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Boulder Rural Fire Rescue
Front Range Fire Rescue
Greeley Fire Department
Longmont Fire Department



Loveland Fire Rescue Authority
Mountain View Fire Protection
Platte Valley Fire Protection
Poudre Fire Authority
Windsor-Severance Fire Rescue

**Board of Directors Meeting
FRFC After Action Review – Meeting Minutes
June 28, 2023, at 10:00am
Loveland Fire Rescue Authority – Station 10
4301 Ronald Reagan Blvd, Johnstown, CO 80534**

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:00am by FRFC President Chief Time Sendelbach

Purpose of the Meeting:

To present information from Front Range Fire Consortium, Academy 2023-1 to the FRFC Board as a debriefing. Chief Eric Klaas (Battalion, Academy Chief) had a PowerPoint presentation referenced throughout his debriefing.

Attendance:

Tim Sendelbach (Fire Chief - Loveland), Michael West (Fire Chief - Front Range), Greg Schwab (Fire Chief – Boulder Rural), Dan Higgins (Fire Chief - Longmont), Jim Klug (Fire Chief - Platte Valley), Greg Ward (Assistant Fire Chief - Loveland), Eric Klaas (Academy Chief & Battalion Chief - Loveland), Tyson Barela (Training Chief – Poudre), Ben Ojinaga (Assistant Chief - Greeley), Doug Gilliland (Training Lieutenant), Chris Mirowski (Training & Battalion Chief - Greeley), John Nunez (Training Chief – Boulder), Ryan Rieser (Training Captain - Platte Valley), John Teague (Training Officer – Boulder), Todd Vess (Battalion Chief – Windsor), Justin Boehler (Training Officer – Boulder), Sara Simonton (James Vincent Group - JVG), Cherie Kozak (FRFC/LFRA Admin)

1. PowerPoint Presentation and Debriefing by Battalion Chief & Academy Chief Eric Klaas:

Chief Klaas shared the attached PowerPoint to address the FRFC Board during his Academy 2023-1 After-Action Review.

a. 2023-1 Expectations:

Training Officers and Cadre: Chief Klaas said the Training Officers and Cadre met to discuss the 2023-1 Academy. He shared that the focus was to provide a high-level overview of class 2023-1, but operational specifics would continue to be discussed with the Training Officers for the next Academy.

- **Initial Expectations for Academy 2023-1:** Initial recruits expected were 38, but they began the academy with 34 recruits, and ended up graduating 31.
- **New Academy Schedule:** The Board decision of a 4 10's work week was implemented.
- **Academy Technology & Testing:** The FRFC ordered iPads to run the Questionmark testing software and that worked well.
- **Curriculum Development:** The Cadre and Chief Klaas continued to refine the curriculum. He said the previous academy focus was to gather information and this academy focused on honing the content and curriculum.

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- Digital Inventory Management: Doug Gilliland and Justin Unrein logged FRFC inventory which is now entered into the Salamander system.

Operating Within Budget: Chief Klaas said the initial Revenue was at \$484,500.00, but it was at \$393,750.00 at the end. Chief Michael West shared that he found language for the cost to an agency when a recruit leaves academy. He said it states that the recruit fees are split up into thirds. Per Chief Klaas, there were three recruits that left academy and the cost to the agencies is outlined in the PowerPoint.

Budget:

- Leased Resource: \$365,053.00 (Personnel, Apparatus)
- Materials: \$35,012.00 (Lumber, Decon, Smoke Juice etc.)
- Graduation: \$2,663.00
- Total Academy Cost: \$402,728.00

b. What Went Well:

Operations: Chief Klaas said the experienced Cadre this Academy and the return of Lieutenants Summer (Loveland) and Visser (Longmont) as Academy Co-Leads, made everything run very smoothly.

- Instructors: Subject matter experts and focus on building depth for succession planning.
- Fitness Plan: Lieutenant Emily Allen (Longmont), modified the fitness plan given recruit needs. Chief Klaas said a decline in strength toward the end of academy was noted.
- Feedback: Google Classroom allows for anonymous feedback from the recruits and the Cadre was able to address possible problems that were brought up in the feedback.
- 3 Different Instructional Models: Based on class size and resources.
 1. 1 – 2-day module: Everyone was in one location. Same information and instructor for all recruits.
 2. 3 – 5-day module: Academy split into 2 Battalions in 2 locations (e.g. – Ladders in Longmont and Forcible Entry in Greeley) and then the following week they would flip-flop.
 3. 5 days or larger module: Safety Survival, Search and Water Delivery. Split into 2 separate locations and run simultaneously.
- Reduced Travel Time: Reduced significantly with splitting the academy to North and South.
- Participating Agencies: Great participation for resource requests (instructors and apparatus)
- JPR Skills Evaluations: Moved Skills Evaluations to the end of the Modules.

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Written Testing: Lieutenant Stew Visser sat through lectures and then selected test questions to match the book and prep materials.

- **Questionmark:** The coaching reports allowed the Cadre to give feedback on missed questions. The recruits were given that information to study prior to their retest. Per Chief Klaas, the retest was the same test questions just in a different order, so if recruits studied from the reports, passing the retest would not be a problem.

Live Fire Instructors: Per Chief Klaas, they tried to only use Certified Live Fire Instructors, either Fire Instructor 1 or 1403 Certified and they are working to increase the pool of Fire Instructor 2 certified personnel.

Administration:

Chief Klaas said he and Sara Simonton with JVG and Cherie are in communication weekly to get reports and questions managed quickly.

Weekly Reports: Chief said at the last After-Action Review, the Board asked for the weekly reports, so he and Sara have been providing them to the Board.

Google Classroom: The Cadre instituted a rep log. There are more assignments going out through Google Classroom and the iPads are working well. Vector Solution was updated to include the NFPA 1001 JPR's.

Graduation: Chief Klaas said Lieutenant Visser reestablished the family badge pinning with a program to support it, and the process allowed for all 31 recruits to be pinned in 17 minutes and it went very smoothly.

- Chief Chris Mirowski – He said he would look to secure a Greeley facility for the upcoming academy graduation.
- Chief Greg Schwab – He said it would be crucial to have the Live Stream option at the next graduation.

c. **What Can Be Improved:**

Varying Recruit Skill Sets: Chief Klaas asked the Board to consider the varying skill sets of incoming recruits. He said Academy has recruits entering who are fully certified Firefighter 2 and recruits who have not had any Firefighter training or knowledge. He feels the recruits with certifications don't necessarily need the academy and they take away reps from the inexperienced recruits. He included that in this academy some recruits were going back to their home agency for additional training to get their reps up, because there wasn't enough time to increase reps during the academy training hours.

- **Module Changes:** Chief Klaas said that in Search they will continue to work to get the wall positions figured out.
- **JPR Skills Days:** The Cadre feels it's very hard to stick to the 40 hours when they are trying to get reps in, and it feels very rushed. With the reduced time this Academy, they lost some scenario-based training to get the JPR Skills Testing done.
- **Module Testing to Follow Curriculum:** Chief Klaas said he would like to have skills testing in the morning as it could help the Cadre identify people who may need remedial training. They could then have half a day for remedial training and skills test them again at the end of the day as

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needed. The written and practical tests now coincide with what they are learning in class, and they are given the written and practical test while everything is fresh and then Academy moves on to the next module.

- **Incorporation of UL Test Studies:** Chief Klaas said the academy can still do better on incorporating UL studies to be sure students are learning the latest information. He said Aims did a really good job talking about water mapping and he wants to apply that in practical application.

Academy Duration: Having the four-day work schedule was helpful on bad weather days as they had a day to move to. Chief Klaas said Wednesday off caused a loss of momentum with the recruits. Chief recommended sticking with 4 10's but to have Monday or Friday off. He also asked for an average of 45 hours a week.

Chief Jim Klug – He asked about remedial training and requested that the academy have enough time in the schedule to allow for remedial training from the Cadre. He said he felt the reduced academy hours didn't allow them to invest in extra training for a recruit which may have resulted in a recruit unnecessarily failing academy. He would like to see more of an investment in the student. Chief Klaas said that is one of the reasons that academy is asking for more time, so the Cadre can provide the additional training for the students as needed.

Administration:

ROG and Attendance: Chief Klaas shared that there were recruits who had missed a week to almost two weeks of academy and the responsibility fell on the Cadre to try to bring them up to speed. He said making up missed time was harder with the recruits who had no experience, and he feels attendance must be more definitive in the ROG.

- **Chief Sendelbach** – He said the academy needs to be careful that they are not creating too much leniency, as there is a portion of it that is part of the academy experience. He suggested looking at a college curriculum to identify the standard for what a student can miss and still pass. He said he feels there must be a greater discussion than to just default to absences being okay if the recruit can pass the test. He included that he feels the Board has to come to an agreement quickly so any revisions can be entered into the ROG prior to the start of Academy.
- **Chief Mirowski** – He said he feels there should be a standard in place and if required, the recruit can go before a review board for special circumstances.
- **Chief Klaas** - He said injuries need to be the other variable considered with injuries/illness. He isn't sure how long a recruit should stay on to see if they are recoverable, as they aren't doing skills or reps to pass the skills checks. He also shared that the Cadre made note that when they would get to a hard week there was an increase in the number of call outs. Additionally, he said that bereavements were challenging, as there are different internal agency policies regarding bereavement that conflicted with the FRFC policies.

Administrative Review Committee: Chief Klaas said he would like to have a change in the language in the ROG. He also said that being too tight on time made it hard to put all the documentation together to see the big picture prior to the review. He said he feels this makes it harder to make informed decisions.

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Rep Log: Chief Klaas said the Cadre will have to assume the rep logs as the recruits were too vague in logging them in the Google Classroom. He said the recruits would just log their reps as 5+ or 7+ which doesn't give them the actual numbers of what they're doing.

Cancer Decon for Students: Chief Klaas feels there needs to be more improvement here. This year they had the gear dryers, and they gave the recruits a day between burns so they could dry their gear when they were saturated from water or sweat.

Cancer Decon for Instructors: Chief said they also got additional decon bags for all instructors. He feels the instructors are setting the example of cancer prevention and they have to be consistent with what they are telling the recruits. He also suggested that the recruits should bring extra cloths, and he would like to eventually see showers on location, so recruits and instructors can shower before getting into their cars and going home.

d. Moving Forward:

What is the Academy Start Date: Chief Klaas said they historically have had the 3rd Monday in February and the 3rd Monday in August as the start dates for Academy.

- **Chief West** – He said he feels they should stick with a consistent time for the start as the agencies rely on that for their hiring process. He also said that having the Graduation after Thanksgiving would be better than before the holiday, and Chief Klaas agreed as pushing to get it done before made the academy too compressed and tight on time.
- **Chief Klaas** – He said he felt that the Friday off would be best as it's better to be in on Mondays in case there is an administrative need as many Chiefs take Friday off.

Who will be the Cadre: Chief Klaas said the projected academy numbers are currently between 20 and 25 for the fall academy. Doug Gilliland said he would be in the Cadre for the 2023-2 Academy. He also shared that he feels Having Monday off would be best as they could then test on Tuesdays and if someone doesn't pass, they have time to remediate and retest that recruit.

What is the Succession Plan:

Chief Higgins - He said Emily is available to help with Fitness for the next academy and that he would try to get someone in for cadre if needed, even though they would not have a recruit in the fall academy.

Chief Schwab – He said he would like to have his Search expert participate in the Search module.

Questions/Comments to the Board from Chief Sendelbach:

- **Material Costs** – Consider bulk purchasing of standard items such as lumber etc.
- **Instructor Expenses** – Recommendation to keep instructor/student ratio balanced for safety but cut back on instructors if not needed. Additionally, to utilize subject matter experts when available.
- **Graduation** – Family Badge Pinning was great! Asked Cadre to continue to make the event special and reduce costs where possible.
- **Post Academy Physical** – Report from Chief Klaas that recruits lost physical strength toward the end of Academy. Chief Sendelbach requested pre and post academy physicals to determine if recruits and agencies are set up for success upon graduation.

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- Academy Fire Chiefs Interaction – Requested that the FRFC Executive Board be present at the first day of academy to welcome the recruits. Chief West said he didn't feel it was necessary as the recruits know their agency Fire Chief. He included that he felt the first day should be about the recruits, the Cadre and Academy Chief.
- Academy Pass Rate – Is the FRFC improving on their pass rate with each academy, and can it be shown that there is continual improvement.
- Review Board Discipline and Passing Recruits – Recommendation that the ROG be set up to support the Fire Chiefs (in the event they may have to dismiss a recruit), and to also stand behind the Cadre and trust their decision making. Suggested that the Board have a mechanism in place to support the decision-making process. Chief Barela shared that in the past, the Fire Chiefs would be the buffer for the cadre and when faced with a failing student, the Academy would release the recruit back to their home organization. The home could then continue training the recruit and put them online or chose to release them. He said it was important to note that the recruit was no longer a part of the FRFC Academy so they would not participate in graduation.
- FRFC Academy Test Bank - Chief Klaas reported that when the new test bank is available in spring 2025, it will need to be an academy purchase.
- College Credit – Chief Sendelbach and Chief Schwab said they feel the Board must work to gain college credit for the Academy curriculum, as degrees will be required for promotion, and Aims gives college credit to their students.

Information Needed from the Board: Chief Klaas requested a definitive start date for Academy 2023-2.

- Board Consensus: 15 weeks, third week in August, 40-hour week. Direction was given to Chief Klaas to configure the hours the way he and the Cadre feel it will work best, with the goal to promote consistency in the days and hours and to take into consideration the issues/needs of childcare.

Motion to start Academy 2023-2 on August 21st, the third week of August 2023 for fifteen weeks, with Academy hours being 4 10's – Chief Michael West (Front Range Fire Rescue)

Seconded – Chief Greg Schwab (Boulder Rural Fire Rescue)

All Approved – Motion Carried

- e. **Chief Sendelbach PowerPoint Presentation:** Chief Sendelbach is encouraging a pilot program with the changes that the Board is implementing.
 - Recruit Cost: \$12,000 per recruit as opposed to the previous \$14,250 per recruit.
 - Training Accounts: Established from historical data and maintaining \$10,000 minimum balance.
 - Cadre Numbers: Kept at required level for safety but continue to tighten it up to reduce cost.
 - Facility Use Fee Schedule: Appears as a credit to the host agency to help maintain the facility.
 - Training Account: The existing money in the fund above the \$100,000.00 will be equally divided based on historical contributions.

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- **Fund:** Reduce fund to \$100,000.00. Each agency will maintain a minimum balance of \$10,000.00 in their training account. Chief Barela asked how far the funding study went back and Sara Simonton said they were able to go back to 2017.
- **Annual Membership:** There would no longer be an Annual Membership fee. Chief Sendelbach said he worked with Emily Powell (FRFC attorney) to draft up an amendment to the IGA reflecting the changes. The \$10,000 fund balance per agency is going to be an amendment to the IGA.

2023-2 Cadre Members: Chief Klaas asked the Board who the Cadre would be for this academy.

He shared that this academy has a need for a minimum of three cadre in addition to him or an Academy Director. He said he has John Nunez and Doug Gilliland and is hoping for Ivy Miller, though that is still a question if she is available.

Succession Plan: Requesting a commitment of 3 academies, as it provides stability to the cadre, and it sets up a natural succession plan. Chief Klaas asked the Board to establish a succession plan and asked for it to be an Agenda item for the Board to Discuss.

- 1.** First being a Cadre member.
- 2.** Transition to Co-Lead
- 3.** Transition to Lead and then you were timed out.

f. **Adjournment:** June 28, 2023, 12:07PM

Motion to Adjourn – Chief Greg Schwab (Boulder Rural Fire Rescue)

Seconded – Chief Jim Klug (Platte Valley Fire Protection District)

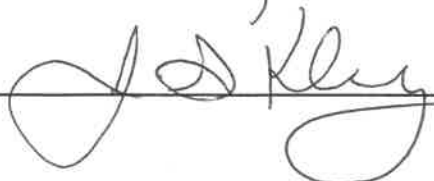
All Approved – Motion Carried

ATTESTATION OF MINUTES:

We attest that the foregoing minutes, which have been approved by the affirmative majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Front Range Fire Consortium, are a true and accurate record of the meeting held on the date stated above.



Tim Sendelbach, President



Jim Klug, Treasurer