

**South Carolina Fire Academy
Advisory Committee Special Meeting
Meeting Minutes – August 19, 2010**

Members Present: John Bowers, Chris Nunnery, Bob Beebe, Phil Elliott, John L Melton, Karl Ristow, Joel Rogers, Jay Smith, Jim Still, Wesley Williams

Members Absent: Bill Addis, Bryan Beason, Bruce Burding, Jonathan Ryan, Art Sattler

Alternates Present: Skip Hannon, Brian Horton, Mike Norket, Dixon Odom, Alan Sistare, Les Woods

Non-Voting Members Present: Joe Palmer, John Reich and Ed Roper

Visitors Present: Billy Gibson, Jonathan Jones, Gary Starnes, Ashley Boltin, Cindy Brazell, Russ Friar

Chairman Bowers called the meeting to order and asked Joe Palmer to open with prayer and then all attending recited Pledge of Allegiance to the US Flag. Ed Roper advised that a quorum was present.

This special meeting was called to discuss issues left on the table from the last quarterly meeting in July concerning the Fire Academy's proposal for challenge testing. Bowers asked that everyone limit discussion to the business at hand.

Two handouts were issued:

- 1 – a brief overview of our IFSAC challenge history up to the Essentials curriculum
- 2 – a proposal for challenging courses 1152, Firefighter I and II, and Fire Officer I

Chairman Bowers had a list of five issues based on input from the FF Association's Executive committee suggestions that he recommended for discussion:

- 1 – removal of the skills portion from 1152
- 2 – remove the length of service provision
- 3 – provide testing in the regional offices with no minimum student requirement
- 4 – start challenge testing in Jan. 2011
- 5 – only allow challenge testing for a 2-year period

There was much discussion about the purpose of testing/ evaluating skills for course 1152. After some round table discussion and after much input from the committee, the purpose was noted as **“To document a level of proficiency to meet minimum fire service standards.”**

Motion: a motion was made to accept and amend the proposal as necessary based on the five items for discussion before accepting the new document.

1st – John L Melton

2nd – Les Woods

Discussion:

Chairman Bowers called for a vote. Only 1 member opposed. The motion was passed.

I – Remove skills portion from 1152 and Fire Officer I

Provide testing only. Questions remain about how to remove the skills and still meet the accreditation requirements. Roper stated that the student must have course 1121 or documented equivalency to 1121 at which time was 60 hours, and we will allow the student to challenge the written exam and practical skills. If we remove the skills testing, then we will lower the bar and may jeopardize our IFSAC credentials. Roper stated that we are trying to be reasonable and meet our accreditation requirements. Roper advised the group for the 1152 and the Fire Office I course, because of our IFSAC accreditation; we will have to do skills testing as part of the equivalency process. Russ Friar advised the testing would be the normal 1152 evaluation, written and random skills. Friar stated that our ultimate goal is to protect our IFSAC accreditation.

Motion: a motion was made to keep the skills testing for course 1152 and Fire Officer I.

1st – Skip Hannon

2nd – John L Melton

Discussion: some did not agree with letting fire chiefs sign off on Firefighter I and Fire Officer I skills.

Chairman Bowers call for a vote. Only 1 member opposed. The motion was passed.

II. Remove the length of service provision

There was much discussion concerning this item ranging from requiring a length of service to feelings that the length of service should not matter as long as the firefighter can do the skills. Years play into skill and knowledge.

Motion: a motion was made to remove the length of service provision from this document for Firefighter I and II. Leave it on Fire Officer I.

1st – John L Melton

2nd – Les Woods

Discussion: we need a time limit to keep people from taking advantage and opening a loop hole for those who are new firefighters. What is the magic number for length of service?

Chairman Bowers called for a vote. The majority was opposed. The motion failed.

Motion: a motion was made to keep 8 years length of service for Firefighter I and II and Fire Officer I.

1st – Brian Horton

2nd – Wesley Williams

Discussion: the 8 years is based off the 2002 challenge process for 1121/1131.

Chairman Bowers called for a vote: All voted in favor and none opposed. The motion passed.

III. Provided testing in the regional offices with no minimum attendance required

Motion: a motion was made to provide testing in the regional offices with no minimum attendance required for all testing.

1st – Wesley Williams

2nd – Bob Beebe

Discussion: If we are skill testing and there are only 2 people needed for testing but the skill requires 4 people, will this be handled? Roper and Reich assured everyone that delivery was a logistical and administrative issue and it will be handled appropriately for the good of the fire service. Written exams should be easily accommodated with minimum numbers. Practical skills sessions will be assessed based on number of registrations due to certain skills requiring team evaluations.

Chairman Bowers called for a vote: All voted in favor and none opposed. The motion passed.

IV and V. Start challenge testing on Jan. 2011 for a period of two years.

Motion: a motion was made to start challenge testing on Jan. 2011 for a period of two years.

1st – Brian Horton

2nd – John L Melton

Discussion: to use a calendar year, not a fiscal year.

Chairman Bowers called for a vote: All voted in favor and none opposed. The motion passed.

Roper stated that the Chief's letter is important to document the firefighter's skills level. A recommendation was made for the Fire Academy to provide a standard form for skills documentation for the fire chiefs to sign off on for proof of the firefighter's capabilities.

Motion: a motion was made to accept, with amended changes by passed motions, this document to challenge Firefighter I and II, Fire Officer I series listed in this document with cover letters created by the Fire Academy to list objectives signed off by the fire chief and the candidate challenging the test.

1st – Chris Nunnery

2nd – Wesley Williams

Discussion: would like to see a draft of this document before we make the final approval.

Chairman Bowers called for a vote: Only 1 member opposed. The motion passed.

Other issues

1 – SCFA to provide a crosswalk of all JPR's for all courses taught thru the SCFA. This will enable chiefs to give credit for previously taken courses to determine level of training. Roper stated that he feels the training document would suffice for this and that fire chiefs need to read 1001, 1002, 1021 and 1041. Roper states that this is a major undertaking and

is not realistic for the SCFA to do this for every course at this time. Roper added that even the NFA states this is a time consuming process and their current crosswalk is out of date. It was stated during the meeting that the crosswalk provided to the advisory board was “just a tip of the iceberg”. Following additional discussion Chairman Bowers tasked the curriculum subcommittee and academy staff to oversee the project and set their own timelines. Jonathan Jones offered his assistance.

2 – What methods are used by SCFA to recognize other agency’s teaching credentials? Friar replied that we review their credentials in comparison with our requirements. If they are comparable, the requester will be required to do a teaching evaluation to determine their level of experience. If the presentation is acceptable the equivalency will be granted. SC State Teaching certificates are an automatic equivalency for our program.

With no other business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,

Ed Roper
Recording Secretary

DRAFT