financial conclusion to the revenue self-generated presentation.

Chad Major asked if there were any more questions. No more questions were voiced. There was no discussion.



**Old Business**

Chad Major stated that one action that the board did take at the last meeting was to elect a new chair and vice chair. Chad Major was elected as chair and Mr. Donald Milligan was elected as vice chair for a one year period.

Michael Donahue stated that they would have to re-vote today because they voted via proxy over the telephone which they have since discovered was not appropriate procedure.

Michael Donahue made a motion to vote to re-affirm the vote that was taken at the prior meeting. Motion was seconded by James Wood. The vote was validated. No objection.


**New Business**


No new business was addressed.

Michael Donahue asked if they had announced whether or not the multi-story was tanked. Dave Casey stated that they had announced that it was at the last meeting.

After some discussion, it was decided that the next meeting would be on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Hotel Acadiana in Lafayette at 10:00 a.m. in conjunction with the professional association's annual conference.

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

  
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Approved by: Chad Major

  
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Date: