



MJC / Regional Fire Training Center

RFTC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 18, 2021
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

I. Welcome:

Members in attendance: RFTC Director- Ron Cripe, Division Dean- Pedro Mendez, San Joaquin County Regional representative- Chief Rick Mello, RFTC Fire Academy Coordinator- Captain Matthew Curless, RFTC site usage agreement representative- Erik Klevmyr, RFTC Administrative Specialist- Liza Vázquez.

Absent: Mike Wilkinson, RFTC site usage agreement representative- Chris Steffen, EMS course instructor- Dan Cummins, Industry representatives- Josh Cummins & Ken Howenstine.

II. Membership:

Mike Wilkinson not in attendance and will no longer serve as part of the committee as he will be moving soon. If members know of anyone that may want to be a part of the committee or have any recommendations for a member at large, they may forward their contact information to Ron for consideration.

III. RFTC Business, Building, and Grounds Report:

- a. COVID-19 Concerns: College and District is still requiring COVID self-screening forms to be filled out prior to anyone coming to any of the college campuses; students, staff, guests. If coming to the RFTC, the approval email from the screening must also be forwarded to Ron for review. Access to the RFTC, like much of the college, is closed to the general public. If anyone needs to come to the RFTC for assistance to see Ron or Liza, they are available by appointment. The RFTC is currently available to students coming to classes (Fire Academy) and the grounds to Fire Agencies with site user agreements.
- b. Curriculum review – Ron is currently reviewing several FTECH & EMS courses. He noted some changes:
 - FF1 2013 curriculum was retired
 - FF1 2019 curriculum is now being used
 - Several SFT Tech rescue courses are being reviewed
 - At the SFT level, several Fire Control courses are being reviewed and changes are also being made
- c. Floor and carpet projects have been completed at the RFTC. Looks great and very pleased with the work and the new look.
- d. Memorial Garden: several people expressed interest in having a memorial of some sort for those in the Fire Service in our area. Mike Wilkinson had worked with Ron on some ideas, but he noted that the interest has gone down. There's currently some concrete work being done on the RFTC grounds. Once it's done, Ron will see if he can speak with the college about a possible area to do a garden for this purpose.
- e. Display Case: Larry Mouw & Mark Jacobs are working on coming up with some criteria for the display case in the RFTC. The criteria will be used to determine what can go in there, for how long, etc. If any members have any ideas, please send them on to Larry or Mark.



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IV. RFTC EMS Report:

- a. Spring 21: EMR & EMS classes down to about 50% in class size compared to how they started, which is typical. This is often seen during this time of the semester due to students not completing their assignments, academic challenges, etc. Not due to technological course challenges.
- b. Fall 21 plan:
 - add an additional EMR course, to have them in the morning, afternoon and evening.
 - EMT: switch from morning line-up to an evening line-up to allow volunteers to help out with the courses.
 - AMR contract possible again. An announcement to go out next month to see if there's an interest in agencies.
- c. Paramedic plan: we are currently developing a program to be offered in the Fall of '22 via a Strong Workforce grant. A not-for-credit option may allow the program to be more flexible. The curriculum is to be prepared during the 21-22 fiscal year and the details are still being worked out. There is current need for paramedics in the county/region; there aren't enough. AMR and Merced have already expressed interest in partnering with the program because there's no local training. Nearest training is in Sacramento, possibly Fresno and beyond. This will be a good opportunity for our area.

V. RFTC Fire Report:

- a. Spring 21: courses halfway through the semester. All FTECH courses are currently still being done online and are going quite well. They are all maintaining enrollment compared to last semester. Instructors have gone through the proper training for hosting remote learning and students have now adjusted to remote learning.
- b. Fall 21 plan: we plan on the typical offering of core courses in the Fall. This is to allow for the proper rotation of FTECH courses that may not have been offered in the Spring and to offer the courses needed to students to help them earn units to earn their Fire Science degree.

VI. RFTC Fire Academy Report:

- a. Spring 2021 Fire Academy: Captain Matt Curless reported that the cadets are doing quite well this semester. We lost one cadet recently due to a job offer. We now have 18 cadets. The cadets just recently went through their FF1 & FF2 module testing and they have their Hazmat & Wildland testing left. Up next they have vehicle fire coming up in training. In the past, cars had to be delivered to be able to train in this, but with the new vehicle prop that was acquired this semester, this is no longer necessary. We have a prop to train and test on from now on. If agencies need this vehicle prop, they can contact RFTC for possible use as well.
- b. Fall 21 plan: there will be 30 spots available for Fire Academy program. Ron & Matt are currently working on coordinating dates for when application period will open, close, for calendar, etc. They're currently evaluating the current academy to plan for Fall '21. Pedro Mendez inquired how many applications we were anticipating for the Fall and also inquired about what the job demands were currently for fire fighters. Ron and other members input on the local and overall job demands for the industry. They also expressed how the MJC Fire Academy played a role in filling jobs/volunteer spots in local agencies.



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VII. Open Discussion: What do you need? What would you like to see? Other Discussion

Chief Rick Mello: would just like to get beyond “COVID fatigue” and be able to see things get back to normal again and really just see anything be offered at the RFTC such as Driver Operator courses. Is excited for the Paramedic program.

Ron: (in response to Chief Mello) expressed that the District Chancellor will be on the conservative side when we come back on campus- classes will stay online if possible. The classes that come back on campus, there will most likely only be a slight increase on the ones that do, and only a slight increase in class sizes. We’ll have to “play it by ear” based on what’s going on, but will keep the members informed.

Pedro: (in response to Ron & Chief Mello): other uses of training at the RFTC will be based on changes in policy- if they allow for flexibility- we will see what we can offer.

Captain Matt Curless: expressed concerns with finding lead instructors for our courses and staffing issues in departments of current instructors and working overtime. There are many changes with certifications now and curriculum as well, so finding qualified instructors may become challenging. He also noted a change in the type of students that are coming through. He’s noticing a change in what’s motivating them to do this job, or a first responder job, and a change in their expectations and feels that this can provide some hurdles.

Pedro: (in response to Matt) acknowledged that the protective services and public safety culture is definitely changing. He suggested some professional development for the concerns expressed to help with meeting the challenges in staffing and certification, and even help incentivize it. If there’s any ideas, he welcomed them.

Ron: noted that Columbia college was also experiencing some similar concerns with their instructors working a lot already then working in class. Suggested perhaps partnering to see if they can share how to overcome this.

Ron also discussed the Meeting Minutes with the group. He stated that once the Minutes were prepared for any current meeting, they would be sent out to the group for review with a specific deadline. If there weren’t any corrections, then they would be published on the MJC RFTC website.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:59 PM.

VIII. Next Meeting Date:

Fall semester (TBD).