

**Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Fire Administration
National Fire Academy Board of Visitors Meeting
Conference Call
February 1, 2005
Building H, Room 300**

Attendees:

The following National Fire Academy Board of Visitors (NFA BOV) members were present for the teleconference:

Dr. Robert S. Fleming (Chairperson)
Professor, Rowan University
1406 Heather Lane
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380

Chief Donald R. Oliver (Vice Chairperson)
Wilson Fire/Rescue Services
307 West Hines Street
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Dr. Sandy Bogucki
Associate Professor
Section of Emergency Medicine
Yale University School of Medicine
464 Congress Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06519-1315

Mr. Art Cota, Division Chief
State Fire Training
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, California 94244-2460

Ms. Helen Johnson
Executive Director
State Firemen's and Fire Marshals'
Association of Texas
4450 Frontier Trail
Austin, Texas 78756

Mr. Gary Tokle
National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-7471

The following members were not present for the meeting:

Chief Warren McDaniels (Retired)
7097 W. Tamaron Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70128

Captain Jack Reall
President, Columbus Firefighters Union,
IAFF 67
1380 Dublin Road, Suite 103
Columbus, Ohio 43215

FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) staff in attendance:

Mr. David Paulison, U.S. Fire Administrator
Mr. Charlie Dickinson, Deputy Administrator
Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA
Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA
Mr. Ron Face, Director, NETC Management, Operations and Support
Mr. Paul Conrad, DHS, Office of General Counsel
Ms. Beth Miller, USFA Budget Analyst, NETC Management, Operations and Support
Ms. Cindy Wivell, NFA Secretary

- **Meeting Convenes**

Dr. Onieal introduced Mr. Paul Conrad, Office of General Counsel.

Mr. Conrad reviewed the ethics material distributed via email and hard copy by Ms. Cindy Wivell. He addressed the OGE 450 form Confidential Financial Disclosure Report that the Board members had to complete and submit as a requirement to be on the advisory committee. Any questions on the materials can be directed to him via email (Paul.Conrad@dhs.gov). He informed the group that the General Services Administration has a Web site that contains information on advisory committees (www.gsa.gov/services/advisory). Their role as members of the board can be found there. Another source for information is the Office of Government Ethics (www.usoge.gov).

The Board members are classified as Special Government Employees. Members of advisory committees:

- may not misuse their Government title.
- may not do political lobbying.
- need to abide by the conflict-of-interest provisions.
- have to be careful before voting on specific issues during Board meetings. If a member votes, and there is a conflict of interest, he could be subject to criminal statutes.
- may not speak or teach on matters specific to advisory committee duties with the Government.
- cannot testify against the Government.
- cannot endorse non-Federal products.
- cannot release non-public information protected by the Privacy Act without seeking advice as to whether or not it can be released.

Mr. Conrad advised the Board members to contact him with any questions on potential conflict-of-interest situations. By contacting him and following his advice, the member will be shielded from criminal prosecution. It is better if the contact is in writing so that Mr. Conrad and the member have documentation.

Meeting agendas should be distributed in time for Board members to review and identify any possible conflicts of interest. Mr. Conrad gave examples where conflict(s) could occur: investments, organizations, lobbying, and specific matters. He stressed to the members to call him with any questions on potential conflicts; if he is unavailable, other contacts include:

Mr. Robert Brock, (202) 646-4095
Mr. Edward Broyles, (202) 646-3961
Ms. Leigh Hoburg, (202) 646-7396

- **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Dr. Onieal said the reconstitution of the Board needs to be completed. A Chair and Vice-Chair need to be elected. Mr. Tokle nominated Dr. Fleming for Chair with a second by Ms. Johnson. A verbal vote was taken, and all were in favor. Ms. Johnson nominated, Chief Oliver for Vice-Chair with a second by Dr. Sandy Bogucki. A verbal vote was taken, and all were in favor.

- **Status of National Fire Academy: Dr. Onieal and Dr. Kiefer**

Dr. Onieal's briefing included the following points with regard to the budget:

- All classes are being delivered.
- Assistance to States is still on track.
- Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE) is funded.
- The American Council on Education (ACE) review is funded.
- There have been minor budget cuts for printing and classroom support.
- The development of courses has been cut; however, Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Director of the National Fire Programs Division, is working hard to keep it going through in-house development and small purchase agreements.
- The Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) symposium has been delayed.
- Instrumentation for the *Executive Development* and *Executive Leadership* courses has been eliminated.

Mr. Dickinson briefly discussed the budget. The Academy will continue to operate. The cuts are not just NFA, USFA, FEMA, or DHS; they are across the Government. In total, USFA has had around \$7M in cuts over the past few years. The challenge for the future is to have more people here on campus doing course development and revision.

Mr. Tokle asked for an idea of the overall number of dollars cut from the budget. Mr. Paulison said a 12 million dollar draw was taken from the 2002-2003 budget.

Over the last 3 years, on average, an estimated 2 million was lost each year. Mr. Paulison stressed that we are not shutting our doors or firing people.

Dr. Onieal stated that the new course, *Command and General Staff Functions in the Incident Command System (CGSFICS)*, is being offered to each Region. It is expensive, so the States can choose to have one CGSFICS offering or three other, less expensive courses. Mr. Cota encouraged the USFA staff to review the need for a third instructor for CGSFICS to see if it is justified, especially at the local level. Dr. Onieal explained that the decision for three instructors is not within the Academy's purview.

Dr. Onieal will be sending out a memo to the States with the courses that have been handed off. He would like to get the number of people who have taken the courses and will send out another memo requesting this information. A total of 150 courses have been made available. This number is unprecedented in the history of the NFA. Of the 150, there were 32 (2-day) handoff courses, a 160-hour chief officer training course (breaks down to ten 2-day), and 105 endorsed courses. There are 30 more in process for endorsement. Ninety elements of NFA courses will be NIMS compliant by the end of April.

Dr. Bogucki asked about the status of credentialing. Dr. Onieal said the project is on hold due to Federal Advisory Committee Act issues. Appointments are being made to the USFA Policy and Program Advisory Committee. Once those appointments have been made and the committee had a chance to meet, discussions on credentialing will be reconvened with a member of the USFA Policy and Program Advisory Committee present. Recommendations from the credentialing group will be forwarded to Mr. Paulison.

Dr. Onieal reviewed Academy personnel changes. Emily McGlaughlin left at the beginning of September. The onboard strength as of September 18 is now the new onboard strength. As a result of not being able to backfill Emily's position, the Academy is down to 17 full-time employees.

- **Budget: Mr. Ron Face and Ms. Beth Miller**

Ms. Miller reviewed the draft USFA spending plan. All members of the Board previously received a copy of the plan. Mr. Face said that USFA is operating as though there was a continuing resolution because the spending plan has not been approved yet. There could be additional taxes.

Mr. Face gave an overview on the campus facilities. Fiscal Year 2005 began with enough money to keep the doors open; since then, additional funding has been received. Those funds are being used to catch up on critical maintenance and for an enhancement (508 compliance) to the Web site for the admissions system. A member of the Board asked about the status of new facilities, and Mr. Face responded that additional buildings have been put on hold.

Is there any concern that money may be taken back? That is always a concern. Is Fiscal Year 2006 looking the same? The planners are telling us that 2006 will be better, and the operations folks say it will be the same as 2004. Two things affect the budget significantly: the union contracts, and permanent staff being hired against temporary money.

- **Board Discussions**

Dr. Fleming led a discussion on the Board's meeting frequency. Dr. Onieal said that two meetings on campus and two conference calls have been budgeted. Dr. Fleming asked if there is a good time to come to campus when advice would be needed from the Board. The group discussed coming at the same time as the Fallen Firefighter Memorial Weekend. Ms. Wivell will get the date of the Memorial out to all via email. Dr. Onieal said he would send pertinent dates out to all the members so they have something on which to base the meeting schedule.

Mr. Cota asked if the Board members had any obligation to produce a report for last year. Dr. Onieal responded that an annual report would not be prepared for this past year, but would be required for the end of this fiscal year. The items to be addressed are contained in the Board's charter.

- **Adjournment**

There was a motion to adjourn and seconded. The meeting ended at 2:45 p.m.