

**Fire Policy Committee Minutes**  
**February 28, 2024**

The Fire Policy Committee (FPC) of the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (Board) held a regular meeting on February 28, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Boardroom at the Oregon Public Safety Academy located at 4190 Aumsville Hwy SE, Salem, Oregon. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Committee Members:**

Jack Carriger, Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association  
Mariana Ruiz-Temple (Designee Claire McGrew), Oregon State Fire Marshal  
Jim Adams, Oregon State Fire Fighters Council  
Ryan Gillespie (Designee Andy Ponce), Portland Fire & Rescue  
Chris Heppel, Oregon Fire Chiefs Association  
Rose Douglass, Oregon Fire Training Association  
Tim Holschbach, Forest Protection Agencies  
Joseph Morneau, Oregon Fire District Director's Association  
Isaac McLennan, Non-Management Firefighter  
Andre Lindauer, Public Member  
TaiLese Swanson, Community College Fire Programs  
Gert Zoutendijk, Oregon Fire Marshals Association

**DPSST Staff:**

Phil Castle, Director  
Brian Henson, Deputy Director  
Sam Tenney, Communications Coordinator  
Jennifer Howald, Administrative Rules Coordinator  
Kayla Ballrot, Fire Program Manager  
Brooke Bell-Uribe, Fire Certification Coordinator  
Julia Budlong, Fire Program Support Specialist



**1. Introductions**

Introductions of members and staff were presented.

**2. \*Minutes**

Approve the August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

- *Gert Zoutendijk moved that the committee approve the minutes of the August 23, 2023, FPC meeting. Andy Ponce seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.*

**3. \*William B. Comerford; DPSST No. 34996**

Presented by Brooke Bell-Uribe

DPSST received an application for certification for William Comerford on July 12, 2023. During their routine background and criminal history check on applications for certification, DPSST staff found that Comerford had a criminal conviction in his history. On April 28, 2022, Comerford plead guilty to and was convicted of Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Police Officer, Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 811.540(1)(b)(A), a Class A misdemeanor in the state of Oregon. This conviction carries a sentence of which not more than one year of imprisonment may be imposed. Due to the misdemeanor conviction which occurred in the last five years and the underlying conduct that involves dishonesty and deceit, this case requires review by the Fire Policy Committee (FPC).

<b>Vote/Consensus</b>	<b>Second</b>	<b>Vote</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Gert Zoutendijk moved that the FPC adopt the staff report as the record upon which its recommendations are based.	Andre Lindauer	10 ayes 2 abstain (Ponce & McLennan)	Motion passes unanimously
The FPC found that Comerford being actively employed as a Fire Fighter at the time of the incident and endangering others to be considered as <b>aggravating circumstances</b> .			
The FPC found that Comerford’s involvement in a Peer Support Team, completing an Alcohol Dependency Program, and taking ownership for his actions to be considered as <b>mitigating circumstances</b> .			
After considering the totality of the case TaiLese Swanson moved to recommend a vote of <i>No Action</i> to the Board for Comerford’s certifications.	Andre Lindauer	10 ayes 2 abstain (Ponce & McLennan)	Motion passes unanimously

**4. \*Curtis A. Deetz; DPSST No. 31371**

Presented by Brooke Bell-Uribe

DPSST received an arrest alert from the Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS) for Curtis Deetz on April 30, 2023. DPSST staff tracked this case as Deetz currently holds DPSST Fire Certifications. On July 25, 2023 Deetz was convicted of and plead guilty to Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, ORS 166.250, a Class A misdemeanor in the state of Oregon. This conviction carries a sentence of which not more than one year of imprisonment may be imposed. Due to the misdemeanor conviction which occurred in the last five years and the underlying conduct that involves illegal possession of a deadly weapon this case requires review by the FPC.

Vote/Consensus	Second	Vote	Outcome
Gert Zoutendijk moved that the FPC adopt the staff report as the record upon which its recommendations are based.	TaiLese Swanson	9 ayes 3 abstain (Carriger, Ponce, & McLennan)	Motion passes unanimously
The FPC found that Deetz being actively employed as a Fire Fighter at the time of the incident, the fact that alcohol was involved with the unlawful possession of a weapon, and that he was a veteran and should be aware how to properly secure a weapon in transport to be considered as <b>aggravating circumstances</b> .			
The FPC found that Deetz wasn't reckless or displaying endangering behavior with the weapon and that he is completing his diversion program for the Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants charge as <b>mitigating circumstances</b> .			
After considering the totality of the case Rose Douglass moved to recommend a vote of <i>No Action</i> to the Board for Deetz's certifications.	Jim Adams	9 ayes 3 abstain (Carriger, Ponce, & McLennan)	Motion passes unanimously

**5. \*Firefighter Brian Flowers; DPSST No. 26630 – Gresham Fire & EMS, Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall Nomination**

Presented by Brooke Bell-Uribe

After a fifteen-year career, Firefighter Brian Flowers passed away on November 19, 2023, after a monthslong battle with Occupational Acute Myeloid Leukemia. His cancer diagnosis was confirmed and designated as occupationally related by the City of Gresham's workers compensation insurance administrator.

- *Isaac McLennan moved that the committee approve adding Brian Flowers to the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall. Gert Zoutendijk seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.*

**6. \*Firefighter Maurice Stadel; DPSST No. 07934 – Salem Fire Department, Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall Nomination**

Presented by Brooke Bell-Uribe

Maurice Stadel served as a professional firefighter with the Salem Fire Department for more than twenty-five years. In 2018 he was diagnosed with tonsillar cancer and passed away on February 24, 2019. His diagnosis of tonsillar cancer was designated as occupational by the Oregon Worker's Compensation Board in alignment with the state's cancer presumption laws.

- *Andy Ponce moved that the committee approve adding Maurice Stadel to the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall. Gert Zoutendijk seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.*

## 7. **\*Chair Nomination**

- *Gert Zoutendijk moved to nominate Chris Heppel as the Fire Policy Committee Chair. Claire McGrew seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.*

## 8. **Agency Updates**

### **Kayla Ballrot presents:**

- The Fire Program hosted another successful Winter Fire School with around 200 students representing over 100 agencies.
- Upcoming National Fire Academy (NFA) classes: Decision-Making for Initial Company Operations in Pendelton, OR on 3/16/24-3/17/24 and Command and Control of Incident Operations in Salem, OR on 3/4/24-3/9/24.
- Maintenance Recertification paperwork will be sent to agencies this June.
- The Fire Program is applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for more fire props.
- Welcome South Willamette District Coordinator, Ryan Frizzell, Southwestern District Coordinator, Rick Cooper, and Northwest District Coordinator, Josh Feller.
- Current vacancies to fill: Gorge District Coordinator and Skid Trainer.
- The Fire Program is working to identify more Skid Training host sites.
- Reminder: Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial will be held on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 1 p.m.

### **Phil Castle presents:**

- Express appreciation to the Fire Policy Committee Members for their dedication.
- Express appreciation to the Fire Program team for their efforts during Winter Fire School.
- DPSST will ensure fire training will have space on campus even with the implementation of increased Basic Police classes.
- Campus population is expected to go down by the end of March.
- The Fire Program is actively working on strategies for the underserved areas within the Fire Service.
- Governor Kotek has made Public Safety a priority and has started looking at the 25-27 budget.

9. **Next Fire Policy Committee Meeting – May 22, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.**  
Meeting is adjourned at 10:18 a.m.