

The Utah Fire Service Certification Council Minutes of August 4, 2020

The Utah Fire Service Certification Council met on August 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. via Teams, (electronically).

Welcome Council Members and Visitors – Scott Spencer

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.

In attendance: Scott Spencer, Jason Earl, Merlin Spendlove, Rod Hammer, Chris Trevino, Krista Horting, TJ Brewer, Wade Snyder, David Youngberg, Hoss Tomkinson, Jeremy Raymond, Ron Harris

Declaration of quorum – Scott Spencer

Scott Spencer declared a quorum.

Approval of minutes from the meeting of January 15, 2020 – Scott Spencer

Chris Trevino motioned to approve the minutes. Hoss Tomkinson seconded. The motion was approved.

Approval of agenda for the August 4, 2020 meeting – Scott Spencer

Merlin Spendlove motioned to approve the agenda for the August 4th council meeting. Wade Snyder seconded. The motion was approved.

Welcome and introduction of new Council members – Lori Howes

Lori Howes introduced Ron Harris, our newest council member. Ron Harris was appointed by the Fire Prevention Board in March 2020. Ron is from Bryce Canyon and serves as the Fire Chief for Tropic Volunteer department and also works for Bryce Canyon fire department. He has been in the fire service since 1989. He has also been a UFRA instructor and tester nearly 18 years.

Executive Session – Scott Spencer

There was no executive session held.

Report and Red Card discussion from Forestry, Fire and State Lands - Wade Snyder

Wade Snyder reported that as of January 2021, Forestry Fire & State Lands would have staffing available to begin issuing red cards from their offices. The council agreed that this change would help to streamline the red carding process and allow agencies to work with only one point of contact which would be the area FMO. Scott Spencer called for a motion. Rod Hammer motioned to move the red carding process to Forestry Fire, and State Lands offices. TJ Brewer seconded. The motion was approved.

Report of testing/certification & failed skills – Jennifer Lindley

Jennifer Lindley reviewed the failed skills statistics and certification statistics with the council. Both testing and certification numbers were much lower through that period due to COVID-19.

Report and approval, if needed, on submitted petitions – Lori Howes

Lori Howes presented a letter to the council written by Chris Jensen of Richfield Fire. He felt like his test was not given according to the UFRA standards of testing. Lori investigated the test with the certification testers assigned that day, and discovered there was indeed a discrepancy and that the candidate(s) who were incorrectly tested should be given another chance at a first attempt, to be tested correctly. The council agreed to give these candidates another opportunity for testing.

Scott Spencer called for a motion. Krista Horting motioned to approve. Rod Hammer seconded. The motion was approved.

Rod Hammer noted that there was an issue with skill #53, the reverse hose lay skill, and should be addressed. Lori Howes said that she would have her upcoming committee review that skill to make the suggested corrections.

Report on Standards and Training Council – Chris Trevino

Chris Trevino reported that due to COVID-19, the council was unable to meet during this time.

Update on Fire I & II – Lori Howes

Lori Howes reported that she has a committee scheduled to meet and review the Fire I and II levels. The committee will start to develop and review evolution-based skills. Lori will report more at the next council meeting.

Update on Officer I/II, III/IV – Lori Howes

Lori Howes reported that she was unable to meet with these committees due to COVID-19. The portfolio processes are currently being worked on remotely by committee members. Officer I/II has been brought up to the 2020 standard. She hopes to get the committees back together to review the test questions soon. Lori is hoping to have these ready by the end of the year for accreditation.

Update on Certification look-up system – Lori Howes

Jolene Chamberlain reported that the look-up system is anticipated to be available this year. Jolene showed the council the new look-up system layouts for both training and certification. The ProBoard form is a new addition where an individual can print straight from their profile. The IFSAC form will also be available from this system. Jolene anticipates that the look-up system and the new database will be ready by September.

Update on IFSAC Site Visit 2020 – Lori Howes

Lori Howes reported that the original IFSAC visit was scheduled in April 2020 and there is currently no date scheduled. IFSAC is granting extensions due to travel limitations with COVID-19. Lori hopes that the site visit can take place early in 2020. Virtual site visits may be an option but at this time nothing has been determined.

Update on 2020 Certification tester seminar – Lori Howes

Lori Howes reported that the tester seminar was cancelled due to COVID-19, but would have been cancelled regardless due to such low attendance. There has been no date determined at this time. A virtual seminar is on the table as well. Lori asked the council if and how the testers of the year should be recognized. Scott Spencer agreed to announce it in the Straight Tip magazine, and then recognize them in-person as soon as a seminar is rescheduled.

Report on certification testing during pandemic – Lori Howes

Lori Howes reported on the impact of the COVID-19 closure at UFRA. Productivity was not down, but testing stopped briefly and very few certifications were issued. UVU gave approval for UFRA to remain open as an essential service. Our Quality Assurance team put an algorithm in place for the practice of safe training and testing, including a health questionnaire survey which is now available in a QR code.

Discussion and motion on proposed new testing policy for pandemic/closure – Lori Howes

Lori Howes proposed a new policy to the council which defines the parameters of testing during a pandemic/closure, conditional upon state restrictions. This policy allows departments who already have a tester to be able to administer both written and skills tests, so long as the tester was not involved in the candidates' training.

Krista Horting motioned to approve the new policy. Jeremy Raymond seconded. The motion was approved.

Discussion on Re-Certification of HazMat Technician for G. Runolfson – Lori Howes

Lori Howes presented a circumstance from a candidate who asked if taking the HazMat Technician course from Alabama Fire College would be sufficient for recertification at the HazMat Technician level. The council discussed the petition, and decided that the candidate

needs to go through the proper procedures of recertification as outlined in the HazMat Technician standard. Scott Spencer called for a motion. Jeremy Raymond motioned to deny the petition to allow the course to fulfill the recertification requirements, but to allow an extension to give the candidate more time to get the required training record completed. Krista Horting seconded. The motion was approved.

Discussion on misrepresentation of firefighter certifications – Rod Hammer

Rod Hammer explained to the council that a member of a local fire agency spoke to Rod about someone posing to be a certified firefighter. Rod asked the council if UFRA had any type of process or policy in place to prevent this from happening. The council discussed the matter and agreed that it should be a matter of local law enforcement, as impersonating a badged professional is a legal matter.

Discussion on HazMat Operations written exam failure rate – Merlin Spendlove

Merlin Spendlove presented to the council his concern over the failure rate of the HazMat Operations written test, as he had four out of five candidates fail a second and third attempt. He and Lori Howes both discussed the fail/pass statistics for this level throughout the whole state. Lori explained that HazMat Operations is an inherently difficult subject and candidates are required to put extra effort into passing the exam. Candidates must study outside of class in order to pass. Lori also showed the highest/lowest scores from another department which showed out of the same class, someone had tested exceptionally well while others failed. Gary Kilgore is also reviewing the entire test bank to look for possible issues.

Update, discussion and motion on HazMat Operations skills – Lori Howes

Lori Howes did not have any changes to present at this time. Lori did mention that the need for training certification testers to the current standard is critical and testers must receive the training before testing that level. More information to come in September.

Update, discussion and motion on updated Policies & Procedures – Lori Howes

Lori Howes presented six policy changes to the council to each of the following: 12.1, 12.28, 12.37, 12.42, 12.73, and 18.2. Jason Earl asked Lori about extrication simulation and how vague simulation could potentially be unless the parameters were clearly defined.

Ron Harris motioned to approve all policy changes as presented. Hoss Tomkinson seconded. The motion was approved.

Lori also added that she would like to add an extension on the current turnaround time for certification to process recerts and certifications.

Krista Horting motioned to approve. Jason Earl seconded. The motion was approved.

New Business – Scott Spencer

Lori Howes announced that UVU has asked that all UVU employees transition to UVU email. We are finding it harder to find testers due to the lack of testers using their UVU email, and so she announced that we will continue using testers main email addresses.

Lori Howes announced that fillable training records are becoming available online and all will be available by the end of the year. They are available on the standards page.

Lori Howes noted a few area changes on the regions for the certification specialists, as some areas were busier than others.

Lori also announced the resignation of Hilary Kline. She accepted a position at Orem City. Lori also said that because the job posting for the third certification specialist is currently open, they will be able to hire two individuals to fill both vacancies.

Lori also mentioned that just like certifications and grades, the red cards may also be a bit delayed due to the training of two new employees.

Old Business – Scott Spencer

No old business to report.

Open nominations and vote for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson – Lori Howes

Lori Howes opened nominations for Chairperson of the council. Scott Spencer and Jason Earl were both nominated. A second for both Scott and Jason were given.

Lori Howes closed nominations for Chairperson. Each council persons' vote was taken. Scott Spencer took the majority of the votes.

Lori Howes opened nominations for Vice-Chairperson of the council. Chris Trevino, Jason Earl and Hoss Tomkinson were all nominated.

Lori Howes closed nominations for Vice-Chairperson.

Each council member voted. Jason Earl took the majority of the votes.

Next Council Meeting, Wednesday, September 16, 2020, 10:00 a.m., Provo, UT

Merlin Spendlove motioned to adjourn the meeting. Hoss Tomkinson seconded. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned.