

**VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD
COMMITTEE ON FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Five Year Strategic Training Plan Workgroup Meeting

A special meeting of the Five Year Strategic Training Plan Workgroup was held at the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in Glen Allen, VA at 2:00 pm. Mr. Mike Armstrong served as Chair.

FE&T COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Mike Armstrong – FE&T Committee Chair - VA Chapter of International Society of Fire Service Instructors

Richard E. Burch Jr. – Full VFSB Chair - Virginia Fire Services Council

Ed Smith –Virginia Fire Chiefs Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Kenneth J. Brown – Virginia State Firefighter’s Association

Joe Wilson – Industry (SARA Title III & OSHA)

Kaye Brown – Virginia Municipal League

Tom Moffett – Virginia Professional Firefighters Association

VFSB MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Reilly – Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Billy Shelton

Tim Estes

Ken Muhleman

Don Hansen

Melvin Byrne

Dennis Price

Dave Jolly

Don Brown

Sam Burnette

Russ Chandler

John Fugman

Tom Phalen

Brook Pittinger

Steve Grainer

Tom Berry

Matthew Smith

GUESTS PRESENT

AGENDA

- A. Review of Current Five Year Strategic Training Plan by Committee Chair
- B. Comments from VDFP Division and Program Chiefs on Five Year Strategic Training Plan

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Mike Armstrong thanked everyone for attending and apologized for being late to the meeting. He reminded everyone that the intent of the meeting is to get feedback from the VDFP Division and Program Chiefs.

Topic: Review of Current Five Year Strategic Training Plan

Motion: N/A

Discussion: A copy of the current Five Year Strategic Training Plan was posted on the agency's website and sent to the Program and Division Chiefs prior to the meeting review; see **Enclosure 1**.

Don Hansen and Dave Jolly provided an overview of the updated Goals and Objectives based on comments from the February Workgroup Meeting, see **Enclosure 2**.

Richard Burch commented that he and Melvin Byrne attended the first Volunteer Summit held by the International Association of Fire Chiefs – Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (IAFC VCOS) to look at nine areas, including recruitment and reputation management. One of the issues brought up was the need for training portability.

Staff noted that dual accreditation would make Virginia training portable to all but five states. California is one of the states that is not IFSAC or Pro-Board accredited. An example of another dual accredited state is Florida, which also requires challenge testing before granting training reciprocity. Additionally, at the request of the Virginia State Firefighters Association a forum will be held to discuss training accreditation versus certification.

Richard Burch commented that his jurisdiction recently completed a Firefighter I and II program and had a higher failure rate than normal. He commented that he thought it was in part due to instructors not being up to date and some issues with questions on the tests.

Dave Jolly and Billy Shelton commented that these are not just local and state issues. There have been several instances where students have failed testing because the student did not read the course materials. There also seems to be a correlation between the utilization of modularized tests or test as you go and course completion.

Don Hansen commented on Goal 3 and the need for stakeholders to be present at the meeting in February to get their feedback.

Vote: N/A

Action: N/A

Topic: Comments from VDFP Division and Program Chiefs

Motion: N/A

Discussion: The committee discussed the continued interest in a state fire-training academy. Staff provided a concept for the state fire-training academy based on an eight to ten week program to get the basic firefighter training. Based on preliminary outreach there is interest from nine people. An alternative concept for a state fire-training academy would be for technical courses with logistical needs that are difficult to meet around the state.

Staff noted that at this time, a cost analysis was in progress and at this time, a funding stream had not been identified. In addition, locations for the state fire-training academy were being considered; however, currently considered locations were not agency-owned facilities. To assist in determining interest from fire departments throughout the state a question could be added to the agency's annual Needs Assessment survey.

The committee and staff discussed other states with a state fire-training academy, such as Massachusetts and Tennessee. It was noted that Massachusetts has a high demand for the state academy because the firefighters want the prestige associated with state academy training. It was also noted that a state fire-training academy could provide an opportunity to smaller cities and towns that may not have the funding or personnel to have their own training academy. A state fire-training academy would allow them to come and train together, and yield a cost savings for the locality. From a marketing standpoint, other states with a state fire-training academy are not necessarily marketing the training, but are marketing trained and capable graduates that are prepared to do the job.

Richard Burch commented that this concept has been around for 20 years. We need to think outside the box and we should focus on those trainings that are not regularly available regionally.

The committee and staff discuss possible target audiences. Initially, the main target audiences would be the smaller departments, volunteers departments, as well as high school and college students on break. It was noted that a daytime academy concept could also provide a training opportunity for firefighters working night shifts.

Billy Shelton commented that the concept has merit; however, we have legal restraints due to our funding stream. Section 9.1-200 *et. al.* of the Code of Virginia does not provide the legal capability to have funding reimbursement.

Mike Armstrong commented that he supported the concept of a state fire-training academy and that the specifics needed to be worked out. He also commented on his disappointment with the attendance at the Instructor Symposium in Dublin.

Richard Burch remarked that he would like the reinstatement of training recertification to be researched. Billy Shelton noted that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is looking at incorporating recertification into the national consensus standards in the entire 1000 series. Stakeholders are requesting it from NFPA and as firefighters continue to strive to be considered professionals, continuing education comes up, as many other professions require it. Richard Burch and Billy Shelton commented that we need check with our stakeholders and should continue to be progressive as we go forward.

Upon consensus of the workgroup, a fourth Goal was added to research the implementation of training recertification and gather stakeholder feedback.

Steve Grainer commented on the updated training for Mobile Incident Support Teams (MIST) being offered in June 2011. Richard Burch requested that an email be sent out with the details of the training, in order to disseminate to the other stakeholders.

Vote: N/A

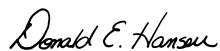
Action: N/A

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 4:15 pm

Clerk of the Committee
Matthew C. Smith

REVIEWED BY:



Don Hansen
Branch Chief of Training and Operations

April 13, 2011

Date

Enclosures

1. Five Year Strategic Training Plan
2. Updated Goals and Objectives