

**Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Fire Administration
Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy
December 06, 2022
Zoom Teleconference**

Attendees:

The following members of the Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy were in attendance for the teleconference.

John S. Butler (Chairperson)
Fire Chief
Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department
12099 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22033

Dr. Michael Macey
Director of Public Safety
St. John's College
1160 Camino Cruz Blanca
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dr. Patricia McIntosh (Vice Chair)
Emergency Management Coordinator
College of the Mainland
1200 N. Amburn Road
Texas City, TX 77591

Steven Dubay
Deputy Chief
Colorado Springs Fire Department
375 Printers Parkway
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Thomas E. Romaine, Jr.
Smokechaser
Minnesota Department of Natural
Resources - Forestry
644 Pfaender Drive
New Ulm, MN 56073

Kristin Crowley
Fire Chief
Los Angeles Fire Department
200 N. Main Street, Suite 1770
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Chief Kevin D. Quinn
First Vice Chair
National Volunteer Fire Council
7852 Walker Drive, Suite 375
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Dr. Mark A. Rivero
Site Coordinator
Southern Illinois University
1044 Beaver Crest Court
Henderson, NV 89015

Federal Emergency Management Agency/U.S. Fire Administration/National Fire Academy (FEMA/USFA/NFA) staff in attendance:

Chief Tonya Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, USFA

Mr. James Hodge, Director, Management, Operations, and Support Services (MOSS)

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, NFA

Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp, Program Support Specialist

Chief Richard Patrick, Director, National Fire Programs Division

Mr. Lester Rich, Acting Deputy Superintendent, Branch Chief, Response Branch, NFA

Ms. Christine Spangler, Branch Chief, Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch, NFA

Ms. Michelle Spielman, Secretary

Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch, NFA

Others in attendance/public attendees:

Ms. Tamara Molina, Acting Deputy Executive Director, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters/Office of Partnership and Engagement/Office of Academic Engagement

Convene Board of Visitors Meeting/Welcome

Chief John S. Butler, Chairperson, Board of Visitors

Chief Tonya Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy

Good afternoon, and welcome to this meeting of the Board of Visitors for the NFA. This meeting is being conducted under regulations outlined in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

I want to thank you for volunteering your time, diligent work and for completing the necessary security and ethical processes to serve as Special Government Employees.

Mr. Eriks Gabliks will serve as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for this meeting. The DFO's role is to serve as liaison between the Board of Visitors and the USFA. The DFO is also responsible for ensuring that all the provisions of the FACA are met regarding the operation of the Board of Visitors.

We have an agenda as published in the Federal Register. The times listed are approximate, and we may need to adjust the agenda to accommodate schedules. We must ensure that time for deliberations is adequate, and that the public has ample time to make comments. No comments were sent in from the public. Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp is the USFA/NFA contact with FACA officials at FEMA and the DHS. Michelle Spielman and Ellen Newlin are backups.

Dextera/Leading Solutions support staff, Mr. Dallas Moorer, will be taking notes and will compile minutes. Minutes will include matters discussed and conclusions reached by the board.

We will prepare the minutes and ensure that they are certified by the meeting chair within 90 calendar days. All comments and notes will be available for public review forever.

Chief John Butler called the meeting to order.

Chair Chief Butler introduced himself and began the Board of Visitors meeting at around 2:10 p.m.

Chief Tonya Hoover, deputy fire administrator, thanked the board for their continued work and gave her update. She spoke about how many members of the board were also in attendance at the Presidential Fire Prevention Summit (<https://www.firehero.org/usfa-summit/>). From the summit came 6 asks. Chief Hoover told the board about how rounds are being made around the country to bring awareness to the 6 asks and about how committees were formed for each ask. She discussed how the Board of Visitors is strategic in its planning and how that will be essential in the future. She also talked about how the USFA is going through a reorganization. She spoke to how the first of the new year marks a new fourth division into the USFA dedicated to data and research and about how emergency medical services is set to be put front and center with a focus on bolstering it.

Chief Hoover told the board that the draft USFA strategic plan is tied to the FEMA strategic plan, and both of their goals align.

Deputy Chief Steven Dubay asked a question about the realigning of the USFA organization and wanted to know how they have drifted away from the legislation.

Chief Hoover answered that the stars were originally lumped together and, over the course of time, drifted apart to suit the needs of the USFA at that time.

Chief Hoover spoke about the new external affairs specialist named Evrim Bunn.

U.S. Fire Administration Data, Research, Prevention and Response Chief Richard Patrick, Director, National Fire Programs Division, U.S. Fire Administration

The director of National Fire Programs, Chief Richard Patrick, addressed USFA Data, Research, Prevention and Response.

Chief Patrick discussed how the complete USFA incident data set was now available. He spoke about how 2 new employees have been hired on for the department and that the website has been updated with plans to have ongoing updates.

Chief Patrick informed the Board of Visitors that a new wildland urban interface (WUI) awareness tool is active and has been deployed and that they are in the process of further enhancing it.

Chief Patrick talked about several best-practice programs and working with other organizations such as the Department of National Security and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to create a partnership to train a number of individuals from both organizations.

Chief Patrick spoke about how they have 25 ongoing research projects and how they have been conducting research into personal protective equipment.

Dr. Mike Macey commented on the importance of getting and using open-source data.

Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvements on the National Emergency Training Center Campus

Mr. James Hodge, Director, Management, Operations, and Support Services

Mr. James Hodge, director of MOSS, discussed that 18 deferred projects have been completed. He spoke about the renovation to the ground floor of D building and converting it back to occupational space, as well as about the campus-wide fire alarm upgrade and the third and fourth floor renovations in N building.

Mr. Hodge informed the board that the tunnel repairs are still ongoing along with the site-wide plumbing upgrade plans, and he spoke about the plans to upgrade the elevators in E, H and K buildings. He also discussed the heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades meant for V1 building.

Mr. Hodge talked about the burn range improvements.

He also spoke about how 20 electric carts have been purchased to replace the current fleet of service vehicles and informed the board about the plans for a campus-wide Wi-Fi upgrade.

Mr. Hodge discussed that there are a number of future projects in the works, but funding needs to be secured.

Chief Kevin Quinn asked a question about the status of a project proposal for a campus health and wellness center. Mr. Hodge responded that they are still waiting on a response from FEMA to get the process started further.

National Fire Academy Updates on Developments, Deliveries, Staffing and Admissions

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, National Fire Academy, Superintendent

Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch, NFA

Ms. Christine Spangler, Branch Chief, Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch, NFA

Mr. Lester Rich, Acting Deputy Superintendent, Branch Chief, Response Branch, NFA

Ms. Tiffany Warren spoke about how they have submitted their annual results to FEMA and that, from the surveys, there has been a significant improvement seen in job performance. She also

discussed expanding online instructor training and that they are still delivering NFA virtual learning.

Ms. Warren then informed the board about the fiscal year 2023 WUI curriculum rollout and talked about diversity, equity and inclusion courses. She then spoke about how they are looking for ways to get new instructors.

Ms. Christine Spangler spoke to the board about how a diversity, equity and inclusion course was in development and that the course design would take place on Jan. 26 through 28, 2023.

Ms. Spangler talked about how when it comes to the course design, they are looking for ways to engage as many as possible. She discussed how 3 Executive Fire Officer (EFO) classes were under review and informed the board that there were 292 survey responses; the raw data was sent to the EFO program.

Ms. Spangler spoke about how the EFO symposium would take place on April 14 and 15, 2023. She also talked about the capstone research guidelines and the EFO Program Handbook and how they will be updated and posted online in January.

Ms. Spangler discussed that a preliminary review was conducted with the Company Officers Section/International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) last month and that another was scheduled for January. She then brought up the need for redeployment funding.

Mr. Lester Rich gave a response branch update. He discussed a new 2-day course in development named "Fire as a Weapon." He then informed the board that both the "Chemistry for Emergency Response" (R0233) and "Hazardous Materials Incident Management" (R0243) have been updated and had walkthroughs in the past week.

Mr. Rich stated that the "Emergency Medical Services: Quality Management" (R0158) course has been revised and is scheduled for January 2023. He talked about how Blackboard offers 2 classes currently with 5 more prioritized to be added through spring.

Mr. Rich then discussed how the Secret Service was interested in having a joint training on incident management and other exercises. He informed the board that projects have begun to add a new classroom and bathrooms to the burn range, and he also spoke of the new forensic field activity site located behind J building.

Mr. Rich stated that a new Apollo Patient Simulator was purchased for the "Advanced Life Support Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents" (R0247) class

Mr. Rich discussed how the breakout rooms were being upgraded.

Mr. Gabliks spoke about how the federal budget is still in continuing resolution and that they will need to wait on that to be complete to precede with new projects. He informed the board that they still retain a nurse on campus and that they are following COVID-19 protocols and safety for staff

and students. He then discussed new Program Decision Options which, if approved, would fund additional personnel and resources.

Mr. Gabliks talked about how state weekends have been filling up and have been trending better than the past year, and he spoke about bolstering the state training classes.

Mr. Gabliks shared that there were only 12 upcoming classes with any empty seats in them all the way through April and that they were looking into ways to fill those remaining spots. He also informed the board that Dec. 15 is the second semester deadline.

Mr. Gabliks posted that the following courses were up for American Council on Education review.

- “Hazardous Materials Code Enforcement” (R0615)
- “Emergency Medical Services: Functions in the Incident Command System” (W0166)
- “Emergency Medical Services: Incident Operations” (R0147)
- “Administration of Public Assistance for Community Recovery” (R0335)
- “Advanced Science of Hazardous Materials Response” (R0655)
- “Applications of Community Risk Reduction” (R0385)
- “Demonstrating Your Community Risk Reduction Program's Worth” (R0378)
- “Emergency Resource Deployment Planning Standards of Coverage” (R0492)
- “Emergency Response to Terrorism: Strategic Considerations” (W0549)
- “Executive Planning” (R0506)
- “Fire Investigation: Essentials” (R0772)
- “Fire Investigation: First Responders” (W0770)
- “Managing Effective Fire Prevention Programs” (R0671)
- “New Fire Chief: Administrative Issues” (W0761)
- “Wildland Urban Interface: Fire-Adapted Communities” (R0614)
- “Service Area Risk Reduction” (R0673)

New courses (3):

- “Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self” (R5201)
- “Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization” (R5202)
- “Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community” (R5203)

Mr. Gabliks also discussed how recruitment for staffing has moved forward and that the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education position is still vacant.

Board of Visitors Subcommittee Activity Reports

Professional Development Initiative Update

Dr. Patricia McIntosh, Chair

Mr. Tom Romaine, Co-Chair

Dr. Patricia McIntosh and Mr. Tom Romaine had nothing to report at this time.

National Fire Incident Reporting System
Chief Kevin Quinn, Chair
Dr. Mark A. Rivero, Co-Chair

Chief Quinn reported progress.

Chief Quinn started a discussion about the upcoming board election. He asked about how many members would be stepping down.

Chief Butler responded that 3 members' terms were ending.

Final Comments/Adjournment

Chief Butler asked if there was any old business to attend to.

No comments were made.

Chief Butler asked if there was any new business.

No comments were made.

Chief Butler motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Dr. McIntosh.

A vote was made, and the meeting was successfully adjourned at 3:40 p.m.