

**SOUTH CAROLINA
FIREFIGHTER MOBILIZATION**

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MEETING MINUTES

Firefighter Mobilization Oversight Committee

Feb. 23, 2022 at 10 a.m.

Public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the South Carolina State Fire, 141 Monticello Trail, Columbia, SC 29203 and provided to all requesting persons, organizations, and news media in compliance with Section 30-4-80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

To allow for social distancing, the meeting was also held via video and teleconference.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was posted and advertised pursuant to South Carolina laws, rules, and regulations. The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Chairman Jones. Others in attendance included Emily Farr (LLR Director), Shawn Pratt, Mike Ellis, Mike Norkett, Rick Dangerfield, Chris Blankenship, Keith Minick, Tim Hall, and David Reed. State Fire employees included Ken Kerber, Susan Duncan, Shon Hamilton, Chad Beam, and George Stapleton.

A quorum was present. Chairman Jones welcomed the Committee members and guests.

II. Roll Call of Members

SC Firefighter Mobilization Committee											
Jonathan Jones	X	Darryl Jones	A	Charlie King	X	Bruce Kline	W	Brian LeGette	W	Mark Davis	X
Kim Stenson	W	Mike Bedenbaugh	W	Phil Jolley	X	VACANT		Joey Tanner	W	Mark Keel	W

W: WebEx X: Present A: Absent

III. Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes

Bruce Kline made a motion to approve today’s agenda. Mark Davis seconded. Motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

Mark Davis made a motion to approve the August 18, 2021, minutes. Mike Bedenbaugh seconded. Motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

IV. Chairman’s Remarks

A. FY23 Budget Requests

Chief Jonathan Jones stated:

Mobilization is currently at 64 percent of planned expenses budgeted, which is in line with expenses.

The cash balance total is \$138,958.76. Cash is available to finish out fiscal year.

Chief Jones stated Mobilization cannot continue to run as it was funded 22 years ago with current funding of \$165,000 a year. It is costing the Division \$280,000 - \$300,000 to run it properly.

Funding is currently being shifted to underwrite any excess with help from the Fire Academy. After examining the budget and without cutting operations or functions, the amount needed going forward is more than \$165,000 per year.

Requests:

The agency asked the General Assembly for \$1 million in recurring funding for emergency response operations to include USAR, HART, and Mobilization. However, during the budget meeting, House Budget staff informed there is more “non-recurring” than “recurring” funds available. As a result, LLR staff quickly researched how much it would be to replace the entire Type 1 cache. Total amount, considering inflation, is \$12 million in non-recurring funding. Staff will keep any serviceable equipment for training and as back-up equipment.

Regional team support requests include:

- \$5 million non-recurring (\$1 million for each region (5) for training and equipment replacement)
- Operational funds (five years): \$5 million

Total: \$22 million in requests (\$12 million for to replace entire Type 1 cache, \$5 million for regional teams, and \$5 million for operational funding)

Staff is requesting an additional \$10 million in the agency budget for an “emergency operation center” with enough space for equipment, offices, and bunk space (80 team members). The current USAR building overnight capacity is 40 individuals. It could also serve as a multi-purpose building. For example, the Fire Academy is limited to one recruit school at a time. There is no bunk space to house a second recruit school without utilizing the USAR building. With funding received, the agency would convert the current USAR building to a run a second fire station and recruit school. To repurpose the current building, the agency needs an additional \$2.75 million to renovate (close bays to create bunk space, classrooms, etc.) and also create and run an EMS Academy.

There is also a budget request for \$850,000 to make EMT tuition free for two years through the SCFA. The SCFA currently has the highest pass rate in the state.

This year, there is a one-time appropriation from the SC General Assembly of \$850,000 to be used primarily for equipment replacement. Some HART equipment is more than 10 years old – older than the recommended manufacturer’s shelf life. In the future, recurring funding is needed to replace outdated and non-compliant equipment.

In total, the budget request is for \$35.6 million in non-recurring and \$1 million in recurring.

Chief Tanner asked for a detailed list of Firefighter Mobilization expenses.

Letter of reappointments have been forwarded to Governor’s office. Chief Kovalcik retired from City of Greenville and will need to be replaced on the committee.

V. Mobilization Coordinator’s Report

Chad Beam, Statewide Coordinator, provided a report to committee members. He stated there have been seven mobilization requests since the last meeting (August 2021) and briefly discussed each one.

He also provided a National Mutual Aid System (NMAS) update. After many concerns, it will no longer be used. The data from the system was returned to the agency.

EMD staff (thru ETI) created "Palmetto." Everything needed in a data system was created in two months. Staff is willing to share the system by the 2022 Fire-Rescue conference. Chad Beam briefly explained the highlights of the new data system including its archival capabilities. Kim Stenson stated his support and the useful capabilities of Palmetto.

Reimbursement for Hurricane Florence has been resolved.

Reimbursement for Hurricane's Laura, Delta, Sally, and Ida have been submitted.

SC Department of Natural Resources channels have been added to the State Fire radio template.

Regarding Survey 123, we continue to lead the effort across the nation. Staff is speaking at the upcoming national IMT conference on the benefits of using GIS components.

There have been no changes to the Firefighter Mobilization Plan.

Staff is currently working "DB Solutions" through the Procurement process and utilizing NMAS funding for this project.

Quarterly training continues for mobilization coordinators.

VI. SC-TF1 and SC-HART Update

Chief Ken Kerber shared a summary of events along with a list of future events/incidents/exercises and a roster indicating 136 active members. There are also 19 Palmetto IST members.

Staff attended a military recognition day where several HART members were also recognized for a rescue. The HART program continues to grow and be recognized.

HART training will be in April 2022 in Horry County.

The 15th Annual SUSAR Conference will take place in Columbia, SC, with the SC Fire Academy hosting the event in May. It is a well-attended conference from USAR teams across the nation.

The Task Force received \$850,000 last year in one-time funding and spent \$400,000 to replace outdated safety equipment, uniforms, and gear.

VII. SC-IST (Palmetto IST) Update

Chief Jones stated quarterly training is tomorrow. Julie McCabe is serving as the ESF-4/9 representative at EMD.

VIII. Old Business

A. Reimbursement Update

Hurricane Florence

Chief Jones stated reimbursement for Hurricane Florence has been resolved after the second appeal was approved.

Hurricane Dorian

Reimbursement has been received.

Louisiana Deployments

Once all of the reimbursements have been received, there will not be any pending requests.

IX. New Business

A. Palmetto FFMOB Module

Chad Beam covered this topic in his earlier statements.

B. ERTF Working Group

Chief Jones met with leadership of Task Force 1, the five regional task teams, and departmental leadership to discuss the \$1 million per team and any needs. He explained the non-recurring funding request to Task Force leadership. There is a strong desire to coordinate the spending of the \$1 million from team-to-team.

There is a request to create an ERTF Working Group and recognize it as a “system.”

X. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting was not scheduled. It will be at the call of the chair.

Mark Davis made a motion to adjourn. Joseph Tanner seconded. The motion was carried unanimously without discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.