

**Fire and Rescue Commission  
Pinecroft Sedgfield Fire Department, Greensboro  
July 10, 2018**

**Attendees:** Harley Cook, Chairman  
Randy Thompson  
Josh Smith  
Freddy Johnson  
Gary Whitman  
Brian Taylor

Kevin Gordon  
Robert Poe  
Phil Welch  
Ryan Cole  
Vernon Massengill

**Welcome, Call to Order, Invocation**

Chairman Harley Cook called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.  
Phil Welch gave the invocation.

**Ethics Statement**

Chairman Harley Cook presented the Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest reminder as required by the North Carolina State Ethics Commission.  
There were no conflicts of interest reported at this time.

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion was made to approve agenda. Kevin Gordon made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Josh Smith. Agenda approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion was made by Vernon Massengill to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2018 meeting.  
Ryan Cole seconded. Motion carried.

**Appointments**

Kevin Gordon moved to appoint Freddy Johnson to the CFI Board to represent the Commission.  
Harley Cook so motioned. Josh Smith seconded. Motion approved.

Joel Faircloth's term on the VSWCF Board is expiring. Kevin Gordon nominated Joel Faircloth for a new term. Josh Smith seconded. Motion Approved.

## **Board Reports**

### **Certification Board Update**

The June 12, 2018 Certification Board was cancelled and as such there is no report. The next Certification Board meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2018 at Rowan Cabarrus Community College in Salisbury, NC.

### **VSWCF Board**

Cloyce Anders was absent. Representative Mike spoke on his behalf. A brief discussion included firefighter cancer and death benefits.

### **Certified Fire Investigator Board**

CFI Board chairman Freddy Johnson discussed applications from the CFI Board and the need for a well-defined set of rules for CFI application submission, particularly late submissions.

A CFI application denial appeal was presented by Doug Jones. Doug Jones cited the precedence of previous approval despite late submission and being unclear about the expiration date.

A discussion was opened.

Gary Whitman asked if this was a big problem and Kim Williams confirmed it was.

Randy Thompson inquired as to how many submissions are received each quarter.

Kevin Gordon suggested a universal due date of December 31<sup>st</sup> for all recertification applications.

Phil Welch agreed.

Kevin Gordon motioned to move the due date of all applications to December 31.

Freddy Johnson seconded. Motion approved.

Plans to set in motion the retroactivity of current list of denied applicants and institution of the universal expiration date to be December 31, 5 years from approval.

Doug Jones' appeal was reversed. His expiration date will be adjusted and he will be approved pending all other terms of his request are met.

## **Agency Reports**

### **Department of Insurance**

Brian Taylor opened the Department of Insurance report by introducing Tom Felling. Mr. Felling represents the Board for the NC Attorney General's office and will be working with the board to set forth administrative rules. Welcome Tom Felling.

Commissioner Mike Causey continues to tour all areas of North Carolina, focusing on rural departments to meet and assess the needs of our firefighters.

House Bill 948 passed.

The June 23<sup>rd</sup> Smoke Alarm Canvassing was a great success.

Kim Williams delivered Fire and Rescue Commission staff reports.

The High School Firefighter Challenge was a big success as always. There were 33 participants this year as opposed to 17 last year.

The Department of Insurance IT department and the Fire and Rescue Commission worked together with Image Trend to upgrade the Fire Bridge incident reporting program and has been successful in creating a more user-friendly experience.

Over 4,000 certifications were issued this quarter.

A North Carolina PTSD peer support group would like to have a section of our website. They have been vetted.

The Rosecrance Florian Conference will be held at the Raleigh Convention Center October 15-16, 2018.

Thank You so much to Chief McGrath for obtaining the Convention Center for free.

Shannon Bullock delivered the Injury Prevention report.

The Fire and Life Safety Conference will be held July 24-26, 2018 in Wilmington, NC.

Over 4000 smoke alarms were installed and more than 90 fire departments participated in the Smoke Alarm Canvassing Event on June 23, 2018. Since January 1, 2018, 7,446 smoke alarms have been given out including 49 hearing impaired smoke alarms.

October 7-13 is Fire Prevention Week. This year's motto is: Look, Listen, Learn, Be Aware – Fire Can Happen Anywhere. Sparky the fire dog has a new friend named Simon and Injury Prevention has some new team members. Welcome to Blair Cox, Norman Franklin, and Claudia Summer.

Derrick Clouston delivered the Training, Grants, and Inspections report.

340 Inspections have been completed this year, 255 9-S inspections, and 85 surveys.

There have been 86 Fire Officer Trainings this year as well.

The Grants division will be wrapping up the HB2 Disaster Grants from the fires and from Hurricane Matthew by the end of the month. There have been 111 Fire Grants dispensed and 504 grants outstanding.

Josh Smith inquired if inspections are going down. Derrick confirmed that yes, they are going down.

Josh and Derrick discussed how inspections going down would affect the Relief Fund.

## **NC State Firefighters Association**

Tim Bradley discussed the SAFRE convention in Raleigh, NC, August 8-11, 2018.

The Firefighters Association is also supporting the Rosecrance Florian organization.

Tim noted that September 11<sup>th</sup> was designated as First Responders Day and recognized as a state holiday.

Representatives met with the DMV to discuss the exemption of official use of a vehicle from a CDL license to include fire trucks.

The Firefighter Cancer Act passed which creates a registry in the CDC for tracking cancer among firefighters.

2.3 million dollars were appropriated for Search and Rescue Team funding.

The Line of Duty Death Benefit increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

A statute passed that allowed for the flying of flags at half-mast for the death of a firefighter.

Four By-Law amendments are pending:

- Eligibility of Lifetime Members to serve on the board.
- Modernization of the position of Treasurer.
- Addition of a Historian/Statistician.
- Allowance of past presidents to vote at the conference if not voting as a delegate for another entity.

### **NC Association of Rescue and EMS**

Joel Faircloth reported that High Angle School scheduled for Spring of 2018 was cancelled due to snow. Next Spring, those who were signed up for the cancelled 2018 class will have first preference. The NC Association of Rescue and EMS Convention will be held September 6-8, 2018, at the Hickory Metro Convention Center in Hickory, NC.

### **NC Association of Fire Chiefs**

Ryan Cole reported for Jake Whisnant on the North Carolina kickoff for Recruitment and the upcoming SAFRE convention in Raleigh, NC.

### **NC Department of Community Colleges**

Kenny Weatherington submitted the following report:

Greetings to the Commission and all in attendance from Mr. Peter Hans, our new President of the North Carolina Community College System, the System Office staff, and on behalf of our 58 awesome community colleges serving our great State. I am humbled that President Hans has selected me to serve as his designee to the NC Fire Rescue Commission and I look forward to working with you to advance fire training for our State.

For System Office updates, I begin with sharing that Mr. Peter Hans was elected by the NC State Board of Community Colleges on May 1 to serve as our ninth President. President Hans has many years of government and public policy work including serving as policy advisor to Senators Faircloth, Burr and Dole and serving 6 years as a member of the State Board of Community Colleges, three terms on the UNC Board of Governors and as Chair of the UNC System Policy Making Body. We are excited with his appointment as President and look forward to his leadership in the coming years.

I would like to also share with you the addition of our newest Public Safety Training Specialists team member, Mrs. Tonya Clark. Tonya has a Bachelors Degree in Emergency Medical Care from Western Carolina University, is a North Carolina and National Registry Paramedic, is a registered nurse and brings to us numerous years of community college experience as both an administrator and educator. Tonya will serve as our team's EMS subject matter expert while cross training in all our team disciplines. She will be located in our Western region with her office being at Southwestern Community College. We are excited that Tonya has joined our team and hope you will welcome her.

As an update on transfer of Certification records, the state office is now transferring records to OSFM daily. Colleges still report when they choose but once we receive the records we no longer hold for twice-a-month transfer but rather transfer that day.

In May, our office hosted our annual regional Fire Rescue School Directors meetings. This year we coordinated with the staff of OSFM to provide the first three offerings of the new School Director Orientation courses for our college directors and fire department directors. Our host colleges provided us rooms for two days at each location for our meetings and these professional development sessions were well received by our school directors. We are very grateful to Alamance Community College, AB Tech Community College and Wayne Community College for the use of their facilities and their warm hospitality.

Several times over the past years, questions and confusion have arisen about whether junior firefighters under the age of 16 could take college classes and certification classes at our community colleges. Due to some recent questions, our office issued a joint memo from Mrs. Margaret Robertson, Associate Vice-President of Workforce Continuing Education and Mrs. Kim Williams, Deputy Director of the Fire Rescue Commission. The short story is some years back GS 95-25.5, the Department of Labor statute, was amended to read *"Nothing in this section prohibits qualified youths under 18 years of age from participating in training through their fire department, the Office of State Fire Marshal, or the North Carolina Community College System. As used in this subsection, the term "qualified youth under 18 years of age" means an uncompensated fire department or rescue squad member who is at least the age of 15 and under the age of 18 and who is a member of a bona fide fire department, as that term is defined in G.S. 58-86-25, or of a rescue squad described in G.S. 58-86-30."* However, the Community College System is governed by NCGS 115D which indicates "minors" must be at least 16 years of age to take college courses. While community colleges were mentioned in GS 95, it did not supersede GS 115D. So, while OSFM will take records for certification training from 15-year old junior members, under the current community college governance, junior members have to be 16 years old to take classes at the community college. This memo was sent to all community colleges to share but is public and available upon request from our office or our colleges.

In closing, we do look forward to the opportunity of continued dialogue as we move to the test proctor change coming in 2019. Our Fire Rescue Advisory Committee is reviewing potential impacts and business solutions to ensure we maintain the desire of the Commission while meeting the demand of our departments. We will direct our questions to Mr. David Bullins to address to the Certification Board as we move forward and our colleges stand ready to work to increase the quality and integrity of both the education and testing processes moving forward. Our office hopes the Commission will continue to work with us to find solutions that are amicable to all of us and as always in the best interest of the customers we both serve.

As our colleges ready themselves for what will prove to be another busy and productive Fall semester, we thank you for your continued support of our colleges as we and the Commission serve our fire service communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenny Weatherington  
Public Safety Training Specialist  
Fire-Rescue and Emergency Management Training State Lead  
North Carolina Community College System

### **NC Division of Emergency Management**

No Report.

### **NC Society of Fire/Rescue Instructors**

Joe spoke on behalf of Jimmy Barrow.

Jimmy Barrow is retiring. Announcements forthcoming.

The NC Society of Fire/Rescue Instructors website is currently down and is undergoing a transition.

When the site is back up it will be far superior to the old site. The phone number remains the same.

### **Professional Firefighters and Paramedics of North Carolina**

President Trump signed a Firefighter Cancer Bill on Monday, July 9, 2018 to set up a national registry for firefighters to help track links between exposure to fumes and cancer.

### **NC Department of Labor**

No Report.

### **NC Office of Emergency Medical Services**

No Report.

### **NC Department of Forestry**

Randy Tierney reported that wildfire activity for this year, so far, has been normal. There have been 3040 wildfires this year and 597 prescribed burns.

Moore County has requested a search helicopter.

Contact NC Department of Forestry with requests.

### **Other Business**

Phil Welch requested that the next Commission Board meeting on October 9, 2018 coincides with Breathing Equipment School at Gaston College and as such, motioned that we move the meeting to Gaston College. October 9, 2018 meeting was moved to Gaston College.

With no other business to be addressed today, Harley Cook motioned to adjourn. Gary Whitman seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Jessica Lashbrook.