



Galveston County Fire Fighters Association

Chief's Retreat February 20, 2016
Santa Fe Fire and Rescue Station #1 at 8:50 am

All Officers of the Board except the Chaplain and Mascot were present; the County OEM Director G. Foskit was present. Also, LaMarque Fire Departments did not have anyone in attendance and Crystal Beach showed up half way thru the meeting.

President Key welcomed everyone to the annual Chiefs Retreat of the Galveston County Firefighters Association. Dan also thanked Santa Fe Fire and Rescue for hosting the meeting and providing the continental breakfast and lunch. Everyone introduced himself or herself. Key also gave a brief rundown of the SAFE-D Conference recently held at Moody Gardens in Galveston.

Going around the room and getting some ideas of some topics that we will discuss throughout the meeting kicked off the meeting. Those topics included:

- A Safety Committee, Universal Accountability System
- Training
- Health of the Organization
- Annual Physicals for members
- Automatic Aide Response, EMS
- Radio Frequencies
- Surveys, Departments Abilities
- Class B Licenses
- Dispatching
- Fireworks
- Contract Compliance

Dan started off by discussing the fireworks issue and that the County Commissioners have already passed a resolution allowing the sales of fireworks in Galveston County from 2 holidays to 5 holidays, and did away with the 5000' ETJ area also.

Dan mentioned that we had discussed this at our last meeting and not knowing that they had already passed it on the Monday before our Thursday meeting. If we have a burn ban in effect, this can get limited or stopped. Rusty mentioned they can't stop it but they can limit the types of fireworks they sell. G. Foskitt mentioned that on that night, he didn't even know they had done this and that they can rescind this motion.

After a brief discussion, **T Anderson made a motion and Seconded by O Thompson that we have a letter sent to the County Commissioners in opposition and have all of the Chiefs sign it. Motion passed.** Chief Rubio from Texas City abstained saying that he can't speak for Chief Zacherl and OEM's G. Foskit wanted to reflect that he has no say and didn't vote yay or nay.

Had a discussion on the obtaining the Class B driving licenses. Chief Wisko from Galveston mentioned that as of right now, you would have to send 2 men and a truck out to Gessner Rd. in West Houston to take your driving test. This is an all day affair and Firefighters get no preferential treatment. Mike says that he is working on this issue and trying to get the driving portion moved somewhere closer to home. The written test may be taken anywhere.

Training for the County Dispatcher was the next topic of discussion. Talked about training that was offered to the dispatchers in the past, but the County would not pay them to go and they had to go on their own time. Discussion was to possibly contact TEEX and see if they had a condensed version of the 40-hour class locally. Something like a 2-3 day class. Discussed that we need to make sure that the training is something that is something that we can gain some value out of. Formed a **Communications Committee of Chris Anderson, Kyle Baden and Jack Helton.** They have been charged with the task of coming up with some options to offer the County for their dispatching training. Try to come up with something by June. Dan mentioned that the County paid lots of bucks for a communications study, what have they done with it? We need to bring this back up in April or May and find out what they want to do. Jeff Pittman mentioned that the 3-hour discussion that he had with those guys didn't make it in the study. Also threw around ideas of regional dispatch system and costs associated with it.

Radio Inoperability was covered for a few minutes. It was agreed upon that we would have a generic fill in the blank letter dispersed to all Departments giving permission for all other Departments to have their channels programmed in their radios, and pass along the letters to the 911 District. T Anderson mentioned that Harris County has something like that and that maybe we could tailor it to fit us. Jack was asked to get this together and get it over to the Secretary Joel. **The Communications Committee was also charged with the task of getting information on all departments' channels.**

Automatic aide and mutual aid was discussed next. Chief Wisko mentioned that if anyone needs them just call. He said that they are willing to go assist anyone at anytime. Jack Helton mentioned that maybe we could set up some sort of automatic pop up in the CAD so it would show whom to call. Maybe something on a countywide basis.

Firefighter physicals and proficiency was covered next. Dan mentioned that each department should have some type of program. T Anderson mentioned that he thinks that it is up to the individual departments not the County Association. Discussed the idea of some type or baseline physical due to the pension plan, and something that could at least find something that may be a problem with the Firefighter. If they get a physical thru their jobs or another source, this could be used in lieu of sending them for one. Maybe we could work out something with the County health department and possibly do them. Garrett mentioned that the County actually has 2 different departments that could possibly do this. If we want to do this, we need to first set up a guideline what we want to do.

Brent Hahn made a motion and was seconded by Rusty Kattner to form a Health and Safety Committee. Motion passed. This committee will be Brent Hahn, Rusty Kattner and John Park from League City. This committee will come up with some guidelines or standard for a physical program. Briefly covered what is covered in a DOT physical.

Accountability was discussed. We discussed what all of the departments use or not use and why. Discussed the ease of use and cost of each. We all agreed that there needs to be a universal system that everyone in the County could use. Especially if departments go mutual aid. Everyone agreed that the Passport System would be the way to go, and that we should move to it. **The Health and Safety Committee was charged to spearhead this project, led by Brent Hahn.** C Anderson that each department needs to start getting their information together and get it ready to give to Brent for the tags by May.

Stan gave a breakdown on the training system and some ideas for training throughout the County. Also spoke about some of the training from last year. The FF II rolled out online also. There was 16 students in the FF I and 30 in FF II.

Had some discussion on the testing from SFFMA thru TEEEX the third party testing company. TEEEX admitted that there is a breakdown in the testing. The Haz-Mat is where the primary problem lies.

The College is now requiring an online learning package program, it takes about 2 hours, and it helps students to learn how to take classes online.

Stan mentioned that Friendswood has an "Edith" trailer that is need of some attention. This is basically a trailer converted over to simulate a hoarder house for training and the situations that could occur when faced with something like this. This is called a Collier condition. The trailer is in need of about \$5000.00 worth of repairs. This will be on wheels and able to travel around to Departments through out the County.

We had a discussion on the training for the Departments over on the Peninsula and what we could do to help get them some third part and outside training, other than those instructors in their Departments. The comment was made that Texas City has the burn trailer and that it could go over there for all of the Departments on the Peninsula on one Saturday. Speaking with Chief Rubio from Texas City, it takes about \$1500.00 for 8 hours of training with their burn trailer. This includes 3 instructors and the trailer. This basically covers the salary of the instructors. The Departments would need to come up with some plywood and fuel for the burns. The sit up and breakdown is not included in the 8 hours. That's basically done for free.

Rusty Kattner made a motion and Orbin Thompson seconded that the County Association pay for them to go over on the Peninsula sometime in 2016. Motion passed. Rusty said for the Commissioner to get some kind of date and get things going. Rusty mentioned that the Departments would need to file for their 2604 training grant money for this and that the County Association would pay for the part that the 2604 don't cover. **James Westinghouse made a motion and Brent Hahn seconded that the Association give \$5000.00 to Friendswood to make repairs. Motion passed.** Stan mentioned that this trailer should be ready to be hauled around to the Departments this upcoming Summer. Dan mentioned that these are some of the things that we have been asking for the past few Retreats. Something that we can take to the Departments that would give them some third party training, making it easier on the Departments. Especially those on the Peninsula.

Went over the survey form and removed some parts and reworded some parts. Basically simplified the wording on it. Removed the parts that don't apply to the Departments anymore. Discussed what parts were applied to the Career Departments.

Spoke briefly about the attendance of the Departments to the monthly County Association. Butch Edwards mentioned that we really don't need to read the associate members at the monthly meetings, just the member Departments. All agreed. Dan asked that the Secretary let everyone know if they have missed 2 meetings in a row. The contract says that if a department misses 3 meetings in a row that they are NOT in good standings with the Association. After discussions, the contract that Texas City, Galveston and La Marque have, states that they should be a member of this Association and nothing about making meetings and not missing 3 in a row. All agreed that it was just an oversight. Chief Wisko mentioned that the 3 Departments still need to make meetings and be members of this Association and participate. Dan mentioned that it is important to make the meetings and discussed the Departments that missed quite a few meetings this past year. Not sure what is going to happen in the future to those who do not meet the requirements of the contract. We don't want to cut all of their money, but possibly have some sort of a percentage taken away as a penalty. We don't want to have to do this to anyone. Rusty mentioned that after speaking to Delot, he seemed to be open to a prorated thing for this year, and a little more stringent next year and maybe a 3rd or 4th year if you don't comply they will cut you off. No money, and this WILL NOT go back to our Association, back to the general revenue. The Judge said if they don't meet the 5 requirements of the contract, no money! Period!

Chief Edwards mentioned that maybe this next year, we let some of the other Departments of this Association hold a monthly County Association meeting, not just 12 of the 17 Departments year after year. Had a brief discussion on the amount of yearly dues for Associate members. The Secretary verified the amounts by the motion made at last year's March meeting. It reads \$200.00 for Department members and \$100.00 for Associate members.

Dan thanked everyone for their attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 1:40 PM.