

**Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Fire Administration
Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy
December 6, 2021
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
Division Director
Simtable
40A Calle Josephina
Santa Fe, NM 87506

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

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

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

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

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 Steve Dean, Deputy Superintendent, NFA
Mr. Ken Farmer, Branch Chief, Education, Training and Partnerships Branch, NFA
Mr. Al Fluman, Director, USFA/NETC Management, Operations and Support Services Division
Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, NFA
Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp, Program Support Specialist
Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell, U.S. Fire Administrator, USFA
Chief Tonya L. Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, USFA
Ms. Ellen Newlin, Program Specialist
Mr. Lester Rich, Branch Chief, Response Branch, NFA
Ms. Michelle Spielman, Secretary
Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch, NFA
Mr. William Troup, Branch Chief, Emergency Response Support Branch, USFA
Ms. Julie Chase, Instructional Systems Specialist, NFA
Ms. Sarahjane Call, Federal Advisory Committee Act Representative

Others in attendance/public attendees:

Mr. Sahil Sandhu, U.S. House of Representatives

Convene Board of Visitors Meeting/Welcome
Chief John S. Butler, Chairperson, Board of Visitors
Dr. Patricia McIntosh, Vice Chairperson, Board of Visitors
Chief Tonya Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration
Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy
Chief Steve Dean, Deputy Superintendent, National Fire Academy
Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell, U.S. Fire Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration

Chief Steve Dean welcomed the Board with opening remarks:

Good afternoon, and welcome to this meeting of the USFA/NFA Board of Visitors. 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.

My name is Steve Dean. I am the Deputy Superintendent of the NFA and will be serving as Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO) for this meeting. My role is to serve as liaison between the Board of Visitors and the USFA. I am also responsible for ensuring that all the provisions of the FACA are met regarding the operation of the Board of Visitors. You know Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp, whose work with FACA officials at FEMA and the Department of Homeland

Security (DHS) have made this meeting possible and made my work immeasurably easier and more productive. Ms. Michelle Spielman and Ms. Ellen Newlin are Deb's backups, and I want to thank them officially for everything they do to make this meeting successful.

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.

Dextera/Leading Solutions support staff, Ms. Jennifer Vanover, will be taking notes and will compile minutes. Minutes will include matters discussed and conclusions reached by the Board. As ADFO, I am responsible for preparing the minutes and ensuring that they are certified by the meeting chair within 90 calendar days. All comments and notes will be available for public review forever. A report will be prepared for the FEMA administrator as required by the enabling legislation.

Chief Dean convened this meeting of the USFA/NFA Board of Visitors. Chief Dean deferred over to Chief John Butler.

Chief Butler called the meeting to order.

Chief Butler welcomed everyone and stated that the new U.S. Fire Administrator, Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell, was on the meeting to say a few things. Ms. Gartrell-Kemp took roll call for the meeting.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Dr. Moore-Merrell.

Dr. Moore-Merrell started by stating that she was thrilled to be in this meeting and to get to talk with everyone. She thanked everyone for their service and dedication to the USFA and also to the NFA and to the men and women of the fire service. She said that she is eager to work with everyone, and together they have a lot to do. She is focused on the mission of the USFA of which the NFA is a big part. Everyone is aware that the mission of the USFA is to support and strengthen the fire and emergency medical services (EMS) so that they are prepared for preventing, mitigating and responding to all hazards. Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that words matter and that she focuses on support and strength, and when she meets with staff, she asks what that looks like for them. So she asked everyone at the meeting the same thing.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that despite the COVID-19 pandemic and being quarantined most of the last and current fiscal year, the NFA has done a lot of offerings, providing over 1,800 course offerings reaching nearly 85,000 students and over 126,000 student days of instruction. That has been accomplished through a lot of far-reaching delivery systems that NFA has sponsored and held either on campus or off campus at state and local sites. There are state and local partner-sponsored courses, technology-based courses and higher education delivery through colleges and universities. The numbers reached well over that of prior years. Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that Mr. Eriks Gabliks will share a lot more when it is his time to speak. She stated that reaching more students in a pandemic speaks volumes to not only the support but about what the NFA was able

to accomplish. She wanted to recognize that right up front and let them know that she is fully aware of that support and strengthening of the fire service.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that as she steps into this leadership role, she is reminded a lot of the FEMA administrator's priorities of community preparedness and resilience. Her vision is going to focus on preparedness and resilience as well but with more of an inward focus for fire and EMS departments and the responders. For example, as the USFA continues to train, they have to train for the threats and the risks that responders are facing currently and not just what they have traditionally responded to. Currently, the focus is on the changing landscape of all hazards. That means everything from the civil unrest to the consequences of an active shooter and violent extremists.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that the USFA also has to be better prepared for wildland fires and other disasters. It is not just those departments that are close to wildland urban interface (WUI) that are affected. There are trickle-down effects and weather-related disasters such as storms that are affecting everyone nationwide, so doubling the efforts in those areas, particularly in the prevention of ignition and hardening the wildland interface, is crucial. Evaluating disaster models and how responders deploy is going to become more important to departments. The first responders need to have the most appropriate personal protective equipment particularly for wildland responses. Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she was currently briefed on a new wildland respirator that has been developed in conjunction with science and technology in the DHS, which is huge when looking at preparing responders. The USFA needs to continue to focus on the overall matching of the emergency resources that are being deployed so that they match the risk environment responders are going to. If everything matches well, then the possibility of firefighter injury and death, civilian injury and death, and property loss decreases. The USFA continues to focus and have that be part of the mission as well.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she is a huge proponent of quality data. She thinks it is absolutely necessary that everything that is done should be data informed and data driven. She is going to lead the way to modernize the National Fire Data Center (NFDC). The USFA has already made great strides in making sure that they can have movement in that area. Modernizing the system does not mean they are fixing what they have. There is going to be a new one. It will transition off the old National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) infrastructure onto a new cloud-based environment. That is the plan, and the USFA is working on trying to find the resources to move forward. They are also going to be designing a new dataset. The legacy NFIRS 5 has not been updated since 1995. It is not going to be relevant to the current times, so they have to bring in partners and make sure they can develop a new modernized dataset that is relevant to the current risk, response and operations environment. The USFA has to streamline a lot of their capability to bring in data from other data sources. They are looking into technology sensors, which are nontraditional data sources that are all going to be relevant to being able to tell the story at the local, state and national level.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that USFA will also have a role in physical and behavioral health challenges. That is a challenge for the fire service, so they are going to take a much more prominent role in those 2 areas as well. The USFA has to work with their federal partners like the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the national firefighter registry and look

at new ways to expand behavior health resilience training. The USFA has a whole generation of firefighters and paramedics who are coming on board who have very different resilience levels. That means that when something bad happens, being able to recover and carry on with life is sometimes not easy. So there will be different resilience levels in a whole generation that will be encountered. They are going to be looking at some of that resilience training and making sure that they have the capabilities to either deliver it or partner for its delivery. The USFA has to play a role in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the fire service. There is opportunity to teach cultural awareness of the challenges that are faced by firefighters in underrepresented groups.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she will be working with the NFA crew and Mr. Gabliks, and they have already talked about the growing willingness to challenge and transform some of the harmful aspects of the traditional culture so that responders can have a psychologically safe workplace. There is always talk about physical safety in the fire service, and Dr. Moore-Merrell's team wants to perpetuate that, but they need to think about psychologically safe workspaces too.

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she did not want to take up too much time; she just wanted to give a brief look at the shared vision and focus for the USFA. A lot of that is going to be coming from the NFA, which is where the Board of Visitors advice is going to come in to be very valuable as they look at a new vision and new focus going forward. Dr. Moore-Merrell asked if anyone had any questions and stated that she looks forward to continuing working with everyone.

Dr. Michael Macey thanked Dr. Moore-Merrell for the overview. He asked what her thoughts were on a plan moving forward with knowing that 20,000 agencies are not reporting data. Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she has studied data for a long time, and part of the reason that there are so many departments not reporting is that they have not been taught the value of the data and that the burden of entry is so difficult that it is not worth it to them to contribute. If the burden for entry could be reduced, that would help. Why should firefighters be putting in times that they can get directly off the dispatch system? If they could leverage technology to pull data in directly, then it does not have to be entered. So if that burden could be reduced for firefighters and for personnel in general, then that would be better. There would be better quality data by doing that because human error is huge. If that pathway for data entry coming in now can be streamlined, then several behaviors can be reduced, leading to the ability to get quality data, and that will go a long way. The other thing is leveraging data to really help departments at the local level. Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she is envisioning that the data will be coming in, but it will also have some pretty advanced analytics capability to turn around and give information back to that department. There are a lot of departments that do not have data analysts and there are a lot of big departments that do, and they do very well with it. They do it for budget, their training, etc. Everything stems from data. There are a lot of departments that do not have that capability. If they can be given something that is automated and almost near real time for them, then there is value in that. They can expand their budget, they can build new stations, they can have the capability to go to their councils or their decision-makers and say, "Listen, this is what is needed, and here is the data to show it."

Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that she definitely wants to speak to the volunteers because part of the reason they do not have good data from volunteer departments is that barrier: the burden of entry. If data can be streamlined and given to them and be entered from their phone, then that is a whole

different ball game. If the barrier of entry can be lowered, then there would be some real possibilities going forward.

Mr. Steven Dubay thanked Dr. Moore-Merrell for sharing her vision. Dr. Moore-Merrell stated that everyone knows how to get in touch with her if they need anything, and she is very excited to move forward with everyone. She thanked everyone in advance for their support and advice along the way. There were no more questions at that time. Chief Butler thanked Dr. Moore-Merrell for being in the meeting.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Chief Tonya Hoover.

Chief Hoover stated that she did not have much to add. She said that she is very excited about the initiatives and the energy. She knows that the Board of Visitors will be engaged, and Mr. Gabliks has a lot he is pushing forward with the NFA. She stated that she is looking forward to hearing the briefings from the different program areas at the USFA.

**U.S. Fire Administration Data, Research, Prevention and Response
Mr. William Troup, Branch Chief, Emergency Response Support Branch, U.S. Fire Administration**

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Mr. William Troup.

Mr. Troup is the branch chief of the Emergency Response Support Branch, and he is filling in for Chief Richard Patrick. Mr. Troup stated that Chief Patrick gives his regrets and is unable to participate at this meeting.

Mr. Troup stated that there are a lot of things going on with the National Fire Programs. They have a new branch chief of the NFDC. Mr. Troup previously held that position, but they hired Mr. David Millstein, who is a longtime staffer who worked and managed the NFIRS helpdesk. Mr. Millstein has extensive fire rescue experience both in EMS and hazardous materials. He is an exceptional new member of the management team, and he starts today. He will be a key part of the future of NFIRS.

Mr. Troup stated that there are tremendous amounts of research efforts that the National Fire Programs do. He stated that Dr. Moore-Merrell mentioned the work on the DHS system's wildland respirators, and Mr. Troup is the person that actually provided a lot of the subject matter experts (SMEs) for that. They were able to reach out to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's (NWCG's) risk management committee, NIOSH and a couple of other committees. They were able to find a lot of real-time needs in the wildland fire service to support the enhancing of the wildland respirators because that is an issue. DHS Science and Technology provides the technology and funding, and the USFA provides the subject matter expertise as well as connecting the dots to the partners in the fire service.

Mr. Troup stated that they have initiated a study funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration concerning the response of fire and EMS to

electric vehicle emergencies. They are partnering with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) on the effort, and they look forward to some great work on that. They are doing an EMS needs assessment. They are going to look at where the USFA space is in EMS, and they will be partnering with the IAFC on that project as well as working with updating the EMS medical director's handbook. That is an online web-training program; it is about 5 years old and in need of an update. They are really excited to do that with the IAFC.

Mr. Troup stated that they are working on a couple of other research projects. One is to look at the study of civil unrest for fire and EMS and how to handle those incidents. They are working on a study of pandemic preparedness and working with the National Association of Emergency Medical Services Officials to prepare for future pandemics.

Mr. Troup stated that they are continuing to work with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), and they have a draft document on the update to "Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services: Challenges and Solutions." They expect that report to be out in a couple months. They are also updating the USFA's "Funding Alternatives for Emergency Medical and Fire Services" which provides information on grant funding. That is an older document that they were partnering with Oklahoma State University's International Fire Service Training Association to update, and they are expecting that to be out in a couple of months.

Mr. Troup stated that they are working on a study of "America Burning" with the IAFC, and that it is an introspective look at what the USFA space is. They are also looking at what used to be called the "America Burning WUI" study, but it is basically going to be a WUI-type program study.

Mr. Troup stated that their work in fire prevention is really unmatched. They have fire prevention safety cards and safety outreach that is good for pictographs which covers all languages. For example, at a restaurant there is a picture of the hamburger, and they are trying to do the same thing with pictures of various fire prevention and fire life safety activities that cover the whole community and not just parts of the community.

Mr. Troup stated that they are working with the NVFC and that they are doing a great job on the retention recruitment document. That delves into DEI in the recruitment of volunteer firefighters again reaching out to the whole community and getting the needed members of the fire service to allow for an effective response as well as equities in the fire service.

Mr. Troup stated that he was honored to come back and meet with everyone. Mr. Troup asked if there were any questions; there were no questions. Chief Butler thanked Mr. Troup for the brief.

Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvements on the National Emergency Training Center Campus**Mr. Al Fluman, Director, U.S. Fire Administration/National Emergency Training Center Management, Operations & Support Services Division**

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Mr. Al Fluman.

Mr. Fluman advised that he will cover a couple of items about where they are on some important projects on the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) campus. They are trying to use every available dollar that comes their way to make improvements on campus. One thing COVID-19 has done is give them the opportunity to get a lot of things accomplished on campus that probably would not have been done as quickly. Mr. Fluman stated that he is going to give a snapshot of what is happening on campus and what will happen in the immediate future.

- There were 3 large renovations that just got completed that were started among the COVID-19 process:
 - Building J basement renovation is now completed and occupied.
 - There were extensive renovations on the first floor of Building L. They are completed, and occupation is in progress.
 - The basement in Building O was converted into some office space to get some staff out of what used to be dormitory rooms. Now they can actually add dormitory space on campus. The office space is complete, and they are just waiting on a couple of IT things to be done. That will give them the ability in the future to house more students on campus.
- They are in Phase 2 or 3 of the campus-wide fire alarm upgrades after this fiscal year. They are doing 9 buildings this year, and most of those are the dormitory buildings that will be done this year. Once that is done, there will be 1 building left, which is Building N. That will be the most difficult and most expensive. The campus will be safer, and it will be up to code and give the ability to communicate to each and every building safety wise.
- A project was just started a couple months ago to put new heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) in a couple floors of the offices in the chapel area.
- They are in the process of starting a very important project to replace all the existing HVAC in Building N. That is one of the largest and oldest buildings on campus. That is going to take 4 to 6 months, but it has to be done.
- They are in the process of doing some security upgrades with cameras and access control in 4 or 5 buildings.
- They completed the Building L solar installation. That is done and has been converted over to solar which will also soon provide electricity.

- Many of these efforts are part of the summary of the climate change initiatives which were started 5 years ago before the emphasis by the Biden administration on climate change initiatives.
- Mr. Fluman stated that he was happy to report that they have made some very large strides over the last 4 or 5 years with their focus being on LED lighting and continuing installation efforts on HVAC, all working toward what is called their net zero initiatives (so they do not have to pay the electric bill, which 10 years ago was a million-plus dollars a year). Last year was \$300,000. This coming year will be close to \$200,000.
- Some other plans are some solar maintenance vehicles for their fleet, electric vehicle usage on campus and outdoor solar workstations. They are in the process of looking into purchasing a hybrid bus for students. Doing all of this will still meet the environmental responsibility with the historic preservation initiatives.

Some things that are going to be done with next year's money (which, if received, will probably be in June):

- There is no longer going to be a road between Building S and the memorial. They will repair some of the large water mains in that area. They are going to convert that whole area into a patio-type area. They want to have some outdoor solar workstations for students. That project is funded, and the work will start on that eventually.
- They think they have the ability to add to their solar network with the visitor's building out front.
- They are going to focus in this year on some renovations of restrooms and some Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades.

Mr. Fluman stated that some of the things that they are focusing on this year with this year's money will actually be done next year. He thinks they will have significant dollars coming in over the next couple of years for deferred maintenance to continue with the success they have had in upgrading many if not all buildings on campus. Mr. Fluman is pretty excited about where they stand for the funding for at least the deferred maintenance. Mr. Fluman asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Dr. Macey stated that he thought it was pretty impressive that they reduced the electricity from a million dollars to basically saving \$800,000. Mr. Fluman stated that they have been able to roll that money over into other projects. Chief Hoover stated that she was glad Mr. Fluman brought it up. NETC tries very hard, and when they talk about the improvements that were done and bringing the electric bill down, it means that they are able to take those needed funds and apply them into the educational areas and into the program areas on things that they have not been able to do so that nobody thinks there is just money lying around. There were no further questions at this time.

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

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, National Fire Academy, Superintendent

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Mr. Gabliks for an update on the NFA.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the headline currently for the NFA is that they are now open for business. This is the second week under their new posture on campus, which is that students, instructors and staff in FEMA schoolhouses — that includes the NFA, the Emergency Management Institute and the Center for Domestic Preparedness — are all vaccinated. There have been a handful of emails or calls from people that are unhappy about this, but overall, it has been very much appreciated by everyone that is coming to the schoolhouses for training. Mr. Gabliks stated that he visited all the classes. There was no negative feedback, and everybody was very appreciative. This will allow them on Jan. 1, 2022, to resume 100% capacity on campus for classes. They have bolstered the schedule that they had planned to offer as of Jan. 1, 2022, and they have added classes. They did have some low enrollment numbers in a handful of classes. Mr. Gabliks advised that Chief Dean and his team have looked at the schedules, and they looked at where they have backlogs of classes needing more students. They added some of those classes back into the schedule. All of this is possible because of the work that Mr. Fluman and his staff have done on campus with their safety and health protocols.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they still have a nurse on campus. They still send the message of self-awareness of people's health condition and still have mandatory face coverings in place. They also have individual tests available for staff and students if they would like them. They have been at an 85% to 90% vaccination rate even before they went to this posture. The transition from 85% to 90% for vaccinations for everyone is a pretty big jump. They have also continued the off-campus deliveries of classes on a state-by-state basis. All of those are being done in compliance with state and local health and safety guidelines so when they bring a class into a respective state or community, the instructors know that they will be complying with those standards in place at the time. All of the contractors also have to comply with the FEMA and presidential executive orders on contract services. The staff is working through that. Again, there have been no negative issues.

Mr. Gabliks stated that with any other given year, they do have some states that have returned classes to the NFA. They offered 9 2-day classes to each state as well as 3 6-day classes to each region. For a variety of reasons, some states and regions cannot deliver those classes they had planned. They will then turn those back in, and the NFA puts them in a bucket and then relocates those classes on a state-by-state basis to meet the needs of the stakeholders. This system is working out well.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they have been having good discussions with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) as well as the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI). Both of those organizations bring added value to the students, employees and volunteers coming to the NFA classes. CPSE has a partnership where they recognize the work done in both the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program and Managing Officer Program toward their professional certification, and the same is true for the IAAI. They recognize the training the NFA provides toward receiving certification from their organizations. The NFA is not a certification body; they are a training

organization. This is just an added value to the students where they are, in essence, able to use what they receive at the NFA and then work toward a professional certification from one of those organizations and will continue to reach out to other partners as they come across that.

Mr. Gabliks stated that another issue he wanted to share with everyone is that the new learning management system (LMS), Blackboard, is moving forward. The staff is working really hard on that. They plan to start moving pilot courses onto the system by mid-January. That will give about a month to test the system. They are training the staff right now, and eventually they will train the contract instructors. The goal is to have that up and running by mid-February, which aligns with the schedule for bringing the Managing Officer Program and some of those classes back on campus. Those classes rely heavily on the LMS.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the EFO Program is moving along well. The EFO Legacy Program is men and women from diverse backgrounds across the country that are in the former EFO Program. For Legacy 3, there are about 20 people still in the queue that were not able to make any of the classes that were recently scheduled. They will be bringing them back after the first of the year, will work with them, will give them a number of dates and will try to find the best date for all of them. The NFA really needs to figure it out and get that group finished so they can move to Legacy 4, which is the 4-year class. For Legacy 4, they have a number of classes after the first of the year. They will offer one last virtual session of Legacy 4 for people who could not make it on campus for whatever reason. That will allow them to catch up with Legacy 4 and then catch up the Legacy 3 group and they will go on to Legacy 4. Mr. Gabliks stated that the feedback has been very positive, but people are tired of waiting. They are also tired of the pandemic, but the NFA is doing the best it can to get them across the finish line. Mr. Gabliks stated that with the new EFO Program, the staff continues to work very hard, and the plan is to have those students back on campus after the first of the year. They brought in SMEs, they worked really hard with contractors and really want to get that train going again and move forward. The plan is to bring in the new EFO students in the spring. That will allow the NFA to get some of the people that are in the queue from the first start of the program where they had a bit of a misfire to move forward. Then they will bring the new cohort into the new Residential 1 experience.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they recently held a North Carolina State Weekend on campus that had more than 180 students. There was really good feedback, and it was a very successful weekend. This was the first state weekend where they implemented a new partnership for their state constituents to take advantage of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF). They have added a class to the schedule in addition to what the NFA already offers. NFFF will make a class available for each state weekend so that the students that come to campus have an opportunity to take an additional class that they might not have had before.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they are in the process of replacing the simulator equipment for the technical simulation systems in Building S. That equipment did arrive in the last fiscal year. They are in the process of installing that. That will give the students more opportunities for virtual learning as well as simulation training on campus. Across the board, the feedback from students on campus and virtually has been very appreciative.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they are working on the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) conference for next year. That is scheduled for June 11-12, 2022, on campus. The plan is to have it in person with the fallback to be virtual, and that will be dependent on the number of people that enrolled for the conference versus how many would take it if it is virtual. The focus for that this year is really a refocus of back to the basics. It is not about what FESHE did, but they want to focus on creating partnerships within the NFA as well as working with their colleges and universities and having the FESHE partners work with stakeholders in their respective communities and national organizations. Looking at how to move the fire and EMS service forward — both career and volunteer — from the professional development standpoint and embracing college education and degrees is part of that.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they have a number of available positions moving forward, with more than 6 positions within the NFA because of retirements. They did have a failed recruitment for the leadership training specialist position. They just have not found the right applicant. Mr. Gabliks stated that it is possibly a sign of the times from the employment market that they are in currently. They have made a decision not to do anything with that position until after the holidays and get a fresh start. They really want to bring somebody in who understands leadership development, who can manage that program to continue the work that has been done and really take that program to the next level. They do not want to just settle for someone that meets the qualifications. They really want to hire somebody that has the passion and the vision to help develop the fire and EMS leaders from across the country.

Mr. Gabliks stated that WUI classes are leaning in heavily on wildfires because this is no longer a seasonal discussion; they have national and statewide wildfire issues across the country all the time. They will be adding a training specialist to the staff to focus on WUI. They will need to look for SMEs to come in and help with that. 2 primary areas for training are community risk reduction — so basically what can they do to help mitigate these situations from becoming very large — and bolstering the command and control for the leaders, both career and volunteer, when WUI emergencies happen. There will be more to come on that.

Mr. Gabliks then talked about the FEMA strategic plan. Resilience is a big part of that. Having a developed and competent workforce is part of that. One of the things that will be seen once the FEMA strategic plan is released is the focus on climate change. FEMA has discussed climate change such as floods and hurricanes, but through the collective efforts of the USFA staff, they will now see and hear wildfire discussed more than ever. Wildfire is not only a part of climate change, but it is also the reality of the landscape that they are working in currently. Wildfires are no longer seasonal and restricted to the West Coast; they occur across the country. They are really looking forward to bringing in a training specialist for that.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the NFA offers the O0305 class which is “Type 3 All-Hazards Incident Management Team” (Type 3 AHIMT). They are leaning into developing more teams on that, so they will be offering more classes in partnership with not only FEMA but also with the NWCG, which is looking to adopt O0305 as the baseline for their Type 2 and Type 1 teams. Those who have worked in this environment know this well, but there is a limited number of Type 1 and Type 2 teams across the country. That number gets even smaller when they get into busy wildfire times of the year. The focus is how to develop regional teams. It is not that they develop the teams, provide the training and help support that, but how they can have more resources on the ground to

help manage these incidents so that they can catch it earlier and not have to rely on the Type 2 and Type 1 teams on a national level. Mr. Gabliks asked if anyone had any questions.

Dr. Macey asked if Mr. Gabliks could give a short background of how the CPSE White Paper became integrated into the Capstone Research Project (CRP). Mr. Gabliks turned that question over to Mr. Lester Rich because he is part of the team working on the EFO Program. Mr. Rich responded that the CPSE White Paper was originally recommended and brought to the attention by one of the people in the old legacy program. That paper was to be offered up as an example, as guidelines or suggestions for the students. It is a very well-researched and backed paper. It will give the students some direction and perspective of what they are looking for with the CRP.

Dr. Macey asked if the minimum score for the CRP is 22 out of 40. Mr. Rich stated that that is probably an estimate. Mr. Rich asked if that was for the actual capstone final paper score or if Dr. Macey got that off of the rubric. Dr. Macey stated that he got it off of the CRP guidelines that Mr. Rich sent out. Dr. Macey was curious how they came up with that. Mr. Rich stated that he did not have that paper on him, but that the idea behind that rubric, and without quoting the specific numbers, is going to lay out that there are 10 criteria being evaluated. Each of those criteria are weighted in a point score, but the student has to score a minimum number of points per criteria. Basically that prevents the student from doing everything in the one criterion and completely ignoring another criterion; they will lose points for that. It is going to be a weighted scoring system. It will not add up to 100 points because there will be other things that are graded that will be added into that. A question in one of the fire investigation class rewrites was that if this does not add up to 100, how can the students pass? Mr. Rich stated that 50 points is the same as 100. Mr. Rich stated that that will be addressed. He apologized for not having that document in front of him.

Dr. Macey asked about the White Paper and that one of the very first initiatives is renaming the fire service, and some people have asked if the NFA has been asked the question of whether they are going to rename themselves or not. Mr. Rich stated that Dr. Moore-Merrell would have to answer that question. Dr. Macey stated that it is just a rhetorical question. The whole idea of the White Paper is to create discussion, and it definitely has. So some questions will be pushed back to the NFA as well. Chief Hoover stated that she was glad he asked that question, and she can say that part of a discussion with Dr. Moore-Merrell has been about the name of the USFA. With reauthorization coming up next year, that would probably be an area that is explored. With any potential reidentifying or rebranding of the USFA, it is all discussion and all possibilities of how that would trickle down and affect areas such as the NFA — or the “National Fire whatever they call it” — and the National Fire Programs. They do so much more than just fire. Mr. Gabliks stated that the rebranding has been happening within the NFA too. With the redesign of the EFO Program, should it really be executive officer, executive leadership for fire and EMS leaders, or something like that? It is a rhetorical question, but it is one that they are discussing internally because as much as they value and are proud of their tradition, they also do not want that to be a limiting factor. There has been discussion that since the NFA has an EFO Program, is it time for an Executive EMS Officer Program, and the answer is that both the Managing Officer Program and EFO Program cover fire and EMS. They are not even talking about fire and EMS operations; they are talking about leading fire and EMS organizations.

Mr. Gabliks talked about sending out the information about the EFO Program. He also stated that they just wrapped up an American Council on Education review last week. They had 16 classes

that were evaluated. 2 of them were new, and they all received the green light to move forward and be either reaccredited or accredited for the first time. They are very proud of the work of the staff, and that is another added value item of the NFA. Chief Butler stated that was great news and something to be proud of.

Mr. Dubay asked Mr. Gabliks a question about the notion of the NFA contemplating providing that regional Incident Management Team (IMT)-level training or Type 3 team training. Is that going to be a regional delivery or is that something to bring individuals and or groups of people back to the campus? Mr. Gabliks stated that the answer is both. They have the ability to offer that training locally, but they have had more success at a regional and a state level. He stated that he will use Texas as an example. Texas has been hosting a number of those classes, as are some other states, and they are able to bring people together that are going to be part of an IMT and go through the classes as a whole. That is the best way to do it because not only will they learn from each other and learn in the class, but also they will get to know each other. The NFA is working with their state partners, and that is their vision to bolster the deliveries on a state-by-state basis. In some communities, they may have offered a class last month and 2 or 3 people may not have been able to make it, so the NFA could be that fallback with classes on campus to catch up those 2 or 3 people that did not make it so they can go back and be part of the team.

Chief Butler asked if there were any more questions. There were no more questions at this time. Chief Butler moved on to the next section which was a Professional Development Subcommittee report from Dr. Patricia McIntosh.

Board of Visitors Subcommittee Activity Reports

Professional Development Initiative Update Dr. Patricia McIntosh, Chair

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Dr. McIntosh.

Dr. McIntosh asked if the Managing Officer Program inventory that Mr. Gabliks talked about was going to be a project that will be worked on. Mr. Gabliks stated that they were multitasking. They still want to engage that committee. They just want to get over the hump of not only the new year and alerting management system but also get the EFO Program in the rearview mirror. Then they can bring everyone together and have a fresh look at the Managing Officer Program, which needs to be done just like they did with the EFO Program. Maybe in the spring they can bring everyone together for that. Mr. Gabliks stated that they are delaying, but they have not forgotten. Dr. McIntosh stated that the committee will continue standing by. Dr. McIntosh stated that they have nothing to report out at this time.

National Fire Incident Reporting System Chief Kevin Quinn, Chair

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Chief Kevin Quinn.

Chief Quinn thanked the staff and Ms. Gartrell-Kemp in particular, and those that take notes because they keep everyone on track. This subcommittee for the NFIRS did meet November 2. It was a nondecision-making informational meeting only. Chief Quinn did ask Ms. Gartrell-Kemp to send out the link. The report is online under the Board of Visitors tab. There will be the Subcommittee Meeting minutes listed for November 2021. Some highlights of what went on and what they did included meeting with Mr. Jim Heeschen, who is the acting branch chief of the NFDC. Everything is in the report and on the link that Ms. Gartrell-Kemp sent out. Mr. Heeschen was very informative with filling them in with all the information regarding the modernization and where they are going. The information from the update on NFIRS and the information from Dr. Moore-Merrell and her vision will work through with the NFIRS modernization and be able to make things more user friendly and could be much more efficient. The report from the Subcommittee Meeting is online for everyone to review. It was a very informative meeting. They did make sure that they were within FACA requirements. There was no decision made, and it was information only. It was great to get the update for where they are currently. With hearing Dr. Moore-Merrell today, there will definitely be more work to follow on the subcommittee as things fall into place. Chief Quinn asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Troup thanked Chief Quinn for the kind words about Mr. Heeschen who was the acting branch chief until Mr. Millstein was chosen for the position. Mr. Millstein will be the new permanent NFDC branch chief. He will be seen more on campus. Mr. Troup stated that he was the previous branch chief after Mr. Heeschen; he covered both branches for a while. Now they have a permanent branch chief, Mr. Millstein, and he will be a great addition. Mr. Millstein has been a staffer in the NFDC for some time. Mr. Millstein managed the NFIRS helpdesk. Chief Quinn suggested having Mr. Millstein reach out so he knows the subcommittee exists in case he does not already.

Mr. Dubay thanked Chief Quinn for the report out and bringing to their attention the Subcommittee Meeting minutes. He is looking forward to looking them over. Mr. Dubay stated that this meeting would officially be the end of his rookie year on the Board of Visitors. He has not been assigned to a subcommittee and wondered how that worked. Mr. Dubay asked if either Chief Quinn or Dr. McIntosh needed any assistance on their respective committees or how he may be able to help in the future. Dr. McIntosh stated that she will definitely be looking for help. A lot of people have stepped forward with willingness, but as they continue to be untasked at this time, she encouraged him to work on whatever he can find.

Final Comments/Adjournment

Chief Butler asked if there were any closing comments, thoughts, questions or topics that were not discussed before they talk a little bit about the Annual Report. The Annual Report was attached to the agenda for this meeting. Chief Butler thanked everyone who contributed, and they

all did some really strong work for it despite the challenges of doing business virtually. Chief Butler asked if there were any questions or issues regarding the Annual Report that was created and presented.

Mr. Dubay thanked everyone for putting together the report and that it looked fantastic. He stated that he found 2 typos. He is confident of the 1 typo but not sure about the other. Mr. Dubay asked if he could send an email to Ms. Gartrell-Kemp with those 2 issues. Ms. Gartrell-Kemp stated that he could email them to her. Mr. Dubay stated that it was a couple of simple things, and he will send her an email.

Chief Butler suggested they make a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gartrell-Kemp stated that they will send out dates for the March meeting. Chief Butler stated that if there is no other business, he proclaims this meeting adjourned. Chief Butler thanked everyone and told everyone to have a great holiday.

Meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.