

Iowa Fire Service & Emergency Response Council

Board Meeting Minutes:
Tuesday, January 31, 2017
10:00am - 1:30pm
Fire Service Training Bureau

Council Members Present

Ellen Hagen - *IA Fire Chiefs Association*
Lynn Washburn-Livingston - *IA Association of Professional Fire Chiefs*
Justin Adams - *IA Association of Professional Chiefs*
Jeff Kling - *Public Member*
Alicia Lidtke - *Iowa Firefighters Association*
Mike Bryant - *IA Association of Professional Firefighters*
Marion Valero-Lehman - *IA Firefighters Association*
Kyle Gorsh - *FSTB (Acting Board Administrator)*

Labor Commissioner/Designee Ex Officio Members Present

Joe Mullen - *Division of Labor, Iowa Workforce Development*

Council Members Absent

Gabe Haugland - *Public member*
Thomas Craighton - *Emergency Medical Services*

Positions Currently Vacant

Iowa Fire Chiefs Association - *Chief Deb Krebill (nominee)*
IA Association of Professional Firefighters - *Thad White (nominee)*

State Fire Marshal Staff Present

Jeff Quigle- *State Fire Marshal*
Jim Kenkel
Russ Grossman
Dawn Beisner

Others in Attendance

Kim Fensterman - *Kirkwood Community College*
Bill Halleran - *IA Firefighters Association*
Don Minks - *Des Moines Airport Fire Department*

Board Administrator Gorsh call the meeting to order at 10:06am. The first item on the agenda was a welcome by State Fire Marshal Jeff Quigle, and introduction of council members who were in attendance. Board Administrator Gorsh provided a brief update on council vacancies and which council members could not be in attendance due to previous engagements.

Board Administrator Gorsh called the meeting to order at 10:06am. The first item on the agenda was a welcome by State Fire Marshal Jeff Quigle, and introduction of council members who were in attendance.

SFM Quigle turned the meeting over to Board Administrator Gorsh for an introduction of council members and a brief update on council vacancies and which council members could not be in attendance due to previous engagements.

BA Gorsh provided a report on the Fire Service Training Bureau:

First item on the report was about the Investigation into Certification.

Gorsh stated that issues about the Certification Unit were brought to the attention of the SFM. Kyle Gorsh and Steve DeJoode were assigned to go to the Bureau to look into the allegation. As part of the comprehensive internal review, inadequate, improper scoring was found that effected most levels of certification offered by the Bureau, which led to a full review that went back several years. This was a very lengthy process - ISU re-scored the exams, then they were returned and entered into the database. A plan was developed to offer refresher courses and retesting at NO COST to the students. The investigation resulted in the Certification Manager being arrested and charged with criminal charges. The impacted students were sent letters, Fire Departments were sent letters as well, and the Bureau is continuing to take calls from fire departments about who is affected.

Adams expressed a concern that those impacted would not have enough time to complete their refresher/retest within the 5-6 month window, and wondered who had made the determination regarding the time frame. Gorsh responded that the 1706 impacted firefighters were sent letters that included a map of the initial testing locations in each region of the state, and stated that the Bureau is working to meet the demand and will continue to post new locations on the website. Adams requested that the information about refresher/retest be sent to the Chiefs. Gorsh will send the Chiefs an email per Adams' request.

Valero-Lehman asked if everyone impacted had been informed. Gorsh responded that the Bureau has had a number of letters returned, and are working to get new addresses so they can be contacted.

Lidtkke questioned the re-grading process. Gorsh responded that ISU will re-grade - allowing the process to be taken out of Bureau hands.

Halleran expressed a concern that it was brought to his attention that a person scored 18% on a test, and questioned if the test had been scored by a different test key (5th vs 6th Edition). Gorsh responded that Certification has several of those that were brought to their attention and they will be re-checked those as soon as possible. Halleran wondered what the time frame was for signing up for refresher retests - he had heard three weeks and six weeks? Kyle responded that it is typically three weeks out but that the Bureau would allow some flexibility - as long as it is before the test so that the kits would be sure to include enough tests, etc.

Washburn-Livingston stated that the Chiefs were not sent the refresher/retest info that was in the letters to those impacted. Kenkel made copies and provided everyone in attendance with that letter and map.

Adams posed a concern that the Commissioner's report expressed a potential "down-play" of the value of

certification. Gorsh responded that the report had to be written in a way to encourage firefighters to get certified, but wanted to make it clear that the firefighters of Iowa are trained and can do their job. Washburn-Livingston stated that the flip-side of that is that it shows that the firefighters don't need to be certified, when the Professional Chiefs have a policy that firefighters will meet National Standards, suggesting that it could have been stated that FSTB believes that firefighters should be certified. Hagen expressed a concern that firefighters are actually not trained.

Krebill wondered when the Chiefs would get a list of the names of those impacted. Gorsh responded that letters would not be sent to the Chiefs in order to protect the firefighters - if the Bureau sent them out it would then be public record. He suggested the the Chiefs call the Bureau to find out who on their department was impacted.

Adams wondered if the Bureau is implementing anything to see trends that might be averted - i.e. HazMat tests - seemed that material didn't match the test. What is Bureau doing to change that? Gorsh stated that the Bureau is working to improve that - utilized Field Staff to review and improve test questions, and improved the odds of success by changing 25 question tests to 50, and 50 question tests to 100. We are hoping to implement some sort of analytic tool to evaluate and indicate areas to improve. Adams supported that stating that test-takers need to "know what they don't know".

Gorsh stated that the Bureau is working on computer-based testing models. A contract was signed in 2013 with Pearson Vue, but there were many "push-backs" from the fire service about limited locations, drive times, and cost, so after carefully consideration of the concerns, the decision as made to cancel the contract with Pearson Vue, but are continuing to look into other options. Washburn-Livingston wondered if there was a financial impact for cancelling to which Gorsh responded no, the fees were going to be charged when it was actually implemented and being used.

The next item in Gorsh's report was about the upcoming 93rd Annual Fire School. To date, 442 are registered to attend. Kenkel stated that they have cancelled two NFA offerings and are updating FULL/Cancelled classes on the website, and would look at the registrations again in another 1-2 weeks to evaluate whether the classes would go or not go. He stated that he would like to have 10-12 persons registered to keep a class. Adams wondered if the brochure had been mailed out. Gorsh responded that the decision was made not to send the brochure in order to save money. Kenkel stated that the cost to print and mail the brochures was over \$4,000. The brochure was available on the website, and would be sent out on request. He stated that he would welcome any suggestions for the future. Washburn-Livingston requested that a PDF of the brochure be sent to the Chiefs. Kenkel will send out after the meeting.

Next item on Gorsh's report was to announce the new HazMat Tanker Rollover prop. Grossman and Kenkel worked on the specs, and will be working on the curriculum, train-the-trainer, etc.

Gorsh also noted that he gave everyone in attendance at the meeting a flash drive to include: the Commissioner's report, list of council members, Minimum Training Standards, and an expense report.

Hagen requested an update on the status of the Bureau Chief position? SFM Quigle reported that the paperwork had been completed but it was on the Commissioner's desk. Washburn-Livingston expressed a serious concern about how imperative it was that a Bureau Chief be hired as soon as possible. Hagen expressed

disappointment with the actions of the Commissioner. SFM Quigle suggested that a letter be sent to her directly, or that she be contacted directly. Washburn-Livingston stated that the organizations are pulling together to have joint communication to work in solidarity to face adversity, and to maintain a joint voice.

SFM Quigle reported that the DPS is looking at having to come up with \$1,000,000 from the budget for fiscal year 2017. Washburn-Livingston suggested that the budget should not have an effect on the Bureau Chief selection. Adams wondered if the SFM has been asked to make cuts to the FSTB by the Commissioner, to which he replied no. Lidtke questioned who paid for the Coordinator position? SFM Quigle responded that DPS is under a hiring freeze so that position will not be filled, but the void would be filled with part time/temporary help; they would not give up on the position but they have to prioritize.

The next agenda item was a presentation on Online Instruction and Testing by Gretchen Bartelson, Steve Waldstein, and Jason Anderson of the Northwest Iowa Community College. Bartelson began with a background about a meeting that took place at the Sheldon FD in October 2016 with SFM Quigle, Kyle Gorsh, Steve DeJoode, Scott Meineke, and Gretchen Bartelson, at which time a plan was discussed, to include a possible partnership to provide online testing through the "CANVAS" system.

Key factors for the partnership include: lower cost than Pearson Vue; allow for customization through test banks, randomized questions, and immediate feedback; would provide analytics to identify problem areas; allow for customization that would provide the best service to the fire service; allow accessibility to test anywhere in the state through portable testing stations.

The portable testing kits or stations would be shipped out to certification testing site locations all over the state. Each kit would include a hotspot and 15 secure devices and five additional back-up devices. The service that NWCC would provide would take care of everything - provide the train-the-trainers, video tutorials, and would provide proctors at each location to provide security and maintain the integrity of the process.

Fensterman introduced herself as a competitor from Kirwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, and shared that they use a similar system. She wondered if the Fire Service Training Bureau had settled on this, or would she be able to offer a competitive presentation about what they could offer. Gorsh said that they were still in the process of determining a path forward.

Valero-Lehman posed a concern that as an adjunct instructor for DMACC, she had used a similar system and had problems with battery life and compatibility issues.

Adams questioned if this process would be accepted by the accrediting bodies - IFSAC and ProBoard. Kyle responded that he didn't see any problem for this proving to be secure.

White asked "Why not Resource One?" Fensterman added that she thought this would be a viable source as the instructors are already out there, familiar with the platform, would have the test, etc. Gorsh responded that the Bureau would still have to send kits out and enter data, but the Bureau would definitely look into it.

Bartelson said that NWCC would look into building their system into Resource One.

Halleran questioned who would be making the final decision about future testing procedures. Fensterman

questioned when other colleges would be invited to make presentations on what they might offer. Adams agreed that other options should be explored. Halleran stated that the NWCC option was initiated as a "what if" question, and that nothing had been formally decided. Washburn-Livingston suggested that maybe a partnership be created between all of the community colleges. Adams questioned Grossman about how many in the fire service actually use Resource One. He responded that around 2/3rd currently use it, and that it is very user friendly.

The presentation ended at 11:45. Gorsh announced a break for lunch until 12:30pm.

Gorsh resumed the meeting at 12:30, calling for elections for Board positions, and opened it up for nominations.

Justin Adams was nominated by Valero-Lehman for the Chairman of the Board. Seconded by Washburn-Livingston. Adams was elected as Chairman by a unanimous vote.

Bryant questioned if the Council had By-Laws and suggested a Vice Chair position be created to serve as back-up to the Chairman. Fensterman had a copy of the By-Laws and provided copies to everyone in attendance.

Jeff Kling was nominated for Vice Chair - elected by a unanimous vote.

Lynn Washburn-Livingston was nominated for Secretary - elected by unanimous vote.

Gorsh called for the meeting to be opened up for public comment.

Fensterman stated that she would like to see a F.A.Q. sheet out for Certification and the Fire Service Training Bureau, in order to provide better communication coming out of the office. Gorsh stated that the Bureau has been trying to accommodate and communicate guidelines and expectations effectively to the fire service.

White questioned if the Bureau had an Annual Report - SFM Quigle explained the FSTB is one of the five Bureaus of the SFM so is included on the SFM report of the DPS Annual Report.

Adams reminded members that under Chapter 100 B of Iowa Code, the responsibility of the SFSERC is very powerful and critical. Hagen stated that from her experience she didn't feel like the Council was heard.

Bryant stated that the focus when the Council last met seemed to be on a new facility, and that he has been hearing lately about a possible new joint facility. Gorsh responded that a working group had looked into that possibility and determined that there was no money. Hagen explained that the legislators made the decision to go with training in the Community Colleges, mobile training units in order to avoid one main center. Halleran suggested that the Council actively participate in the Firefighter Day on the Hill on March 2, 2017. That way they would be present to fight alongside other organizations as one voice - both Professional and Volunteer.

Bryant questioned the budget of the SFM. SFM Quigle provided background - total budget is \$6.2 million. All goes to fund 4 of the 5 Bureaus - 5th being the Electrical Bureau that is funded through licensing fees. Kenkel

stated that 89.9% of the FSTB budget is for salaries and benefits, the rest comes from the Volunteer Firefighter Training Fund. The DPS is facing a \$1,000,000 cut through fiscal year 2017.

Adams questioned the salaries of the Bureau Chief and the Certification Coordinator, and wondered if they were at their max. SFM Quigle explained the positions had a salary range and that he would find out and get the Council those numbers. White requested that SFM Quigle provide a salary budget and operations budget for the Council.

Adams questioned if cuts were needing to be made in FSTB, will the Council determine where those cuts would be made, and asked if SFM Quigle had been asked by the Commissioner to make cuts at the FSTB, to which he responded No.

Gorsh introduced the next item on the Agenda welcoming Thomas Lampe, Bureau Chief, Interoperability Communicaitons of DPS, to provide an update of the DPS Interoperability. Lampe explained that the IC is a new Bureau in Iowa and has been working to develop since 2007 and is being built by both the DOT and DPS. There are currently 84 ISICS microwave sites, built by Motorola who puts the guts of the "huts" together, transports them to each site and they then "plug and play". 2018 is the date set for completion.

Adams requested that a date for the next meeting be established. The focus of the meeting would be to advise with the SFM on the hiring of the Bureau Chief position. SFM Quigle explained that the PDQ for that position was modeled after the PDQ for Kansas Bureau Chief. Adams stated that the Council has a job to do and wants to be sure that it meets its responsibilities. SFM Quigle explained the hiring process - SFM Quigle creates the justification and PDQ, sends to Jim Saunders for approval, then goes to the Commissioner for approval, then on to HR at DAS (DPS rep), looks at it and passes it on to the Dept of Management, then comes back to DPS. The position will be posted on the Brass Ring, International Fire Chiefs, higheredjobs.com, North American Fire Training Directors, IFSTA, IFSAC, etc.- the goal being to put it out to as many areas, organizations as possible. White questioned when the Council would get involved. Adams stated that the Council would make a recommendation. SFM Quigle state that a realistic time-frame to go through the process would be July 1, 2017.

Adams called for establishment of next meeting date and future agenda. Bryant suggested that a letter be composed and sent to the Commissioner before the next meeting, and proposed a Community College presentation meeting. Adams posed a concern that any decisions about testing policy and procedure should wait until the new Certification Coordinator is hired and can be a part of that decision.

Adams stated that he would send the Board members an email offering three possible meeting dates in mid-late March.

Adams asked for questions, there were none.

Adams made a motion to adjourn. Bryant seconded the motion. Motion carried, and meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm.