

WV STATE FIRE COMMISSION MEETING

Canaan Valley Resort

Davis, WV

December 1st, 2023

The official business meeting was called to order at 9:00am by Chairman Grant Gunnoe

ROLL CALL: by Kathryn L Burns

Commissioners Present

Steven Byers, Dave Camp, Carl Eastham, Doug Estep, Edward George (via phone) , Grant Gunnoe, Tom Keefer, Brian Jones, Doug Mongold, Jim Oldaker, Ted Shriver and Virgil White.

It is noted that Counsel Brandolyn Felton-Earnest is in attendance as well.

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Hart

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to accept and approve the minutes of the October 6th, 2023 Fire Commission Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

RECOGNITION

Honoring Donnie Wratchford – Marshal Tyree presented a plaque to Mr. Donnie Wratchford for his heroic actions that saved many from harm and potential death, during a bus accident and subsequent fire.

SFMO & DIVISIONAL REPORTS:

Marshal Tyree gave the Services, Inspections and Investigations Report, and his December 2023, Operations report to the Commission containing staffing, legislative, updates, and fire department funding loss updates. He also spoke of the FY 2023 Annual Report and planned visits and meetings.

Entertained Questions:

Commissioner Shriver inquired about the decreased number of licenses per the Services report. Marshal Tyree responded that was due to the fact Apprentice Electrician Licenses and certain Fire Protection Licenses are no longer required. Commissioner Shriver also asked about the Investigation Report that contained an item in Russell County VA. Post the meeting it was determined this was a reporting issue in the BATS system.

Chairman Gunnoe thanked Marshal Tyree for his report and asked that he relay to his staff how appreciative the Fire Commission is for the work they do.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Disciplinary, Legislative and VFD Equipment, AFFF and Training Committees did not meet.

Fire Department Services Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Minutes

November 30th, 2023

Call to Order

Commissioner Mongold called to order the regular meeting of the Fire Department Services Committee at 10:55am on November 30th, 2023 at Canaan Valley Resort, Davis WV.

Roll Call

The following commissioners were present:

Doug Mongold
Jim Oldaker
Phil Hart
Brian Jones
Dave Camp

The following commissioners were absent:

None

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

1. Consideration of Fire Officer Applications

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following applications for approval.

- a. Stanley Harvey FO 1 (Athens)
- b. Bill McChellan FO2 (Smithers)

Commission Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission to approve the applications as listed, seconded by Commissioner Jones. With all the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

2. Consideration of Fire Chief Applications

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following applications for approval.

- a. Adam Smith (Clover-Roane)
- b. Christopher Harless (Smoot)
- c. Christopher Pace (Thomas)
- d. John Cronin (Spencer-Roane)

- e. Jeff Thaxton (Tyler Mountain)
- f. David Dezzutti (Clinton District)
- g. Brian Starn (City of Fairmont)

Commissioner Jones made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission to approve the applications as listed, seconded by Commissioner Camp. With all the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

3. Report on Fire Department Receiving 180 Days to Achieve Compliance.

ASFM Scott briefed the Committee on the Departments receiving 180 days.

- a. Grantsville VFD
- b. Reader VFD
- c. Chapmanville VFD
- d. Buffalo Creek VFD
- e. Town of Man VFD
- f. Logan County #2 VFD

No Action Necessary.

4. Consideration of Fire Department Recertification

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following departments for Recertification.

- a. Gilmer County VFD
- b. Main Harts Creek VFD
- c. Cottageville VFD
- d. Reader VFD

Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission the recertification of the listed departments, seconded by Commissioner Hart. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

5. Consideration of Fire Department with Perfect Evaluations Recertification.

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following Perfect Evaluations for Recertification.

- a. Ballard VFD
- b. Peterstown VFD
- c. Lindside VFD
- d. Union Community VFD
- e. Southern Jackson VFD
- f. Ripley VFD
- g. Henlawson VFD
- h. Verdunville VFD
- i. Cora VFD
- j. Lake VFD
- k. City of Logan
- l. Main Island

Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission the recertification of the listed departments, noting their perfect evaluations, seconded by Commissioner Hart. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

6. Discussion/Consideration of Equivalency Process/Requirements

6a. Consideration of Committee Assignment – FDS or Training

Commissioner Mongold stated that this item needs to be carried over to the next meeting to allow additional time to review the current requirements and work on this issue.

Deputy Bailey suggested that perhaps a joint Committee could be formed as the issue falls both under Training and Fire Department Services.

Chad Lindsay of Fort Ashby VFC inquired as to why we have these equivalencies as the Fire Officer I and II are readily available, have been for some time and enough grace time has already been given. The Committee responded that it is a Legislative Requirement.

No Action Taken.

7. Presentation by the Maryland Fireman’s Association on Recruitment and Retention.

President Smothers of the MSFA (Maryland State Fireman’s Association), along with Kate Loveless (Executive Director of MSFA) and Jonathan Dayton (Chairperson of the MSFA Recruitment and Retention Committee) gave a wonderful presentation to the Committee, sharing several of Maryland’s Recruitment and Retention programs, ideas and initiatives with the Committee as both States have similar issues before them. The material they presented and graciously offered to share with not only WV Fire Departments/Associations but with any Department/Association across the Country, was most informative. The Committee greatly appreciates the work and time put into the presentation.

Adjournment

Having no additional business, Commissioner Mongold moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:48pm. Without objection the meeting adjourned.

Commissioner White made a motion to accept the report as written, seconded by Commissioner Estep. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

Training Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Minutes

November 30th, 2023

Call to Order

Commissioner White called to order the regular meeting of the Training Committee at 10:04am on November 30th, 2023, at Canaan Valley Resort, Davis WV.

Roll Call

The following commissioners were present:

Virgil White
Jim Oldaker
Doug Estep
Tom Keefer
Dave Camp
Doug Mongold

The following commissioners were absent:

Unfinished Business

Chairman White noted that a work group was held to review the submitted curriculum updates to address any concerns. The meeting went well, and both training entities were able to answer any of the concerns of the Committee. He explained that it was determined that the use of different curriculum books did not pose any issues. He and Fire Commissioner Chairman Gunnoe also reminded the Committee of the motions (inserted in italics below) made at the October Committee meeting and that those items had been tabled to allow the workgroup time to review.

11/30/23 - Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Commission to approve the WV PST FO I and II updates as presented, seconded by Commissioner Keefer. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

11/30/23 - Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Commission to approve the WVU FSE FO I and II updates as presented, seconded by Commissioner Keefer. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

11/30/23 - Commissioner Keefer made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission, that all training entities keep a copy of evaluations sheets, whether it be a summary sheet, individual objectives and any homework, either by hard copy or electronically on all courses approved by the Fire Commission, seconded by Commissioner Estep. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

Jamie Weller of WV PST addressed the Committee regarding the use of summary sheets in response to the motion made by Commissioner Keefer at the October committee meeting as noted above. In their situation, if someone fails a skill, that failure is noted on the summary sheet and remains there until they pass that skill and that their retention of those records as such, WV PST already meets the guidelines in Commissioner Keefer's motion.

Per Mr. Weller and Mark Lambert (WVU FSE) there is a paper trail of all training in both training entities. Mr. Lambert noted that WVU FSE maintains all student documents.

1. Consideration of WVPST Curriculum Update.

- a) **Fire Officer I**
- b) **Fire Officer II**

Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Commission to remove the item from the table at the December 1st, 2023, meeting, seconded by Commissioner Keefer. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote.

Consideration of WVU FSE Curriculum Update.

- a) **Fire Officer I**
- b) **Fire Officer II**

Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to recommend to the Full Commission to remove the item from the table at the December 1st, 2023, meeting, seconded by Commissioner Keefer. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote.

2. Report/Consideration of Methods to Handle Increased Numbers of Specialized Modules (NFPA 1006).

Mark Lambert had a conversation with Ralph McNemar on the matter and until they see the JPR sheets there is really no discussion to be held and there is no set date or time when this will be required.

Per the Committee this item will need to stay on the agenda for future follow-up.

New Business

1. Update on National Qualifying System for Emergency Responders.

Chief Deputy Robert Bailey reported that more information will be available at the February Commission meeting and the item will remain on the agenda.

2. Report on WV PST Pass/Fail rate for preceding year.

Jamie Weller provided the statistical information to the Committee. Highlights of that document included the overall 88% passing rate, which was the same as the previous year, the attrition rates (both non-academic and academic) and the top responses for attrition.

Commissioner Mongold inquired if there are times a student is allowed to make up class time they miss and Mr. Weller responded, they do if it is something they can work with.

Mr. Weller also explained the extensive Peer Review process in place for their program. Based on the report and their processes, it is WV PST's recommendation that the program/testing continue as it is currently structured. In addition, he provided their Policy book to the Committee, so they can review as they wish to.

The Committee thanked him for his well put together report and had no additional questions.

Mark Lambert stated that WVU FSE pass/fail rates for FF 1 are at 89% at this time with last year being 90%. They have taught 1100 students for FF 1 with 80 dropping or failing but he has not followed up, on why they dropped. The Committee asked him to provide his information electronically to the Committee, so it can be saved, to

which he agreed.

In other business Mr. Lambert noted the dates of Junior Camp will be June 15th through June 20th, 2024 and he will be meeting with the US Fire Administration and the National Fire Academy about the camp. WVU FSE continues to teach electrical vehicle safety across the country. The classes are free if certain attendance requirements are met, and he encourages anybody in WV who wants the class to take advantage of it. He noted that he believes training hours may be a Legislative item once again.

Adjournment

Having no additional business, Commissioner Oldaker moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:41am, seconded by Commissioner Estep second. Without objection, meeting adjourned.

Commissioner Eastham made a motion to accept the report as written, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

Following the Committee reports Chairman Gunnoe noted that the AFFF Committee will stand down and be removed from the agenda, until the times comes the Committee has work to do.

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1) Tabled in October - Consideration of WVU FSE Curriculum Update:

See Training Report.

- a) Fire Officer I
- b) Fire Officer II

Commissioner White made a motion to remove from the table this item of business, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner White made a motion to approve the updates as presented, seconded by Commissioner Keefer. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote.

2) Tabled in October - Consideration of WVPST Curriculum Update:

See Training Report.

- a) Fire Officer I
- b) Fire Officer II

Commissioner White made a motion to remove from the table this item of business, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner White made a motion to approve the updates as presented, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote.

3) Report/Consideration on Methods to Handle Increased Numbers of Specialized Rescue Certifications (NFPA 1006).

See Training Report.

No action taken, item will be put back on the agenda as more information is available.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Consideration of Fire Officer Applications.

See FDS Report.

- c. Stanley Harvey FO 1 (Athens)
- d. Bill McChellan FO2 (Smithers)

Commissioner Eastham made a motion to approve applications as listed, seconded by Commissioner Jones. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Chairman Gunnoe gave an explanation regarding the promotional language in §8.15.22 and noted that language in the Requirements for Local Fire Departments policy was in conflict with that code. He requested Marshal Tyree send out correspondence to paid departments, explaining they need to be in line with §8.15.22 and that the policy be changed accordingly.

2) Consideration of Fire Chief Applications.

See FDS Report.

- a. Adam Smith (Clover-Roane)
- b. Christopher Harless (Smoot)
- c. Christopher Pace (Thomas)
- d. John Cronin (Spencer-Roane)

- e. Jeff Thaxton (Tyler Mountain)
- f. David Dezzutti (Clinton District)
- g. Brian Starn (City of Fairmont)

Commissioner White made a motion to approve applications as listed, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

3) Report on Fire Departments Receiving 180 Days to Achieve Compliance.

See FDS Report.

- a. Grantsville VFD
- b. Reader VFD
- c. Chapmanville VFD
- d. Buffalo Creek VFD
- e. Town of Man VFD
- f. Logan County #2 VFD

No Action Taken

4) Consideration of Recertification of Fire Departments.

See FDS Report.

- a. Gilmer VFD
- b. Main Harts VFD
- c. Cottageville VFD
- d. Reader

Commissioner White made a motion to recertify the listed departments, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

5) Consideration of Perfect Evaluation Recertification of Fire Departments.

See FDS Report.

- a. Ballard VFD
- b. Peterstown VFD
- c. Lindside VFD
- d. Union Community VFD
- e. Southern Jackson VFD
- f. Ripley VFD
- g. Henlawson VFD
- h. Verdunville VFD
- i. Cora VFD
- j. Lake VFD
- k. City of Logan VFD
- l. Main Island VFD

Commissioner White made a motion to recertify the departments noting their perfect evaluations, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

See FDS Report.

6) Discussion/Consideration of Equivalency Process/Requirements

6a) Consideration of Committee Assignment – FDS or Training.

No Action Taken

See FDS Report.

7) Election of Officers for 2024.

Commissioner Chairman Gunnoe called for nominations for the Election of New Fire Commissioner Officers for 2024.

Commissioner Mongold nominated Grant Gunnoe for the office of Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. No other nominations were made, and nominations closed. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Eastham nominated Doug Mongold for the office of Vice Chairman, seconded by Commissioner White. No other nominations were made, and nominations closed. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Eastham nominated Ted Shriver for the office of Secretary, seconded by Commissioner White. No other nominations were made, and nominations closed. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

SPEAKERS:

Chad Lindsay with Fort Ashby VFC brought his concerns before the Commission on the lack of information on the upcoming FireFighter Tax Credit (HB4558) and the recently passed Fire Department funding (SB1021, 1022 and 1023). He is requesting the Commission and the Fire Marshal's Office provide any clarity they can.

Marshal Tyree reported that he will reach out to Ms. Cindy Dunbar (Research and Development Director of the Tax Division) for any update on when the tax forms will be available and disperse as able to do so.

In response to Mr. Lindsay's question on the Fire Department Funding, Marshal Tyree stated that the All-County Fire Protection Funding was dispersed and received by the County Commissions. That funding included all counties in the State and was based on population percentage by county. As for the County Fire Protection Funding going to counties with a Fire Fee or Levy, those monies are still being processed and the letters with the amounts are being prepared. These are also a percentage based on population and the number of counties that have a Fire Fee or Levy. Marshal Tyree noted that there are several interpretations of the language in the bill. Addition information will be dispersed as it becomes available.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Marshal Tyree discussed a letter from Chief Dave Armstrong of Belle VFD pertaining to a decision that was being made at the county level to dispatch all Fire Departments to Cardiac arrest calls. A lengthy discussion was held on the matter between Commissioners, Staff and those in attendance on the legalities involved and any Fire Commission Rules that would relate to the matter. A letter is to be sent from Marshal Tyree on the behalf of the Commission clarifying their opinion and noting the corresponding Legislative Rules.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

The meeting location for April 4th, 2024 Committee Meetings and April 5th, 2024 Commission Meeting is to be in the Martinsburg area. The Administrative Secretary will check on available meeting accommodation.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING(S):

Committee Meetings - 10:00am Thursday, February 1st, 2024, and Commission Meeting 9:00am Friday, February 2nd 2024, at TC Energy Building 1700 MacCorkle Ave SE, Charleston WV 25314

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Shriver made a motion to adjourn at 10:37am without objection, without objection meeting adjourned.
