

**Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Fire Administration
Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy
April 22, 2024
Zoom Teleconference**

Attendees:

The following members of the Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy were in attendance for the meeting.

John S. Butler (Chair)
Fire Chief
Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department
12099 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22033

W. Nelson Bauer, Ph.D.
Deputy Fire Chief
Orange Beach Fire & Rescue Dept.
P.O. Box 458
Orange Beach, AL 36561

Steven Dubay (Vice Chair)
Deputy Fire Chief, retired
Colorado Springs Fire Department
463 Evergreen Court
Woodland Park, CO 80863

Megan Schuth, Ph.D.
Battalion Chief/Fire Marshal
Denton Fire Department
332 E. Hickory Street
Denton, TX 76201

Dr. Michael Macey
Director of Public Safety
St. John's College
1160 Camino de Cruz Blanca
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Scott Somers, Ph.D.
Professor
Arizona State University
10157 East Palladium Drive
Mesa, AZ 85212

Tiffanye S. Wesley
Deputy Fire Chief
Arlington County Fire Department
2100 Clarendon Boulevard Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22201

Edward Davis
Executive Director
National Association of Hispanic
Firefighters
3114 Flameleaf Street
Garland, TX 75044

Federal Emergency Management Agency/U.S. Fire Administration/National Fire Academy (FEMA/USFA/NFA) staff in attendance:

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, NFA
Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp, Program Support Specialist
Chief Tonya L. Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, USFA
Ms. Michelle Spielman, Secretary
Chief Richard Patrick, Director, National Fire and Emergency Medical Services Division, USFA
Mr. James (Vince) Hodge, Director, Management, Operations and Support Services (MOSS)
Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch (TAPA), NFA
Ms. Tammy Pimentel-Matthews, Branch Chief, Response and Special Operations Branch, NFA
Mr. Edward Kensler, Training Specialist, Leadership and Partnership Branch, NFA
Mr. Lester Rich, Deputy Superintendent, NFA

Others in attendance/public attendees:

None

Convene Board of Visitors Meeting/Welcome

Chief John S. Butler, Chairperson, Board of Visitors

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy

Chief Tonya Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration

Mr. Eriks Gabliks welcomed everyone to this meeting of the USFA/NFA Board of Visitors. The meeting was being conducted under regulations outlined in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Everyone is a Special Government Employee. Mr. Gabliks served as the Designated Federal Officer for the meeting to make sure everyone followed the federal requirements.

Mr. Gabliks stated that Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp is the contact person. She is the one who collects everyone's information and sets the meetings up. Ms. Michelle Spielman was Ms. Gartrell-Kemp's backup, and Ms. Jennifer Vanover would be taking notes for the meeting.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the Board of Visitors agenda is published in the Federal Register. The times listed are approximate, and they might need to adjust the schedule as needed. There should be enough time scheduled for all speakers, comments and questions, as well as for interaction. Mr. Gabliks stated that under the FACA requirements, anyone wanting to send something in to be reviewed had the ability to do so. There were no comments sent in from the public.

Dextera/Leading Solutions support staff, Ms. Vanover, would be taking notes and would compile minutes after the meeting. The minutes will include matters discussed and conclusions reached by the board. The minutes would be prepared and sent to the meeting chair within 90 calendar days. All comments and notes would be available for public review forever; they would be archived. Mr. Gabliks advised everyone to be sure to state their name before speaking so the minutes could be recorded accurately. If anyone has notes, they should email them to Ms. Gartrell-Kemp so she

can forward them to Ms. Vanover. Mr. Gabliks stated that for the meeting order they would follow Robert's Rules for motions.

Mr. Gabliks convened this meeting of the USFA/NFA Board of Visitors.

Mr. Gabliks then turned the meeting over to Chief John Butler, who welcomed everyone to the meeting, congratulated Mr. Steven Dubay on his retirement, and called the meeting to order.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Chief Tonya Hoover.

Chief Hoover stated that Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell was very busy getting ready for the World Fire Congress and may join the meeting later. Chief Hoover thanked every member of the Board of Visitors for their dedication and support to the NFA. Chief Hoover also congratulated Mr. Dubay on his retirement and turned the meeting back over to Chief Butler.

Chief Butler then turned the meeting over to Chief Richard Patrick for updates on the National Fire and Emergency Medical Services Division (NFEMSD) and the National Fire Data and Research Center Division (NFDRC).

**National Fire and Emergency Medical Services Division
Chief Richard Patrick, Director, National Fire and Emergency Medical Services
Division, U.S. Fire Administration**

Chief Patrick thanked everyone for the opportunity to share updates with the Board of Visitors on NFEMSD and the NFDRC. They do track a lot of data from a lot of different angles. The Prevention Branch does a weekly data sweep on home fire fatalities and the accuracy of that is good. Currently they are at a total of 792 civilian deaths and 22 firefighter line-of-duty deaths (LODDs) for the year. They also collaborate with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of Emergency Medical Services, and on COVID-19 data for fire, EMS, 911 and law enforcement deaths, for which they maintain accuracy and keep up to date.

Chief Patrick stated that they are near finalization of building out the reorganization of the USFA, at least in the division of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) programs, as well as the national fire data and research center. The EMS Branch added their fifth full-time employee about 2 months ago. The individual is a retired paramedic/firefighter from the Dallas fire department. She is also a physician's assistant and has an extensive background in 911.

Chief Patrick stated that thanks to Dr. Moore-Merrell's engagement of EMS organizations in D.C., the division now has regular monthly meetings with all the EMS and nongovernmental organizations to make sure everyone has a seat at the table. The division's EMS Branch also produces a weekly Health Security Awareness report that is available if anyone would be interested. It is about everything from pandemics to emerging health threats that can affect the fire and EMS stakeholders.

Chief Patrick stated that they have 3 interns that will be starting in the divisions. Some are currently working with the National Fire Data and Research Center on various projects. One will be working collaboratively with prevention and EMS and that is actually a paid internship for the summer.

Chief Patrick stated that the EMS Branch also signed on as a Prehospital Blood Transfusion Initiative Coalition fed-ad hoc committee member. There have only been 3 federal entities who have been asked to participate at this time.

Chief Patrick stated that the Fire Prevention and Control Summit added an EMS working group. There are about 25 people who represent all aspects of EMS, and they are actively participating. They will be reporting out at the Congressional Fire Services Institute meeting in the next week.

Chief Patrick stated that EMS has been very active with FEMA preparedness, response and recovery. A specific area that is of interest is the community lifelines, the National Response Framework and why ambulances are identified only under transportation. There will be more information forthcoming on what the community lifelines are, what they need and where the EMS role is within that framework.

Chief Patrick stated that they are doing a research study called “Comprehensive Research Cohort Study of Emergency Responder Roadway Safety.” The study is intended to take the existing data from NHTSA and other sources to get a better understanding as to why first responders do not exercise employing the safety devices they have related to roadway safety from a behavioral standpoint. There are about a dozen research studies that are ongoing across the board.

Chief Butler asked where the data was coming from that says first responders are not using their safety equipment. Chief Patrick replied that they are researching whether they are using safety devices and, if not, why. The industry has been doing investigations and has found that certain things were not being done. They are trying to research and find out facts and get evidence on the topic.

Mr. Dubay asked if the safety-related equipment was specifically addressing roadway incidents, seatbelts, vests, gloves or all of the above and more. Chief Patrick replied that the research they are doing on this topic is dealing with struck-by incidents.

Chief Patrick stated that EMS week is May 19 to 25. It will be the 50th anniversary of EMS week. There will be a lot of federal activities going on in Washington, D.C. The EMS Branch and their colleagues at the NFA are trying to get a program together to do some things on campus because there are a lot of students on campus that week. Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services is setting up a committee to start redoing their strategic plan. They have made great progress with the metrics of the current plan. Chief Patrick stated that he would share more information with anyone interested.

Chief Patrick stated that the Prevention Branch has about 18 programs they are working on. They just did a webinar on battery fires before, during and after the incidents. There were about 1,250 individuals that attended that webinar. The Prevention Branch is also working closely with FEMA on keeping the building codes up to date.

Chief Patrick stated that the contract with Sesame Street was renewed. There is a wildfire safety program that is being executed. Sesame Street is doing research on the marketing of this topic. They are creating an 8-page coloring book and doing a train-the-trainer program that will enable teachers to teach the program. There is a long-standing relationship with Sesame Street and the fire safety program within the USFA.

Chief Patrick stated that Arson Awareness Week is coming up on May 5. The theme this year is protecting houses of worship. There will be a webinar on May 6 with a lot of information. Chief Patrick stated that that was all the updates for NFEMSD.

**National Fire Data and Research Center Division
Chief Richard Patrick, Director, National Fire and Emergency Medical Services
Division, U.S. Fire Administration**

Chief Patrick switched over to the updates for the NFDRC. He stated that they still have some positions available. They have welcomed Dr. Denise Smith on board as the director for this division.

Chief Patrick stated that the fire departments and states have continued to submit their 2023 National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) incident data. There have been 21,900 departments that have contributed over 28.6 million incidents for 2023. The experts are expecting the data to exceed that this year. They are looking forward to the next chapter of fire department reporting with National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). There will be another webinar titled “Modernizing the U.S. Fire Data System: NERIS Data Framework and Development Update,” which will be hosted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Directorate, Underwriters Laboratories Fire Safety Research Institute and USFA on May 2. The link to the webinar is <https://web.cvent.com/event/fb4dc5b4-0aa4-483a-8a1b-772f343cc457/summary>.

Chief Patrick stated that there is an ongoing project of understanding the needs of fire departments responding to incidents in tribal areas. The tribal areas have been phenomenal on their response on building out that data. They are using geographic information system tools to discover which fire departments are responding to incidents in the tribal areas.

Chief Patrick stated that the Research Branch continued to participate in weekly mental and behavioral health working groups. They also serve on a committee at the White House dealing with suicide prevention. They continued to monitor the National Violent Death Reporting System and they also track suicides committed by firefighters. They are expecting their first year of data from last year to come out this summer.

Chief Patrick stated that the National Fire Data and Research Center is continually researching emerging trends that help navigate the fire services response to new risks. There has been some work on gas leak explosions and also brain and gut connection for firefighter health and wellness. The data analysts are trying to create stories to tell that have correct and accurate data. Chief Patrick asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Dubay asked if Chief Patrick was still doing double duty with NFEMSD and the NFDRC. Chief Patrick replied yes, but Dr. Smith has been in transition since she has been hired for the director position for NFDRC. They are down some branch chiefs so they need more branch chiefs if anyone would be interested or knows anyone that would be interested.

Chief Butler stated that he and a few others were a part of the webinar involving NERIS and if anyone else was interested to let him know. He turned the meeting over to Mr. James Hodge to give the MOSS update.

Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvements on the National Emergency Training Center Campus

Mr. James Hodge, Director, Management, Operations and Support Services

Mr. Hodge welcomed the Board of Visitors members and thanked them for their time. He will give an update on the work that has been done, the work that is in progress and the work that will be done around campus.

Mr. Hodge stated that there has been great progress on the Wi-Fi infrastructure throughout the campus. There will be a full upgrade across campus including fiber optics. This project will probably go on for another year or more. The Wi-Fi has improved but there has been some struggle with FEMA and their requirements with logins and a few other things.

Mr. Hodge stated that the next large project will be the roofs on buildings D, E and F. This is a project to replace the 100-year-old slate roofs. It was challenging to get the funds for that project, but they are making progress. That will be started after the memorial. The patio on the front of building E is separating from the building, so that needs repaired. This project is going to be around \$4.5 million.

Mr. Hodge stated that there will be renovations done to buildings G and R. This is where the NFEMSD and the NFDRC will be staffed. This will take about 9 to 12 months.

Mr. Hodge stated that they are preparing and handling the logistics for the World Fire Congress. The guest and invitees will be on campus to see the memorial. They are working with the NFFF to prepare for the memorial also.

Mr. Hodge stated that there is a large project in the back of the campus which is the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). It is a conveyance of water through Tom's Creek into the Monocacy River which is a tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. Since the campus is on federal property, it is a requirement to put in a containment system that will control storm water runoff. It is a state requirement, but the campus still needs to pay for it.

Mr. Hodge stated that building K is the dining hall, and that building is getting painted, and the outside exterior restored. When that work started they discovered a high level of lead in the existing paint. They went through the abatement process and the work has now started back up. They will pause that and have everything out of the way for the memorial. They are also doing renovations

on the ground floor of building K for the media production team. They are trying to make it so it can accommodate the media production team and meet their needs.

Mr. Hodge stated that they had to replace a back-flow preventer in building E which was not expected but was successfully completed. It did not cost as much as they anticipated.

Mr. Hodge stated that they put the last set of solar panels on the visitor's center. On a clear sunny day they are off the electrical grid and using total solar. Mr. Hodge asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Dubay asked if Mr. Hodge was referring to the retention pond when he was talking about MS4. Mr. Hodge replied yes. Mr. Dubay asked if that was in the northeast corner of the property. Mr. Hodge replied yes. He refers to that as the back of the campus.

Mr. Dubay asked if the pavilion at building B was completed. Mr. Hodge replied yes. They have wanted to do a ribbon-cutting ceremony but because of weather they have not done it. It is in full use and the students are already using it. Mr. Dubay asked if it would take use away from the cabin, but Mr. Hodge stated that he does not think it will, there will just be an extra place for the students to do class get-togethers. There were no more questions.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Mr. Gabliks.

Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting over to Ms. Tiffany Warren to give some updates on the TAPA Branch.

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

Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch

Ms. Warren stated that Budget Analyst Ms. Laurie Wivell is retiring, and they have found a replacement. The person is in training with Ms. Wivell until she leaves at the end of June.

Ms. Warren stated that her branch is going to be automating a portion of their scheduling process. They have a new scheduling person that will innovate the scheduling process. They are working to automate the residential course scheduling process, and they will be implementing that soon.

Ms. Warren stated that they have been working with the rising cost of contract instructors. They have conducted studies of how to address the problem, and they have put in a threshold across each category of courses. Once the course has gone over a certain amount that it is not affordable, they will not be able to offer that course. They will ask the instructors if they would like to submit a lower bid; if not, then the course may not be offered. They have not had too many incidents where they had to cancel a course. They are still looking at ways to convince the FEMA leadership to give them more money for the instructors because the cost of everything is going up. Ms. Warren asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Mr. Gabliks shared that Blackboard is moving forward with much success. There have been no negative issues in the last 6 months. As of April 19, there are more than 20,000 people participating in the virtual NFA online classes across the country. About 580 of those were just from the last week.

Chief Butler asked if the virtual numbers could be broken down by state. Mr. Gabliks asked Ms. Warren if she had that information. Ms. Warren stated that she would ask about that. Mr. Gabliks stated that he could have more information available at the next meeting. Chief Butler asked the Board of Visitors members if the information that he asked for would be useful. They all agreed.

Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting over to Ms. Tammy Pimentel-Matthews, who will give the updates for the Response and Special Operations Branch.

National Fire Academy Updates on Response and Special Operations Branch Ms. Tammy Pimentel-Matthews, Branch Chief, Response and Special Operations Branch

Ms. Pimentel-Matthews stated that she just came back from California where they ran the course “Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination” (FI-210) in collaboration with CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management and other various fire investigators. The class was opened to NFA students. There were about 39 participants in California. They hope to run that class about once a year, maybe twice. The weather conditions did make it a little challenging, but they accomplished the objectives.

Ms. Pimentel-Matthews stated that they are in conversation with Western Carolina University to put on 2 classes a year starting in 2025 for a class that is a part of the university’s Forensic Anthropology Program. This is a class that the university offers in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, where fire investigators are trained in structural fire and arson investigations in the anthropological approaches to the study of burned remains, forensic archeology and fire scene aftermath. They would like to have some of the fire investigators participate in the course.

Ms. Pimentel-Matthews stated that they are currently at about 168 participants for the Women’s Weekend on June 15 and June 16. Women in Fire will be holding a 4-person panel on Friday evening during the Women’s Weekend. Chief Hoover will be speaking at that event, and Dr. Moore-Merrell will be present. There will also be a social gathering on Friday evening, and then classes will be on Saturday and Sunday. If anyone else would like to participate, reach out to Ms. Gartrell-Kemp.

Ms. Pimentel-Matthews stated that the Response and Special Operations Branch has currently hired 2 new instructional systems specialists (ISSs). They are waiting on a list to get 2 new training specialists. There is a program support specialist vacancy that is on hold.

Mr. Gabliks asked if there were any questions. Ms. Tiffanye Wesley asked if the numbers of participants that signed up so far for Women’s Weekend could be repeated. Ms. Pimentel-Matthews replied 168. Last year there were 186 participants. They still have 30 days before the cutoff date.

**National Fire Academy Updates on Prevention Branch
Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy**

Mr. Gabliks will be giving the updates for the Prevention Branch.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they had to give rainchecks to a few off-campus deliveries because they could not get instructors to bid on those classes. Sometimes they have too many classes going on at the same time and not enough instructors to cover them.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they are working with Society of Fire Protection Engineers, and they received an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) 2 years ago to create a wildfire mitigation program. They have succeeded with that and think it should be a part of the NFA program for both on and off campus. They are transitioning that class into an NFA class, so they are making it a 2-day class.

Mr. Gabliks stated that there are some projects coming up on community risk reduction and updating some current classes that need a refresh. There are some wildland urban interface community risk reduction classes that also need a refresh. Since there is a new budget, they can move forward with those projects. Mr. Gabliks asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Mr. Gabliks introduced Mr. Edward Kensler, who is the training specialist for the Leadership and Partnership Branch but is filling in as the acting branch chief and will be giving updates on the branch.

**National Fire Academy Updates on Leadership and Partnership Branch
Mr. Edward Kensler, Training Specialist, Leadership and Partnership Branch**

Mr. Kensler thanked everyone for the opportunity to give his overview. There have been a lot of changes going on in this branch. They just hired someone who will be overseeing Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE). They currently have an ISS who just started.

Mr. Kensler stated that they have 2 stand-alone leadership classes that seem to be doing well: “Leadership in Supervision” (R/N0645) and “New Executive Chief Officer” (R/N0763). They are being monitored and they have a steady enrollment of 20 to 24 students for each class.

Mr. Kensler stated that they went through and cleaned up their instructor cadre to make sure that the instructors that were on their list wanted to be on there. They did see that some instructors were on a waiting list for the leadership curriculum that was on hold, and they opened that back up in January, so they were able to correct that.

Mr. Kensler stated that the Managing Officer Program is on hold currently for a refresh. They are ready to get that contract started.

Mr. Kensler stated that the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program is their big project. They had over 250 participants for the EFO and Leadership symposium. That included a pre-event: the staff

ride in Gettysburg. That has been the most participants in 10 years. They have the 2-year EFO Program in place. They are in the process of moving out the current EFO students and taking on a new cadre of students coming in. They have partnered with Columbia Southern University (CSU) to help with the backlog of getting the current student's final papers through. If all goes well all the remaining students should be graduating by spring of next year. In 2 weeks they should get the first batch of papers to review. With the new cadre of students, they have opened the applications up for a maximum of 500 applicants, and that number was met within 2 weeks of the starting date. They had people come in from the EFO section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) to review those applications. They did talk about having an advocate from each state to advertise not just about the EFO Program, but all the NFA courses. They have 150 new EFO students starting classes in July-September 2024 and that is a total of 6 classes for the first residency course. Mr. Kensler asked if there were any questions.

Dr. Scott Somers asked what the mix of instructors is in the East versus the West Coast. Also, he asked if the budget was creating issues in recruiting West Coast instructors. Mr. Gabliks stated that they try to bring in instructors from across the country and sometimes the cost will be higher depending on the distance. The mid-Atlantic region does not dominate the instructor cadre. The staff does try their best to bring in a mix of instructors across the country on and off campus. When there are fewer instructors, they know they can bid higher because of less competition. They have been trying to recruit more instructors. Dr. Somers stated that it is good to have a mix of instructors so there are different perspectives because the challenges do differ between urban and rural, and the East and West Coasts.

Dr. Megan Schuth asked if they were surprised at how quickly the applications came in for the EFO Program. Mr. Kensler replied yes. Dr. Schuth stated that she has looked at different job listings and a lot of them have EFO as a prerequisite for a lot of fire chief positions.

Dr. Nelson Bauer asked if they could explain the CSU role. Mr. Kensler stated that the students must do a research paper for the EFO Program, so they had sessions where for 3 months instructors would help the students with their first 3 chapters. Then, the students had to finish the rest on their own. The students were having issues with that. So with CSU they developed a 6-month class to help the students with their whole paper and they have all the resources to do that. Dr. Bauer asked if it has been beneficial to the program. Mr. Kensler stated that there has been mixed feedback, but for the most part the feedback has been positive. They have not received the papers back for review to comment about their quality. Once they get those papers, they will do an evaluation.

National Fire Academy, Superintendent's Updates

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy

Mr. Gabliks stated that after many continuing resolutions this year, they did get an approved budget. The challenge is getting things done that have been waiting, and there is only so much room in the procurement area. They did decide to cancel and send home 1 class that was on campus when the government was going to shut down at midnight. There were 20 students in that class, and they all have been rescheduled. There were 2-week classes that they decided to keep on campus and were fine after the budget was resolved.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they are getting ready to authorize the \$20,000 per state fire training program. The recruitment for the Leadership Branch chief is open. Each division is keeping 2 positions vacant.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they just got back from the FDIC International, and there were record-setting numbers of 35,000 plus in Indianapolis. They spent time with Women in Fire, International Society of Fire Service Instructors, etc., and gave all their partners an update. They have been to a lot of different conferences and done a lot of outreaches and podcasts.

Mr. Gabliks stated that classes are winding down because for the next 2 weeks they will be preparing for the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. Last week, the campus received the 226 United States flags from the capital and they had a transfer ceremony that the students were a part of. The flags are being held in the chapel on campus until the presentation. There are 89 people being honored from LODDs from 2023. The other 137 are from previous years. Mr. Gabliks stated that it is always an honor to support the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial on campus.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they had a gap in the FESHE position for about 3 years. Mr. Michael Bercaw was hired for that position and is working with all the academic partners and reestablished contact with them. He has also been contacting schools that have fire and EMS programs that are not in FESHE. Over the last 2 months, they have 3 new schools that are inbound.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the NFA is staffing all the Fire Prevention Summit work groups. The recruitment and retention committee did 2 sessions at FDIC International last week. There was good feedback on the work being done and they shared a lot of best practices. The recruitment and retention committee has submitted a grant through the AFG process to set up a national campaign for awareness in recruitment.

Mr. Gabliks stated that NFA is not only supporting the World Fire Congress with staffing, but there will be several attendees coming to campus to be at the memorial. After the memorial they will be given a tour of the campus. They will also be doing a breakout session on how the U.S. and the NFA support state, local, tribal and territorial partners.

Mr. Gabliks stated that state weekends have been strong overall. There have been some that have been canceled. They have also combined some states for the classes. The Maryland weekend had to be canceled because they could not generate enough students. Mr. Gabliks asked if there were any questions.

Chief Butler asked if there were any concerns of losing any of the funding for next year. Mr. Gabliks stated that they are operating under the circumstances that they have the money in their budget so they will get all the things done that have been asked for. Mr. Gabliks stated that where they go in fiscal year 2025, he does not know. They have submitted their requests for enhancements.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Mr. Gabliks to explain what was happening with the subcommittee activity reports.

Board of Visitors Subcommittee Activity Reports

Mr. Gabliks stated that the subcommittees are paused and still in discussion. They are looking to reconstitute those with new purpose. They may bring a proposed health and wellness group in to replace the NFIRS group, and the professional development group could become the FESHE group. Those are still pending and there will be more information on that later.

Final Comments/Adjournment

Chief Butler asked if there were any more questions or comments.

Mr. Gabliks stated that in the recruitment and retention update the NFA shares the work of a lot of their partner organizations, so in some cases, there are some people that have no idea what the IAFC or the National Volunteer Fire Council is doing, etc. So, the NFA is like the connector to get people the different information for the different organizations.

Mr. Dubay asked Ms. Gartrell-Kemp if she had any direction on travel for the next meeting that will be on campus. Ms. Gartrell-Kemp stated that the letters have been sent up the chain and told them not to make any travel arrangements until the letters are in their hand. Ms. Gartrell-Kemp asked if they wanted to stay the 2 full days or stay a day and a half because the annual report is usually done before lunch. The Board of Visitors agreed on the 1 and a half days for the in-person meeting.

Chief Butler asked Mr. Gabliks if he was going to Florida for the Black Chief Officers Committee Conference. Mr. Gabliks replied yes. Mr. Gabliks shared that they also have a partnership with National Native American Fire Chiefs Association, and they are running a leadership academy in Arizona. There are multiple tribal fire departments in that, and they have connected them with some NFA 2-day classes that they are spreading throughout their association.

Mr. Gabliks stated that at FDIC International, the general assembly was asked how many people had cancer, and half of them raised their hands. Almost everyone raised their hand when asked if they had a co-worker or family member who had cancer. Mr. Gabliks stated that he thought that was very sobering; everyone agreed.

Chief Butler thanked everyone for their time and the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.