

SOUTH CAROLINA FIREFIGHTER MOBILIZATION

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MEETING MINUTES

Firefighter Mobilization Oversight Committee

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2019, 10 a.m.

141 Monticello Trail, Building 2

Columbia, SC 29203

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: Firefighter Mobilization Regional Coordinators Mike Norkett, Mike Ellis, Rick Dangerfield, Marquis Soloman, and Pierce Womack. Representing LLR include Director Emily Farr. State Fire representation includes Chief Ken Kerber, Chad Beam, Nathan Ellis, George Stapleton, Doug Spinks, and Susan Duncan. Also in attendance were David Reed (Columbia FD), Chris Blankenship (Hilton Head Island FD), Robert Risinger (Lexington County Fire Service), and Kevin King (Easley FD).

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

II. Roll Call of Members

SC Firefighter Mobilization Committee											
Jonathan Jones	X	Darryl Jones	A	Joe Palmer	A	Bruce Kline	X	Brian LeGette	X	Mark Davis	X
Mike Russell for Kim Stenson	X	Mike Bedenbaugh	P	Phil Jolley	X	Steve Kovalcik	X	Joey Tanner	P	Mark Keel	X

P: Via Phone X: Present A: Absent

III. Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes

Bruce Kline made a motion to approve today's agenda. Steve Kovalcik seconded. Motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

Phil Jolley made a motion to approve the Feb. 6, 2019, minutes. Bruce Kline seconded. Motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

IV. Introductions and Opening Comments

Chief Jones stated 2019 has been a busy year. All attendees introduced themselves.

V. Activation and Deployment Summaries

Chief Kerber briefed attendees on the HART Academy (in the absence of a national standard for helicopter aquatic rescue for civilians, the HART Academy is creating one), the slow-moving Hurricane Dorian (this second-most-powerful storm ever recorded in the Atlantic was a rain/wind event in SC), and the Landfill Mission to search for Nevaeh Adams. The search started Sept. 17.

Remains were found Oct. 18. It was the longest deployment in Mobilization history with personnel from 26 fire departments searching in 100+ temperatures in HazMat suits. Afterwards, a briefing was held in Sumter.

Chief Keel spoke in regards to the search. He stated a lot was learned and remarked there was no way they could accomplish the task without the assistance of Firefighter Mobilization. Every state agency called agreed to assist in the search. He appreciates the service of all involved and it provided closure for the family.

Chief Kerber thanked Shon Hamilton and Chad Beam who assisted every day at the landfill.

Chief Jones stated it was a bonding experience for all involved. McCrady Training Center provided housing.

Director Farr also thanked everyone for their service.

Chief Kerber provided and referenced his nine page handout. Stated the National Mutual Aid System (NMAS) is going "live" Jan. 1, 2020. He also purchased Survey 123 – which allows tracking of houses/areas that have been searched. It provides one common operating picture.

Chief Jones pointed out there were nine mobilization requests/seven activations in 2019 – the most in a year. Mentioned the Fire Academy tanker was deployed to the landfill. The Academy also provided equipment for decontamination at the landfill.

VI. SC-TF1 and SC-HART Update

Chief Kerber provided a list of upcoming training events and stated there are 127 current operational members on the roster. Encouraged committee members to continue seeking those interested in joining this specialized training. Several (20+) State Fire employees will be added to the list for operations, planning, and logistics.

Chief Kerber stated there is no standard for HART – although it is a partnership of military and civilians. Also stated the National Guard Bureau in Washington agreed this is a specialized discipline/partnership. There is a need to create Standard Operating Procedures for HART, consistent from state to state. Spent months vetting information and procedures. If successfully accredited, we will be the only accredited program in the nation. The next step is FEMA for "team" typing – they would need to create it.

The HART Academy was a seven day training event and will, in the future, continue to grow.

VII. SC-IST (Palmetto IST) Update

Chief Jones stated Doug Spinks is the newly hired IST manager. He has a military background. There are, currently, almost 30 IST members. Several members have finished their tasks books. For Hurricane Barry, a small advance team was sent to Louisiana. There was full activation of IST during Hurricane Dorian. IST also deployed for a training exercise to the Guardian Center with Marine Corps for annual full-scale exercise. Simulation involved the "mayor" signing all operational authority to IST Commander and allowed the integration of civilians with the military.

George Stapleton promoted to Division Wide Operations Chief. Additionally, Tim Wojcik and Doug Spinks report to Stapleton. Uniforms have been ordered for IST.

Purchased D4H software for IAP development and repurposed an existing trailer for a small IST trailer.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

A. Statewide Coordinator Recommendation

Chief Jones recommended Chad Beam to be the Statewide Coordinator. Ken Kerber will assist. Bruce Kline made the motion to nominate Chad Beam as the Statewide Coordinator. Chief Jolley seconded. Motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

B. Firefighter Mobilization Plan Review

Chief Jones stated the Firefighter Mobilization plan was updated two years ago. It needs updating to reflect current practices. Reimbursement guidelines are needed. Needs procedure how tasking works through NMAS. The current plan is “heavy” on paper forms and the plan is to be more electronic. Bruce Kline suggested a timeframe for plan review is needed. Chief Jones would like to set the goal for completion before the beginning of hurricane season. The topic will remain on the agenda.

Chief Jones stated Ken Kerber’s position description has been updated to better align with the other Assistant State Fire Marshals’ duties. He is responsible for annual review of HART manual, Task Force program manual, and the Firefighter Mobilization Plan as well as content of MOU’s.

Chief Jones stated the budget, overall, is 31 percent at this stage in the budget year. Continue to finalize our costs for the landfill which is close to \$400,000 (and \$100,000 in supplies).

We are waiting on FEMA for reimbursement for Hurricane Florence.

Chief Phil Jolley stated he is pleased everything is going well.

Chief Jones stated staff has asked for (in LLR’s budget) \$850,000 for one-time non-recurring money. Equipment purchased in 2009 is now 10 years old. State Fire’s operational budget is not able to replace aged equipment.

He also stated there is now, in the SC legislature, a SC Fire Service related caucus.

He stated the dormitory is newly renovated and received a certificate of occupancy. Renovations are under budget. As such, was able to add an emergency back-up generator. He offered a tour.

The next SUSAR conference will be in November 2020 in South Carolina.

X. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting will be held Feb. 5, 2020, at 10 a.m. Mark Keel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Russell seconded. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.