

# Iowa Fire Service & Emergency Response Council

**Council Meeting Minutes:**  
Wednesday, July 11, 2018  
10:00am - 2:00pm  
Fire Service Training Bureau

## **Council Members Present**

Justin Adams, Chair - *IA Association of Professional Chiefs*  
Jeff Kling, Vice Chair - *Public member*  
Ellen Hagen - *IA Fire Chiefs Association*  
Mike Bryant - *IA Association of Professional Firefighters*  
Ray Reynolds - *IA Association of Professional Fire Chiefs*  
Yolanda Koch - *IA Firefighters Association*  
Aaron Beemer - *IA Association of Professional Firefighters*  
Pam Kenkel - *Public member*  
Alicia Lidtke - *IA Firefighters Association*  
Deb Krebill - *IA Fire Chiefs Association*

## **State Fire Marshal and FSTB Staff Present**

Dan Wood - *State Fire Marshal*  
Steve DeJoode - *FSTB Bureau Chief*  
Jim Kenkel - *FSTB Special Programs Manager*  
Russ Grossman - *FSTB Field Programs Manager*  
Gary Howard - *FSTB Certification/Accreditation Program Manager*

## **Others Present**

Kim Fensterman - *Kirkwood Community College (speaker phone)*

## **Council Members Absent**

Thomas Craighton - *Emergency Medical Services*  
Joe Mullen - *Division of Labor, Iowa Workforce Development, Ex-Officio member*

## **Roll Call**

- Council Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

## **Approval of previous meeting minutes**

- Motion to accept made by Krebill, seconded by Hagen. Motion carried.

## **Approval of Agenda**

- Motion to approve Agenda made by Hagen, seconded by Kenkel. Motion carried.

## **Introduction of new members**

Adams apologized on behalf of the Governor's Office for late notice approval and official proclamation of appointments to fill the 3 vacant positions. New members: Yolanda Koch, IA Firefighters Association; Ray Reynolds, IA Association of Professional Fire Chiefs; and Aaron Beemer, IA Association of Professional Firefighters

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Computer based testing update - Steve DeJoode**

- ISU Procurement currently working on the contract with the chosen vendor Media Defined/NetExam, which allows students to go to a computer lab in a local facility and sign in for online testing facilitated by an FSTB proctor. NetExam chosen for superior pricepoint and features.
- After contract signed, will work with NetExam to set up system to integrate with FSTB process.
- Justin Adams asked if the contract included sending tablets to departments. DeJoode explained that the tablets would not be the best fit logistically as it would run up the cost with shipping fees and the number of them would be needed and maintained.
- Kim Fensterman expressed a concern that the community colleges would not be happy about this, and they will want to charge for the use of the computer labs, etc. Proposed that it would be discussed at the next community college meeting.
- Ray Reynolds expressed concern about the “push-back” from the fire service about computer testing being the only way to test. Justin Adams acknowledged that there is an attempt to make testing accessible on the local level through libraries, schools, as well as community colleges. DeJoode said that paper testing would be allowed as a back-up, but certainly not encouraged.
- Anticipate computer based testing by the end of 2018, contingent on the planning and implementation. DeJoode explained that NetExam had the ability to move beyond computer-based testing, allowing LMS, blended learning and computer -based training, etc. Adams Suggested that he would like to include a feature that would allow Chiefs and Training Officers to validate certification. DeJoode acknowledged that he would make that happen.
- Ellen Hagen asked DeJoode why NetExam was selected over the others. DeJoode explained it was due to the low price-point and the many accessible features that could be utilized in the future.
- Adams questioned where the funding would come from? DeJoode suggested that the initial cost would be covered from the general admin and that it would be sustained through certification fees, etc. The goal is to use any available computer lab, still utilize proctors, and maintain the twelve student minimum per site. The payment for this service is still being negotiated but paying a certain fee per exam is looking like the preferred option.
- Mike Bryant questioned ability to handle multiple tests per site, and how reciprocity would work. Gary Howard explained that multiple test levels could be given at each location, and that there is a verification process established to recognize national certification by ProBoard and IFSAC. Adams questioned why retesting is required for reciprocity from other IFSAC accredited states. Ray Reynolds suggested that we look at changing that in the future. Adams requested that Gary Howard research and provide stats on how many people come to Iowa for FF1 certification per year.

### **By-laws Committee report (Mike Bryant)**

- Mike Bryant reported that everything that is followed by the Council is in 100B except the issue of skyping, but by-laws can be written into the code. Dan Wood suggested that the Council not include by-laws as if made too specific it might limit the ability to Skype. Discussion: Since the by-laws are the same as the code then by-laws were to be kept new language would have to be added. Might be best just to remove them. Bryant offered motion to rescind the by-laws, seconded, all ayes, motion carried.

### **Revolving Loan Fund report**

- Received no applications. Suggestion to re-open the period and push out information about the loan. Hagen suggested that applicants from the last years be notified that it has re-opened. Bureau will try to locate the list and contact those departments. Discussion took place about changing the open

period to the fall when budgets are being considered. Reynolds offered a friendly ammendment to open the period immediately and close it September 30, 2018 seconded by Bryant - all ayes, motion carried.

### **Addition of new members to council**

- Adams informed us that the addition of new members requires legislative action to change the original language. There has been an interest from the following: IaSFSI, community college partners, Fire Marshal's Assication, and HazMat. Discussion took place about how more members make make it harder to make decisions and get anything done. It was decided that current members would bring it back to their associations and it will be put on the agenda one more time.

### **Community College meeting update/agenda (Kim Fensterman)**

- Meet in August
- Meet with Gary Howard about Procedures Guides for Certification Exams
- Discuss the retirement of community college coordinators
- Discuss training schedule with Russ Grossman - need to determine how many FF1, FF2, etc. will be offered
- Discuss update of Essentials 7

Kim said that she will be sure to forward the date/time/agenda of the community college meetings to the council in the future.

### **State Fire Marshal Update (Dan Wood)**

#### **Hiring of FSTB Bureau Chief**

- Needed to wait for the budget to be signed to post the job
- Hiring justification and job description (PDQ) went through Dept of Admin Servies (DAS) and Department of Management (DOM) for approval
- Nine persons have expressed interest so far - three from out of state. All of them look good, and have fire backgrounds.
- Requested higher starting pay which was approved but dependant on qualifications. Have to score on credentials and education.
- Will select top three and hold a "Meet & Greet" at DPS Building, followed by a discussion - allowing a chance for everyone to meet the candidates. This will fulfill the requirement of 100B for the council to approve the hire of the Bureau Chief.
- Will be sure to provide everyone the chance to view the resumes of the top three.
- Will push to be sure that they all have a fire background, management experience and leadership abilities.

### **Review of Local Fire Dept. & Emergency Medical Services Grant Program Application**

- The fireworks bill set aside money for Fire Prevention and Equipment Grants
- Grant portal opened in March and closed on June 30th, 2018.
- Dan Wood requested the assistance of the council to help in the selection of the awards.
- After considerable discussion and deliberation, motion was made and seconded to fund Atlantic FD, Rake FD, DuBuque FD and the statewide Juvenile Firesetter Program (with an additional \$10,000 to juvenile firesetter program), and to establish a committee off of the SFERC to determine the criteria to award funding in the future. All ayes (Dan Wood abstained), motion carried.

## **FSTB Update**

### **Building Status with ISU**

- Dan Wood stated that they were made aware of a location in Nevada that might have been a possible location in which to move the FSTB facilities to an ISU facility in Nevada, but that didn't work out, so the FSTB will be staying at the current ISU location.

### **FSTB Fee Schedule**

- Steve DeJoode reported that he has not yet been able to determine a future fee schedule as they are waiting for the computer-based testing contract to be finalized. Suggested that he would be able to discuss that at the next meeting.

## **Certification Update - Gary Howard**

### **Written Testing**

- 38 written test sites have been offered since the last meeting.
- Justin Adams and Ellen Hagen posed concern about the delay in confirmation notifications. Gary Howard offered to look into specific concerns but explained the current procedure:
  - test site is published on the website for selection for at least one month, then taken down two weeks prior to the test date. That allows two weeks for verification, to send out confirmations, secure proctors and send out kits.
  - In reference to a complaint about a test kit not making it to the instructor before a site in Spencer, Gary Howard explained that he was not made aware of the problem until an hour before the test was to begin so it was too late to do anything about it at that point. He attempted to correct the problem by actually going out to administer the tests at various locations.
  - To prevent problems in the future, he has notified evaluators that he needs to be notified at least 24 hours in advance of the test if they have not received the kit. He is also now on the list to receive UPS tracking information which he checks daily.
  - FSTB is planning to host a written testing site for all levels once per month, or at least quarterly.

### **Practical Testing**

- Certification has rolled out 12 new regional practical skills testing sites since the last meeting.
- Gary Howard has been to most of those and found logistics and accommodations to be successful.
- Pam Kenkel addressed concerns that she has heard about it not being clear what skills they are supposed to be doing, and the inconsistency in what instructors are asking of them. Dan Wood suggested that the practical exercises are all explained in the procedures guides, and Justin Adams suggested that some departments doing in-house training may not be understanding what they are doing. Gary Howard stated that more than 100 personnel have gone through the evaluator hand-off, but availability of staff is limited, some of the inconsistency might be in what the facility has to offer and the availability of the staff.
- Gary Howard stated that the feedback that he has received from students about the practical skills are that they really like the AM/PM format as it prevents long wait times, and allows them to be notified of their pass/fail status as they go through the process rather than waiting to be notified in the mail.

## **Field Programs Update**

Russ Grossman stated that he would defer conversation and report about props to Steve DeJoode

who is currently working on those projects.

### **Prop maintenance costs**

- DeJoode reported that trailers have been sent to DOT maintenance shops to do the work, tally the bill and invoice us for the bill. No report on how much at this time.

### **Prop replacement value and schedule**

- DeJoode reported that not much has been done on this, but future AFG grants will look at upgrading existing props.

### **Part time drivers for prop movement**

- DeJoode reported that delivery of props is not an issue and there is no need for additional drivers to move the props. The concern is that there would be a need to replace Carl Link after he retires in April 2019, and what the budget looks like for replacing people. Dan Wood said he talked to DPS Attorney, Barb Edmundson, about drawing up a part-time contract that outside persons/agencies could bid on if this if necessary. That could be done, but it would require a large amount of time for the process.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **FSTB Survey Results - Steve DeJoode**

- Steve DeJoode passed out results of the survey that was sent out to the presidents of five associations about what they want, expect, and need from the FSTB. Council members reviewed it and discussion ensued about how the findings might be used to lobby and educate politicians about why we need more money.
- Adams asked SFM Wood about what the future of FSTB might look like if the SFM budget just remained status quo. Wood responded that it would not be sufficient, and that as staff left or retired they would not be replaced. Believes we need to think outside the box in terms of funding the current staff moving forward, and suggested to work with legislators to put a surcharge on homeowners insurance policies that would go to FSTB for funding and be used to train the fire service and keep Iowa communities safe.
- After much discussion it was decided that the survey was a good start but the council needs to collect more data and information that can show what the FSTB is doing, not doing, what it can do, and what additional resources will be needed to deliver the wants/needs of the fire service.
- It was decided that all of the associations need to be united in coming up with and presenting a legislative agenda addressing the critical concerns of the FSTB: maintaining/adding FTEs; physical relocation of facilities; and equipment. It was suggested that a meeting be held with members before the next scheduled meeting to discuss facts, data and expectation of action needed to formulate a plan and create the legislative agenda. It was suggested that early -mid September would be a good time.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- No other business or comments from council members or the public.
- Council Chair Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded. Motion carried, and meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

