



Utah Fire Service Certification Council Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
Utah Fire and Rescue Academy, Room 147

1. **Certification Council meeting called to order, by Council Chair Scott Spencer**

Members attending: Scott Spencer, Rod “Hoss” Tomkinson, Krista Horting, Merlin Spendlove, Chris Trevino, TJ Brewer, Ron Harris, John Evans, Jeremy Raymond, Wade Snyder, David Olsen, Ted Black, Rod Kearl

Not in attendance: Dave Youngberg (Krista Horting acted as proxy)

2. **Welcome council members and visitors, by Scott Spencer**

3. **Declaration of quorum, by Scott Spencer**

4. **Approval of Certification Council meeting minutes held on January 24, 2024, by Scott Spencer**

Merlin Spendlove motioned to approve the minutes of January 24, 2024, it was seconded by TJ Brewer, and the motion carried.

5. **Approval of the March 20, 2024, Certification Council agenda, by Scott Spencer**

Jeremy Raymond motioned to approve the agenda for March 20, 2024, it was seconded by Chris Trevino, and the motion carried.

6. **Recognition of Rod “Hoss” Tomkinson on Certification Council, by Jolene Chamberlain**

Rod “Hoss” Tomkinson was recognized for eight years of service to the Utah Fire Service Certification Council.

7. **Reappointment of council member Jeremy Raymond, by Jolene Chamberlain**

Jeremy Raymond was approved by the Fire Prevention Board to serve another three years on the Certification Council.

8. **Welcome of new council member (appointed by Brad Wardle), by Jolene Chamberlain**

Jolene Chamberlain welcomed Rodney Kearl, who was approved to be appointed to the Utah Fire Service Certification Council by UFRA Director Brad Wardle and the Fire Prevention Board.

9. **Open nominations for Certification Council vice-chairperson, by Scott Spencer**

Ted Black made a motion for Ron Harris as vice-chairperson, and TJ Brewer seconded the motion. There was a motion for nominations to cease. The motion was approved.

Ted Black motioned to approve Ron Harris as the Utah Fire Service Certification Council vice-chairperson, it was seconded by TJ Brewer, and the motion was approved.

10. **Report from Forestry, Fire & State Lands, by Wade Snyder**

Wade Snyder shared that Utah is trending toward a near/above normal fire season onset. FFSL is starting a statewide heli-tech program in Spanish Fork (with a 10-person crew and a type 2 helicopter). They will be able to load up people, drop them off where they need to be, and go back for buckets and supplies. They still have the heavy helicopter operation—the first heavy lift helicopter comes June to August (for three months).

The second group will begin August to October, with opportunities to extend if needed. There will be an overlap month, which is usually their busiest month. They use the heavy helicopter for initial attack as well. These are statewide resources and will land where they need to be and stay overnight where they need to be for the next day. Their home base is usually Spanish Fork.

They received legislative funding for the new fuels crew (two squads of 5–10 people).

11. Report on testing, certification, failed skills, and upcoming exams (3 months), by Jennifer Lindley

Jennifer presented the Certification Report and drew attention to the new certifications in the new technical rescue areas. There have been 777 certifications in the last 3 months.

The Failed Skills Report showed the usual Officer 1st & 2nd attempt failures, a few Live Fire 2nd attempt failures, and no Inspector failures.

12. Report on Fire Prevention Board meeting, by Scott Spencer

Director Brad Wardle presented the projects going on with the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy: reappointment and appointment of council members, updates to bills in the legislature, funding will be coming for an ARFF prop.

Ted Black mentioned the need for younger firefighters to work with the legislation. He mentioned Senator Val Peterson's and Senator Harper's support over the years.

13. Discussion and motion to approve/review the following submitted portfolios:

- a. Steve Chaffin (Inspector II), presented by Scott Spencer.
Scott recommended approving the portfolio based on the information submitted.
Jeremy Raymond and David Olsen approved the portfolio of Steve Chaffin.
- b. Brandon Parr (Fire & Life Safety Educator), presented by Chris Trevino
Chris Trevino reviewed the portfolio and recommended approval.
Merlin Spendlove and Ron Harris approved the portfolio of Brandon Parr.
- c. Rick Cooper (Officer II), presented by Chris Trevino
Chris Trevino reviewed the portfolio and recommended approval.
Merlin Spendlove and Ron Harris approved the portfolio of Rick Cooper.

14. Review, discussion, and motion regarding UAC 710-16-6 (Non-Affiliated Fire Service Training), by Scott Spencer

A group of council members met online to discuss the changes to R710-16, and Andy Byrnes's recommendations. It was decided to replace the old wording with the following:

“3(b) if the course coordinator is not certified, qualifications can be satisfied by 10 years’ experience in the Utah fire service or a related field, 5 years of which must be acquired as a chief officer in a fire department, with a combination of knowledge, experience, and expertise in the specific certification levels that will be instructed.”

“4(b) if the instructor is not certified, instructor qualifications can be satisfied by 10 years’ experience in the Utah fire service or a related field, 5 years of which must be acquired as a chief officer in a fire department, with a combination of knowledge, experience, and expertise in the specific certification levels that will be instructed.”

Also, Jolene explained additional edits made to R710-16. Jolene mentioned the outdated use of the abbreviation “RCA,” referring to a recruit candidate academy. She explained that we aren’t looking at the students, but at the academy itself for accreditation. The correct name we should be using is “accredited recruit academy (ARA).” Each council member was given a copy of the edited R710-16 to review. Jolene and Joan had cleaned up the document where there were errors in information, levels that

were outdated, and sections that didn't correlate well to the actual process for non-affiliated accreditation.

The "Participating Agencies" document (from the UFSCS Policies and Procedures Manual) was shown, with the explanation that the definitions in our policies and procedures were changed last year to clarify the meaning of "non-affiliated," due to confusion or wording issues with training.

Jolene mentioned that we needed to update the R710-16 to correlate with and match the actual wording in our Policies and Procedures Manual, which was approved by the Certification Council.

Council members were asked to review each of the changes. Yellow highlighting indicated the current wording, and the red font indicated what they recommended.

Scott Spencer mentioned that it has been years since this was updated.

Both 3(b) and 4(b) were approved.

For R710-16, new updates were presented regarding the policy for non-affiliated accreditation.

Ted Black motioned to remove all the language submitted by Andy Byrnes and rewrite a new document in legislation format. In the rewritten document, all deletions need to be crossed out, and all the new language needs to be underlined. When it is submitted, it needs to be in that format. Ted appreciated the rewriting of this document.

TJ Brewer seconded the motion, and it passed.

15. Discussion/assignments for accreditation site visit (April 12, 2024) for UVU's Recruit Candidate Academy, by Scott Spencer

Three council members are needed for a review committee for the site visit at UVU's Recruit Candidate Academy on April 12. Krista Horting, Jeremy Raymond, and Ron Harris volunteered.

16. Discussion and motion regarding accommodations for written examinations, by Joan Aaron

Joan had shared with UVU the Certification accommodation policies and procedures, and the UVU authorities had replied with their recommendations. Joan presented to the council the feedback she received from the UVU authorities (Sherry Page, director of accessibility services; Cathy Jordan, associate general counsel; Jeremy Knee, deputy general counsel; and Eric Humphrey, university registrar).

UVU's policy recommends documentation from a professional who is licensed/certified to diagnose or treat the disability, unless the need is obvious. Joan mentioned that our accommodation policy is actually more lenient than UVU's, which requires a licensed/certified person to diagnose. Our requirement says, "A statement from the candidate's doctor or fire chief/administrator must accompany the request, attesting to the need for testing accommodations and clarification of why there is a need for a reader and/or extended time." UVU mentioned that a 4th attempt would not be considered an approved "accommodation."

As far as the right to appeal. Joan said we follow the Office of Civil Rights policy. The Certification Council is the "Group of people who are trained, knowledgeable, and experienced in the area." The council is the governing body, or the decision makers, for certification testing. Our candidates are informed in multiple ways of their right to appeal.

Candidates and departments have access to our examination requests, which notes "accommodations" at the bottom. There are also the Policies and Procedures accommodation sections (12.27, 12.54); the accommodation note on Examination Request forms; the appeals policy in sections 12.62, 16.13, 16.14, 16.16, 16.17, 16.18, and 21.16; and the appeals notice on the TAC sheet and the Tester Instructions sheet.

Regarding photos, UVU advises having candidates sign a model release form for photos used in any publication, which is UVU's "Creative Works License and Model Release" document for photos.

However, they noted that UFRA's use of photos is a gray area because our candidates are not UVU academic students and FERPA may not apply.

Ted Black asked what pictures we take and why. Jolene and Joan mentioned we take photos for training internal purposes and for the *Straight Tip* magazine. We do not take photos for monetary gain.

Wade Snyder mentioned that no person is currently representing the ADA compliance policies.

Scott Spencer indicated that because all the items appeared to be in order, no motion was needed.

17. Discussion and motion on submitted petitions, by Joan Aaron/Scott Spencer

Recertification request for Hazardous Materials Technician, for the following West Jordan Fire Department personnel (2006–2012): Mike Powell, Dave Bauer, Blair Marshall, Bryan Bobo, Mark Powell, Jason Spencer, Bryan Brinkerhoff, Russel Ferre, Thomas Haynie, Ryan Stephenson, Roy Todd, Scott Gehrke, Bradley Jensen, Jeff Paul, and Skipper Taylor

A letter from Chief Derek Maxfield was sent to the Certification Council stating how their department is not able to access training records and historical data, due to a cyber attack last year. They used multiple platforms to store their data. The servers that held their firehouse training records were incapacitated. West Jordan also submitted to Certification copies of their training hours for those candidates. Mike Powell addressed the council representing West Jordan, explaining what happened. When Mike recently became the hazmat training captain, they realized that they have been doing all the training, but had not submitted them for recertification (Chief Wardle and Chief McElreath).

Chris Trevino also explained the process and commitment that West Jordan has maintained the training hours. They can't account for all the historical electronic data that is missing.

Ted Black asked if the problem had been fixed.

Mike Powell said that they have a new setup and have fixed the problem and continue to work with IT.

Jeremy Raymond asked a follow-up question.

Jolene Chamberlain recommended that the group retest to the new standard (to follow Technician policy), so it will not be in question. (They have already submitted new training records.)

Ted Black asked, "Why have them retest? They did their due diligence. Why does this not line up?" Ted recommended we give them the certification.

Jeremy Raymond requested they attach the required training records to their recertification request.

Ted Black motioned to approve the recertification for the HazMat Technician certifications for the listed West Jordan candidates and move forward. TJ Brewer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

18. Discussion and motion regarding State Fire Marshal's Office personnel recertification, by Scott Spencer/Joan Aaron

There was discussion and a motion regarding Wade Francis and Rohn Carl Peterson's Hazardous Materials Technician recertification.

This item was tabled at the last meeting. Afterward, Ted Black submitted Wade Francis's training records, attached in the documents.

Rohn Peterson's completed training records have not been received.

Rohn's certification expired on June 30, 2021. A database error on the Lookup System pulled it as active, but that has been corrected. We are still waiting for his training records.

Rohn Peterson needs to submit training records to be recertified.

Jeremy motioned to approve recertification for Wade Francis, it was seconded by David Olsen, and the motion carried.

19. Review and discussion regarding Wildland Firefighter I and II testing updates, by Joan Aaron

As discussed, there were no changes at this time. Testers must continue to initial candidate WLFF I and II training records, attesting that they have verified the candidates' NWCG certificates and tasks books as required before the candidates may take the WLFF I or II certification exams.

20. Review and discussion of online testing and procedures, by Joan Aaron

Questions and discussion regarding online policies

TJ Brewer asked if a 2nd attempt could be taken immediately after a failed 1st attempt. Joan will look into the possibility, but for now we will keep it as a single attempt.

21. Review, discussion, and motion to approve/update Policies and Procedures standard to include TBD.

Nothing to discuss.

22. Old Business, by Scott Spencer

The Instructor/Tester Seminar is combined with Train-the-Tester on how to proctor an online test, scheduled for March 26, 27, 28.

23. New Business, by Scott Spencer

- a. Online testing policies were approved by Pro Board.
- b. UFRA has an online test site for 30+ candidates.
- c. We are waiting for more iPads and equipment.
- d. We hired about 30 new testers. Interviews were on March 7. Tester training was on March 19.
- e. Any other items needed were discussed.
- f. Russ Young has been hired as the UFRA Assistant Director of Advanced Training and Special Operations to address the program growth within the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy.
- g. Sarah Head was hired as our new Certification Administrative Assistant.

24. The next Certification Council meeting will be on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at UFRA.

Ted Black motioned to adjourn the meeting. Wade Snyder seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.