



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

MINUTES

FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL

Portland Library, Portland
Thursday, June 8, 2017

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 by Vice Chair Jamie DiPace in the absence of Chair Don Harwood.

Attendance

Members present: State Fire Marshal William Abbott, Susan Bransfield, Jamie DiPace, David Marcarelli, Jeffrey Morrissette, Tim Tharau, Thomas Wiedl.

Members absent: Don Harwood, Victor Mitchell

OEDM Staff present: OEDM Director Bonnie Becker, Training Program Supervisor Doug Schanne, Trainer DJ Zordan.

At Vice Chair DiPace's invitation, DJ Zordan introduced himself and offered his experience to Council.

Approval of Minutes

March 17, 2017 minutes were reviewed. William Abbott motioned to accept, seconded by Susan Bransfield. All in favor. None opposed. Motioned carried.

Communications

There were no communications.

Staff Reports

Office of Education and Data Management

Bonnie Becker reported that fall 2017 pre-certification modules will be taught and tested to the current code, including NFPA 921 2017 edition. The spring 2018 class will be taught and tested to the new 2018 code. Fall 2017 career development classes will be taught to the current code, and the spring 2018 classes will be taught and evaluated to the new 2018 codes. Quarterly challenge exams in August and November 2017, and February 2018, will be to the current code. The May 2018 challenge exam will be cancelled, with the first exam to the new 2018 codes will be administered at the August 2018 challenge exam.

Bonnie reported that the Pre-Certification announcement had been sent out, and that applications are due July 11. Notifications will be emailed August 1. This year the Jones and Bartlett conceptual portion of the training will be online, prior to the start of class. The online program must be completed by September 8; class starts September 13.

Bonnie noted that OEDM Trainers DJ Zordan and Sheila Taridona continue to make positive changes to the program; explaining that the move to the online portion will take a week off of the training class and also equalize the knowledge base of the new students.

DJ explained that there are 15 chapters to the Jones and Bartlett online training, and that students will be required to pass each chapter's 10-question test in order to begin the classroom training. He also noted

the need to construct a more interesting application feature of classroom training which would include hands-on experience with the use of visuals such as props and mock ups of firewalls and dampers as an enhanced option. David Marcarelli offered to get access codes to the Jones and Bartlett Fire Code Inspector online module for council members who want to review the training.

Bonnie proposed introducing a final at the end of the code and fire investigator classes in lieu of the 20 incremental tests that are currently given. The final would be the same exam as the Challenge exam; however, the 20 tests that are built into the current program would become quizzes with the end being the cumulative final.

Jeffrey Morrisette discussed the possibility of integrating a final that included both the Connecticut and national certifications by having a core standard test and a 20-question Connecticut-specific section so that students would only have to take one test to get Connecticut and National certifications.

Bonnie identified the need to take one step at a time, stating that opposition to the concept of a Connecticut final in itself will be a major hurdle, and that the possibility of including national certification would be a next step. In addition to the work involved in integrating the two exams, Bonnie noted the lack of demand for national certification, even though it is currently simple to apply by means of a one page form. Bonnie specified that the statutes don't mandate that the Office of State Fire Marshal nationally certify fire officials.

David Marcarelli expressed concern that some program finals are quite different from what is taught in class. Bonnie reassured Council that the class and final would be developed to the same job performance requirements.

DJ noted Sheila's and his concern for the five-hour fire code test being a long time with much material to cover and numerous books to reference. Council discussed the need for review/study sessions. Susan suggested that study class review sessions are sometimes provided by outside groups; Jeff said that some programs have reported back to their jurisdiction.

Council expressed the need for the municipalities to know how their students were progressing during training. Without the incremental tests to provide a measure of how a student was doing, how would the jurisdiction be notified? Bonnie and DJ responded that informal assessments would be conducted throughout the training, and that if a student was struggling, the municipality would be notified.

DJ recommended that a practical component be added to the written final. Council suggested using FM Global SimZone, the Sheet Metal Workers Facility, the Travelers facility, and technical schools as possible locations for the practical exams.

Bonnie noted that for the practical exam she would expect every assessment to be based on an objective along with a rubric to ensure that everyone would be graded the same. She noted she would like to see it through; however, it would require a great deal of work and the timing is not feasible.

Bonnie reported the results of the survey sent to all Fire Marshals regarding the need for night classes: Out of 195 surveys sent, 78 jurisdictions responded, with 8 requests for evening training. She said that based on the survey, any questions about OEDM class quality and the need for night classes were unfounded.

Jamie responded that he would go to the Commissioner with the request for night classes. Bonnie advised that there was no need to go to the Commissioner because the low response to the survey for night classes did not justify the expense of the training.

A final suggestion was made to schedule a night training class, and if not enough people applied, reschedule it for a later date.

Bonnie reminded Council that the CBOA/CFMA Conference, focusing on building mechanical systems and how they relate to fire safety, will be held November 3, 2017 at Aqua Turf.

Bonnie reported that OEDM is now working with ICC and NFPA, Simpson Strong Tie for Building, CFI Trainer and other vendors to pay upfront in order for officials to take classes on the vendor's respective websites free of charge. Bonnie noted that initially she sought the learning management system in an attempt to eliminate officials having to self-report credit hours.

Bonnie announced that OEDM is considering Saba as a replacement database. This learning management system will allow officials to check preapproved classes, access their credit hours, and change their contact information. Saba also be able to track and/or assign Fire Investigation and Fire Code Inspector classes by individual. More onus will be on students and code officials to track their own information, and to notify their appointing authorities and/or supervisors of attendance, grades, credit hours, etc.

Bonnie reiterated her goal to make all outside credit classes be pre-approved. David Marcarelli requested that Doug review Gateway Community College's master course syllabus's for credit eligibility. Bonnie offered that OEDM can advertise and link people to Gateway Community College.

Bonnie finished her staff report by announcing that Commissioner Currey was working on getting one more person appointed to the Board of Control, which would enable the Board to meet with a quorum.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

William Abbott reported that John Doucette was continuing to provide assistance to the Pre-Certification training class. He said that OSFM is pushing their way through code updates, legislative matters and that the office continues to stay involved with OEDM as much as possible.

Old Business

Review and Approval of Bylaws

Revised Fire Marshal Training Council Bylaws were reviewed. Susan Bransfield motioned to accept, seconded by William Abbott. All in favor. None opposed. Motioned carried. Vice Chair DiPace signed the Bylaws in Chair Harwood's absence.

Meeting Schedule

Bonnie reported that the September and December FMTC meetings are on the same days as the Building Code Training Council meetings, and asked that Council select other dates or times. All FMTC attendees agreed that the Joint Training Council would meet on Thursday, September 14 and that the next Fire Marshal Training Council meeting would be on Thursday, December 7, 2017, with the locations to be determined. Susan Bransfield motioned to accept revised schedule, seconded by William Abbott. All in favor. None opposed. Motioned carried.

Review of Career Development Schedule

Doug Schanne reviewed the 2017 Fall Career Development Training schedule class titles and instructors, and provided a briefing on each class.

David Marcarelli recommended the use of Quinnipiac University's North Haven campus for the hosting of classes. The facility can accommodate up to 300 people, is free of charge and centrally located to New Haven County. David also advised to contact him to schedule the dates.

New Business

Review of Denied Outside Credit Applications

Doug Schanne discussed the number of applications denied over the past few weeks due to applicants' failure to submit sufficient support information with their applications, prolonging the process. He also explained the various application submissions which fail to include detail and appropriate credit information that coincides with the program taken. Bonnie reiterated the effectiveness of using the Saba software to access pre-approved classes.

Jeffrey Morrissette suggested that the outside credit requirement policy be reissued with a blank form and a sample of a completed form with attachments as an example of what OEDM requires. He said the sample would "Help us Help You."

It was suggested that OEDM send monthly email reminders containing the required steps and documentation for outside credit approval, as well as the OEDM policy, be sent to all officials. It was also recommended that OEDM monitors give outside-credit-procedure reminders during housekeeping notices at all classes.

OEDM Budget

Bonnie stated that the Council's request to review the OEDM budget would be denied, as fiscal oversight was not under the purview of the training council. She affirmed that she received the Commissioner's blessing concerning this decision. Bonnie told the Council that it is the Board of Control's responsibility to review OEDM's budget.

FMTC and the Decertification Process

Bonnie noted that in 2007 the statute was changed to include a FMTC member in the hearing process. Jamie stated that he would like those who are seeking a hearing to know that they may appeal to the FMTC. He asked that the insert for appeal makes reference to the Fire Marshal Training Council.

Adjournment

At 11:06 Tim Tharau motioned to adjourn, seconded by David Marcarelli. All in favor. None opposed. Motioned carried.

Donald Harwood, Chair
Fire Marshal Training Council