Fire and Rescue Commission Meeting

FTCC – Training Center
775 Tom Starling Road
Fayetteville, North Carolina 28306
April 14, 2026

Members in Attendance

Harley Cook, Chair	Freddy Johnson, Vice Chair		Scott Mullins
Josh Smith	Tim Henshaw	Walter Gardner	Andy Thomas
Cloyce Anders	Gary Whitman	Mason James	Brent Gordon
Randy Thompson	Steven Roberson	Robert Poe	Brian Taylor

Welcome and Call to Order - Harley Cook, 10:00 a.m.

Invocation - Walter Gardner

Ethics Statement – Harley Cook

Freddy Johnson made a motion to approve the agenda. Walter Gardner second. Motion passed.

Walter Gardner made a motion to approve January 13, 2026, minutes. Freddy Johnson seconded the motion passed.

Appointments

Harley Cook, Chair reappointed Jason Edwards to the Certification Board.

Freddy Johnson, Vice Chair, reappointed Derrick Clouston to the Certification Board.

Josh Smith made a motion to reappoint Doug Bisstte to the Certification Board. Seconded by Ryan Cole. Motion passed. Doug represents the NC State Firefighters' Association.

Gary Whitman made a motion to reappoint Terry Foxx to the Certification Board. Seconded by Steve Roberson. Motion passed. Gary represents the NC Association of Rescue and EMS.

Josh Smith made a motion to appoint Jeff Richardson to the Certification Board. Seconded by Scott Mullins. Motion passed. Jeff represents the NC Society of Fire and Rescue Instructors.

Certification Board Report - Kevin Gordon

Certification Board Report – March 05, 2026

Standing Committee Reports –

OSFM Report – Update on staff changes and introduced new staff members. Pro Board reaccredited NC's Haz Mat Tech, Fie Officer 3, Instructor 3 and FIT certification programs.

The IFSAC site visit will occur the week of October 26, 2026. The application is due by June 28, 2026. Internal OSFM deadline is the week of May 29, 2026.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports –

Technical Rescue – Task book for Structural Collapse has been completed and soon all the current qualified instructors will be briefed on this change and how to use the task book during course delivery. Work is progression on both Wilderness and Machinery, and these programs will be submitted with the IFSAC application later this year.

Fire Officer – Staff is working to create the 2025 version of the skills sheets, and we will utilize the Jones and Bartlett manuals**.** Instructor upgrades will be scheduled for later this year. OSFM Staff members are working on a plan to bring back Fire Officer IV to be delivered in 2027.

Fire Instructor – Staff is working to create the 2025 version of the skills sheets, and we will utilize the Jones and Bartlett manuals**.** Instructor upgrades will be scheduled for later this year.

Fire Fighter – Staff proposed a new layout for Fire Fighter that will utilize single classes; and the utilization of the Jones and Bartlett manual. The plan was approved by the Certification Board. See the attached documents.

Pro Board reaccredited NC's Haz Mat Tech, Fie Officer 3, Instructor 3 and FIT certification programs.

Josh made a motion to approve the Certification Board Report including the changes to the Firefighter Certification Program. Scott Mullins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VSWCF Board Report - Cloyce Anders

Cloyce reviewed the fund balance, revenue, expenses and retained earnings statements.

Premiums will be collected July 1, 2026, due to drop in retained earnings

OSFM staff are currently working on hiring for the loss control position.

CFI Board-Freddy Johnson

Freddy Johnson, Vice Chair.

Chairman, members of the Commission, good morning.

I have two items to report on behalf of the Certified Fire Investigator Board.

First, after consultation with legal counsel from the Department of Justice and counsel for the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Board has revised the manner in which it presents its report to this Commission. Because the Board's authority is derived from and subject to this Commission, we will now present our recommendations for your consideration and action, rather than reporting only summary numbers.

Going forward, the Chair or a designee will read into the record the names of applicants recommended for approval or denial, as well as the courses recommended for approval. The names of the applicants and the courses are included in your meeting packets.

Based on that, the CFI Board recommends that the following individuals be granted Fire Investigator certification:

- **Cody Bennett**
- **Edmund Kennedy**
- **Richard Blaine II**
- **Roland Falana**
- **Jason Grafford**

Steve Robersonmade a motion to accept the recommendations. Ryan Cole seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Board recommends that the applications of the following individuals be denied:

- **Marshall Jackson**
- **Curtis Johnson**

Andy Thomas made a motion to accept the recommendations. Josh Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Board further recommends that the courses listed in your packet be approved for credit toward Fire Investigator certification. I am happy to read those courses into the record if any member of the Commission would like.

Ryan Cole made a motion to accept the recommendations. Cloyce Anders seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Second, having worked through this process, the Board has identified a timing concern. In some instances, the Board receives course materials and applications close in time to scheduled conferences or other training opportunities. Waiting until the next Commission meeting for final action can result in courses not being offered as planned or applicants not receiving certifications in a timely manner.

To address this, the CFI Board respectfully requests that the Commission consider and adopt the following motion. Counsel from the Department of Justice and the Office of the State Fire Marshal are present and available to answer any questions.

The motion reads as follows:

"The Certified Fire Investigator Board requests that the Commission adopt the following motion:

The Fire and Rescue Commission hereby authorizes the Certified Fire Investigator Board to review and evaluate applications for Fire Investigator certification and submissions of training courses for credit toward such certification, in accordance with standards and criteria previously approved by the Commission.

The Board is further authorized to issue approvals or denials of such applications and courses on an interim basis on behalf of the Commission, in order to ensure the timely administration of the certification program.

All actions taken by the Board pursuant to this authorization shall be reported to the Commission and shall be subject to ratification, modification, or reversal by the Commission at its next meeting.

Nothing in this authorization shall be construed to delegate the Commission's authority to establish standards, adopt rules, or take final disciplinary action, all of which are expressly reserved to the Commission. Any modification or reversal by the Commission shall operate prospectively only and shall not invalidate or otherwise affect any approval previously granted by the Board and relied upon prior to the Commission's action."

Andy Thomas seconded Freddy Johnson's motion. Motion passed.

Freddy Johnson reviewed the recommended changes to the CFI application and the hourly requirements.

Scott Mullins made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the CFI application. Josh Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Gray Whitman made a motion to approve the changes to the CFI hourly requirements. Ryan Cole seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Kyle Heuser – Updates

Introduced Nick Sorensen. Nick has replaced Dilcy Burton as the Fire and Rescue Commission's attorney.

Felony Discussion–

Kyle provided background information that under state law, all fire departments should be conducting background checks. State law mandates that any firefighter applicant with an arson felony should not be allowed to join a fire department.

If applicant is a 5-year resident, without a felony in North Carolina, a department can use less formal background checks under current law. Such as the clerk of court or third-party system. However, if they do not meet residency requirements, a department must do an SBI fingerprint background check. Last year the legislature passed changes that apply to county and municipal departments. Any applicant who will work with children must have an SBI fingerprint background check. Volunteer departments don't fall under this rule.

Fire and Rescue Commission statutes do not give authority to deny or revoke because of felony. Kyle recommends that the felony question be removed from the application.

Fire and Rescue Commission will create a request to the general assembly to add revocation or denial of a certificate based on felony convictions. Brian Taylor suggested adding it to pending legislative bills.

Cloyce Anders made a motion to add to an existing bill language giving the Fire and Rescue Commission authority to require a criminal background check and to give the Commission authority to revoke or deny certificates based on felony convictions and to remove the felony question from applications until any such legislation is passed. Freddy Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Kyle Heuser – Rules

Still waiting to submit to the OAH and for OSFM Omnibus bill to pass in the legislature. Kyle would like to review the rules and provide new draft. Tim Henshaw made a motion to have Kyle and staff review the rules and provide a draft of the changes. Josh Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Agency Reports

The Commission next heard reports from various state agencies and organizations regarding programs and updates on fire and rescue activities and initiatives.

Ryan Cole asked about live streaming meetings.

After discussion with the attorneys, staff need to have more discussions to ensure the live streaming options are appropriate.

Ryan Cole made a motion asking staff to come back with recommendations for hybrid meetings, live streaming and release of the recordings to be included in the by-laws. Scott Mullins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Cloyce Anders made a motion to adjourn. Freddy Johnson seconded the motion**.** Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Williams