



## STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Automatic Extinguishing Systems Advisory Committee

April 17th, 2024, Meeting Minutes, 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT)

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Hybrid Zoom Meeting Conference Call

3780 Kilroy Airport Way, Suit 500, Long Beach, Ca, 90806

Meeting ID: 837 5654 3716

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Allen Quirk, National Association of Fire Equipment Distributers (NAFED)

Peter Hulin, National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)

Wayne Weisz, American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA)

Randy Roxson, Sprinkler Fitters of Association of California (SFAC)

David Karrick, California American Fire Sprinkler Association (CAFSA)

Vahe Zohrabian, California Fire Protection Coalition

Eddie Wade, Brooks Equipment Company

James Knowles, Amerex

James Feld, University of California, Berkeley (retired)

Jason McBroom, Alpine Fire Protection District

Darrell Hefley, Jorgenson Company

Shelley Merrell, Integrated Fire & Safety

Todd Golden, Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices Local 709

Amber Barrios, Associated Compliance & Training

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Matthew McCarrick, California Association of Life Safety & Fire Equipment (CALSAFE)

Randy Dysart, Retired

Bryan Jonson, West Sacramento Fire Department

Chip Lindley, Lindley Fire Protection

Jason Hudgins, Walschon Fire Protection, Inc.

## OSFM STAFF

Greg Andersen, Committee Chairperson, OSFM  
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director of Fire Engineering, OSFM  
Brice Bennett, Acting AES Program Coordinator, OSFM  
Cortney Walker, OSFM  
Jeff Schwartz, OSFM  
Megan Lopes, OSFM  
Adam Stewart, OSFM  
Taylor Machado, OSFM  
Chris Dale, OSFM  
Alexander Rapphahn, OS

## PUBLIC GUESTS

Todd Golde, Local 709  
Rick Vasquez, Local 709  
Derek Miles, Local 483  
David Lewandowski, Jorgensen Company (Alternate)  
Brian Hutto, Local 669  
Shawn Arballo, Local 709  
Ted Hakimi, California Fire Protection Coalition (Alternate)  
Shawn Gray, Lund Pearson Mclaughlin Fire Protection  
Wendy Day, Local 709  
Kim Stocking, Advanco Fire Protection

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

- A. Welcome and Logistics Briefing  
The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Greg Andersen, at 9:00 A.M. PDT on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024.  
Attendees were informed of meeting logistics and etiquette.
- B. Roll Call/Determine Quorum  
Roll call was conducted by Alexander Rapphahn, and it was determined that a quorum (14 of 20) of members was present.
- C. Introductions / Announcements  
All attendees introduced themselves.
- D. Approval of Minutes for January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.  
Chairperson Greg Andersen asked for approval for the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, meeting.

Jim Feld proposed a correction to the previous meeting minutes. Bagley-Keene was misspelled in Section 3, Subsection E and needed to be corrected.

**It was moved by Member Vahe Zohrabian to approve the minutes as amended; motion seconded by Member Allen Quirk. Motion was approved unanimously.**

E. Announcements

Chairperson Greg Andersen announced the fitter numbers for the current year were 4,472. 2020 renewals completed for next year, putting the projected numbers for next year on par or a little ahead of the current year. There has been a steady increase in new applications and the turnaround time on new applications and renewals is much shorter now that the program has 2 analysts. Staff reports are being set out before committee meetings to inform the members of topics that will be discussed.

Greg Andersen informed the committee that the committee charter update was still being looked at by legal, and they are looking at specific issues with Bagley-Keene. Chief Henning added that there are 2 levels of Bagley-Keene, each with different requirements. Committees formed by state law, with clear membership, must meet with an in-person quorum. The other level is a state-run meeting, not established by law, people do not have to be in person but must be on camera and must be over 18 years old. All the State Fire Marshal's committees are being reviewed to ensure they are following the Bagley-Keene regulations, this committee is not mentioned in state law. Hybrid in-person and virtual committee meetings have increase participation. Todd Golden asked what is needed for a quorum and Chief Henning replied that 51% of the committee members needed to be present.

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

A. Fee Package

Chairperson Greg Andersen informed the committee that the fee package is almost complete and if it ready before the next meeting, a special meeting to review it. The package will be provided to the committee members before the meeting so they may have time to review it.

B. ITM Licensing Taskforce Update

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated that the ITM meeting happened the previous Monday and the OSFM is going to take all the different proposals and write up a staff report for a future committee meeting. There the staff report will be open to discussion.

C. Sprinkler Fitter Programs Numbers

Greg Andersen noted that this information was already covered in the announcements section.

D. Committee Charted Update

Greg Andersen noted that this information was already covered in the announcements section.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Sprinkler Fitter and Multifamily Residential Sprinkler Fitter Cognitive Exams Staff Report

Chief Andrew Henning stated that a contact with Sacramento State has been executed to have provide consultation services on the commercial and multi-family sprinkler fitter exams, both English and Spanish versions. They will be reviewing the question and flagging ones that need further edits. The original exam was created based off the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the job based off the input from a small group of industry professionals. Then sent to a larger group as part of a survey to identify the percentage of time they spent doing specific activities related to the job. That was used to determine the number of questions related to each activity on the exam. The current exam is a 3 question ABC exam which is outside industry best practices and will be moving to a 4 question ABCD exam. Dropping the commercial exam from 112 questions to 100 and adding some ITM questions to the exam. The best practices for exams is to update them every 5 years and this exam is close to 6 years old. The goal is to have this update completed before the new year and have the new exams launch in January. This will require several meetings with industry professionals to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities for the new exam, sending out the survey to the larger industry, and developing or rewriting test questions. This may happen on zoom but might have to happen in person to ensure security of the test information. Committee members will be contacted to assist or recommend industry professionals to assist. Once the Sprinkler Fitter exams are updated then other Fire Engineering exams will be looked using the same methods. Chairperson Greg Andersen noted that KSAs are knowledge, skills, and abilities; then opened the topic for discussion.

Vahe Zohrabian asked if more questions were going to be added to the exam, if then more time would be allowed to take the exam. Chief Henning responded that the original exam was about 150 questions and then dropped down to 112 questions. The goal for the review is to further decrease the questions to 100. There will be multiple versions of the exam with a 30% overlap of questions. That means that each exam will have 70 of its questions pertaining to that exam only and 30 that can be found on other exams. This will require the creation of a lot of new test questions and a reserve of questions to be added in place of a test question that is not performing as designed. The new exams will be evaluated using scientific methods during testing and after the tests go live to ensure that the exams difficulty is fair for the industry.

Amber Barrios asked if the OSFM knew the average time it was taking for individuals to pass the exam. Chief Henning confirmed they did have the average pass rate for the exam but did not have the average test time for passing the exam due to the difficulty of exporting that data out of PearsonVue but will be looked at for setting the test time. The time per test item will be evaluated during the creation of the exam, this could lead to a shorter time. Amber Barrios added that in her experience the Spanish version test takers took longer to complete the exam than those taking the English version. Chief Henning stated that this will be looked at as part of the test creation with the assistance of the consultants. They are experts in creating exams and with the help of the industry professional will work to create a fair, balanced, and reliable exam.

Wayne Weisz asked if the intent was for the exam to remain open book. Chief Henning replied that internal discussion on this topic has not happened yet, but that the sprinkler fitter exams were very similar to the NICET exams, which are open book.

Greg Andersen addressed a question from Vahe Zohrabian that was asked earlier. Installations may be added as a category for testing or kept separate as part of ITM, they are still evaluating that decision. Vahe Zohrabian responded that adding categories will affect the apprenticeship programs education requirements. Chief Henning added that staff still need to come together and figure out how ITM will be implemented. He sees Sprinkler Fitter and ITM as 2 separate exams but there may be components of ITM added to the sprinkler fitter exam. Greg Andersen added that there will be a guide breaking down how much of the exam will focus on each category. Chief Henning added that after an applicant takes the exam, they will receive a candidate feedback report showing how they did on each section of the exam, allowing them to focus their studies if they did not pass the exam.

Multiple Committee members voiced their concerns about the Spanish version of the test, the different dialects of Spanish, and different industry slang terms used. Chief Henning responded that the exam will be translated by a native Spanish speaker then translate it back to English to ensure the exam still meets the original intent. Additionally, they will look for the best practices to assist the Spanish speaking exam takers. Such as a list of specific words in Spanish with their English counterparts. Vahe Zohrabian added that the test time should not be shorted. Chief Henning responded that they will be looking at that as well as reasonable accommodations for exam takers.

**B. Removal of Notary Signature Requirement**

Chief Henning noted that they had an issue posting this staff report, but it was sent to all the committee members.

Brice Bennett stated that the OSFM had required a notary for a lengthy amount of time. In reviewing other agencies and best practices, no other agencies require them. OSFM views this as an undue hardship for the sprinkler fitters and would like to remove the requirement with committee consent. Chief Henning added that the form will still show the requirement for the form, but notes will be added to alert applicants that the notary is no longer required. This is because changing the forms requires assistance from the Office of Administrative Law.

Greg Andersen asked for a general vote to approve. All committee members approved. The Motion was passed.

Amber Barrios asked if this motion would go into effect immediately. Greg Andersen responded it will be enforced immediately, but it will take a little time to fully inform all the stakeholders. Chief Henning stated that the goals are to keep recalibrating the program to better meet industry needs.

Public guest Wendy Day asked if a new form released. Greg Andersen responded that they cannot change the form because it must go through a regulatory process. A note will be added to alert applicants that the Notary is no longer required.

Vahe Zohrabian stated that if the program is being worked on then CEUs and the title 19 requirements should be looked at because they are discouraging possible CEU providers. Greg Andersen acknowledged the issue and that is being worked on as part of the regulatory package. Brice Bennett add that this issue is part of the update.

C. CEU Submittal Requirement Change to 3<sup>rd</sup> Renewal.

AES Analyst Alex Rapphahn stated that per the current regulations, CEUs were due every 3 years. Depending on when a license was issued, a fitter could have as little as 22 months if issued in June. Or as much as 33 months if issued in July, before their CEUs were required for renewal. The way the rule was written also made it confusing for fitters and those assisting them in assessing when CEUs were due. To make this easier to understand, OSFM will now require CEUs to be due on every 3<sup>rd</sup> renewal. The first partial year, no matter how short or long, will not count towards the 3-year CEU requirements. This change will extend the CEU requirement time to between 30 and 41 months. This will also make it easier to determine when CEUs are due. OSFM started implementing this change April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

Amber Barrios express that the CEU timeline was still confusing and that moving to 10 CEUs every year would be simpler. Greg Andersen responded that there may be some changes coming regarding that, but they require changes in regulations. The goal of this was to remove the

confusion and standardize the length of time a fitter had to complete their CEUs. David Karrick asked how this could be done within the regulations. Greg Andersen responded that the way the current systems was set up, some fitters were being required to submit CEUs before 3 years had passed. Chief Henning added that the issue was with both the regulations and GovMotus. Applicants who apply in July get the full 3 years, but those who apply May or later do not get the full 3 years. A future staff report will outline the direction OFSM wants to go with how CEUs are required, be that every 1,2, or 3 years, and based off the calendar month rather than the year. This will require working with GovMotus.

Amber Barrios asked if it was possible to have GovMotus display the CEU due dates. SSM1 Cortney Walker responded that OSFM could contact GovMotus about that, but any enhancements will cost money and are applied across GovMotus. OSFM needs to walk the line of what is truly beneficial and other methods of solving problems that don't affect every FEI program. Amber Barrios added that GovMotus' math seemed to be off sometimes, citing that she had a fitter who was supposed to have CEUs due this year, but GovMotus never asked for them. Cortney Walker explained that GovMotus does not currently have the ability to process multi-year renewals in consecutive year order. When a fitter does a multi-year renewal from 2018, GovMotus sees that as their 2<sup>nd</sup> renewal, and AES can't reset their CEU requirement date. This causes GovMotus to ask for CEUs the next time that fitter renews and create confusion. Internally OSFM is working to find a balance between what is possible and what is best for the stakeholders. Amber Barrios reiterated that having 1 CEU due every year would be easier to keep track of. Cortney Walker responded that the FEI staff is working to find the best solution to this problem within regulations and best business practices and will continue to take suggestions from the committee.

Chief Henning added that OSFM is just as frustrated with GovMotus as the committee members and that they are doing market research on other platforms. This is not a quick process and if they choose a new one, they will have to use it for 10 years. They are looking for something that is not just slightly better than the current one and meets all the needs of the different programs. If a new platform is found, it most likely will not be implemented for another 3 years.

Vahe Zohrabian added that requiring a fitter who got their license in April to renew their license 2 months later did not seem fair. Chief Henning replied that this would be address in an upcoming staff report.

Public guest Wendy Day asked why when sending in multi-year renewal forms, GovMotus sends a receipt for \$225.00 and not the multi-year renewal amount. Why can't multi-year renewals be processed by each

year. Cortney Walker explained that GovMotus does not allow for that, when a license from 2019 gets a multi-year renewal, GovMotus renews automatically renews the license to the current year. The staff will start to email multi-year renewals with paid stamps back to the applicants, so they have a true receipt.

Shelly Merrell asked if anyone had been in contact with the creators of GovMotus to see if they could make the changes discussed. Cortney Walker replied that they are in contact with them nearly every day. The division is always pursuing ways to better the program to better meet the needs of the stakeholders. Vahe Zohrabian added that a system that is paid for should meet the needs of its users. Chief Henning replied that GovMotus was not really designed for all the things that the program needs it to do. But it is a balance between paying GovMotus for enhancements while looking for a new platform. While they are determining what platform will be used going forward, they are looking at other ways to improve the process. The card payment processor that FEI is currently using is not performing to the standards needed. So, FEI is currently in the process of moving to a different provider. We will continue to advocate for the needs of the program to improve it.

D. Information Bulletin for Clarification on the 90-Day Test Window

Greg Andersen confirmed that all the committee members received the information bulletin and wanted to vet it through them. Chief Henning added that FEI is in preliminary discussions with PearsonVue to move all the fire engineering exams allow for self-enrollment, currently each FEI program must authorize applicants to take the tests. This would eliminate the 90-day test taking window, when a candidate is eligible, they can enroll to take the exam. The applicants will still be required to meet the other requirements of the applications they are submitting. If a person passes the sprinkler fitter examination but has not completed the apprenticeship program, then their application will be rejected. The goal is to implement this before the end of the year. The goal of this is make the application process easier for the applicants and stakeholders as well as streamlining the process for the FEI analysts. Greg Andersen added that this will greatly reduce the number of steps in the application process.

Kim Stocking asked if the certification exams could be offered in languages other than English or Spanish. Greg Andersen replied that they are working on the process for how to get different the exams translated into different languages. Chief Henning added that they are working through some elements of this with PearsonVue.

Amber Barrios asked if it was possible to have PearsonVue ask for proof of completion of an apprenticeship program before allowing a person to schedule an exam or before they take the exam. Greg Andersen replied



that it was a possible requirement that Chief Henning brought up, but they are still evaluating all the requirements. Chief Henning added that PearsonVue can add a list of very detailed requirements when a person is signing up to take the exam, so they know what they will need. PearsonVue will not verify those requirements for a person to take the exam. As stated, before the goal of this is to streamline the application process. Nothing will prevent people from taking the exam, but if they don't have the requirements for the license, they will be stopped at the application process. It is not a challenge exam to get into the industry without going through the apprenticeship.

Peter Hulin asked if the 30/90-day requirements were preexisting or something new. Greg Andersen regulations give an applicant 30 days to take their exams, but FEI felt that was not reasonable, so the testing window was extended to 90 days. The code package being worked on will formally extend the testing window to 90 days, but as of right now the applicants are being given an extra 60 days to take their exams. Peter Hulin stated that they were unsure if an applicant could schedule 3 exams in a 90-day period, but OSFM staff assured him that they could. Greg Andersen added that if/when the exams open to self-enrollment, the testing window will be eliminated.

Kim Stocking asked if a non-English/Spanish speaker should wait to submit their application until there is an exam offered in their language or if they should start the application process as a show of good faith. Greg Andersen said he would notify her as soon as he had an answer from the legal department.

#### E. Sprinkler Fitter 3-Year Renewal Cycle

Greg Andersen stated that the program is looking at switching from an annual renewal cycle to a 3-year renewal cycle. This way when the renewal happens, it is the same time that the CEUs are due. This will not change the cost so as to meet budget requirements and fill vacant positions in the program. This would make the renewal process easier on the department, but he acknowledged a much larger fee, as it would be the cost of 3 years, could be difficult for some stakeholders. The current fee package was rejected because the AES fees were not raised enough. There may be a small increase in the fees but one way to counter increasing the fees is to change to a 3-year renewal cycle. One of the suggestions is to send out a new card every 3 years with a new expiration date. The goal is to alleviate the renewal process on the AES program, the stakeholders, and the industry.

Chief Henning added that they are looking for feedback from the committee on this topic. They believe that this could alleviate a lot of concerns brought up about the renewal process and CEUs. He has been

talking to and working with other state programs and other state's fire marshals' offices to see how they do renewals and see if AES can incorporate those best practices into their renewal process. Right now, they are just looking for feedback from the committee. They already have some stating that \$450.00 is a lot of money and they do not have a good workaround on that issue yet. Greg Andersen added that they are looking at changing the initial application process, if a person gets their license on April 7<sup>th</sup>, they have the rest of April before their first year starts. This would spread out the renewals over the year. The AES renewal system was set up to mirror the other regulation packages, those original packages are done in law, the AES one is not so it is easier to change. The new application and renewal regulations were originally based off using paper applications but most of the program is done by computer now. The process could be changed to a simpler renewal timeline, like vehicle registration, where a person has clear dates when they must renew by.

Amber Barrios agreed that \$450.00 is a lot of money and may be a problem for many fitters. The validity period would make it so that fitters getting new licenses late in the current period did not have to immediately pay again to renew their licenses. She noted that the 3-year renewals do not work for apprentices or trainees based on the lengths of the different apprenticeship programs and the trainee regulations. If this was phased in for the 2025 renewal, would the fitters that have CEUs due for that renewal still have to submit their CEUs for renewal? This was confirmed by OSFM staff.

Peter Hulin asked if it was possible to make a 2-tiered system for the apprentices/trainees and the fitters. He also noted that asking a person first entering an apprentice program for \$450.00 seems extreme. Once the apprentice passes the exam they would move to the fitter tier. Chip Lindley agreed.

Greg Andersen noted that this does not work at all for trainees and different options for the apprentices are being looked at. He noted that giving apprentices an extra year on their 5-year program may assist the people who are stuck in limbo because they cannot pass the fitter exam. Other options are also being looked at.

Jason McBroom asked if the cardholder pays for 3 years upfront and then changes companies, are they required to reapply and pay a new fee. Cortney Walker responded that when fitters switch companies they are not required to reapply. If the AES program got a letter stating that a fitter no longer worked for a company, that fitters license would be placed on hold pending new employment verification. There is not change to the license expiration if a fitter switches their employers. If the AES program is notified that a fitter is no longer employed by a C-16 licensed company, their

license is put on hold not cancelled.

Todd Golden stated that the number one issue is the \$450.00, it would be a hardship on the fitters. Could a portal be set up where fitters could have the option deposit \$150.00 each year? He is against the \$450.00 and prefers the yearly renewal with 10 CEUs due each year. David Karrick noted that fitters may have trouble remembering when their renewals are due. Vahe Zohrabian added that having the option to upload CEUs when a fitter had them would be better. Greg Andersen replied that having CEUs due each year would increase the workload on the staff to review them. One of the options that Chief Henning brought up was an audit of a designated percent of submitted CEUs or moving to a 2-year cycle requiring 2 CEUs.

David Karrick stated that he views the California AES program as very complicated and extending it over multiple years could make it difficult to keep track of. Having every fitter on the same renewal timeline would make it easier to remember or be reminded by co-workers when renewals are due. CEUs were designed to prove that people working in the industry were continuously being educated not taking 30 hours' worth of classes the month before their renewal is due. The program is complicated and not meeting the touch points of the original intentions were. A one-year standard for renewals and CEUs makes administration from the industry side easy. He suggested to make CEU audits easier, have CEU providers register their classes annually and a percentage audit of those CEUs would further decrease the workload. Ease of operations equals a high percentage of compliances. One year and 1 CEU would be the best option in his opinion.

Wayne Weisz added that he believed that the sprinkler fitter numbers would increase with a less complicated system, uncertified fitters would be more willing to get in compliance. The \$450.00 3-year cost would be a big issue in his view but if forced into that, allowing fitters to pay \$150.00 a year would greatly alleviate that cost. He ultimately agrees with David Karrick that a 1-year simple system would improve the process.

Amber Barrios shared that there could be issues for contactors that pay the fitters fees. If a fitter gets their card paid for by a company and then leaves that company, their card is still good for 3 years. This could discourage those contractors from ensuring they are in compliance. She added that she agreed with David Karrick, as a CEU provider, annual renewals would be better. Giving the CEU providers license numbers to put on certificates would make it easily referenceable for AES staff. This would make it easier for CEU providers to track when their classes expire as well. Greg Andersen replied that these types of things would require changes to the regulations and that it is not a fast process if it happens.

David Karrick expressed concern that a 3- or 5-year apprentice sprinkler fitter renewal could be abused by bad actors only looking to get a card then leave their programs. Greg Andersen replied that they have had multiple discussion on this topic and are still working on it as well as the issue of renewing at a certain time every year or based on when the applicant applied.

Chief Henning agreed that having everyone renew on the same date is easier. In the current proposal, the fitter cards would have an expiration date on the back, not a sticker. This would allow the fitter to look at the back of their card and know when it expired. Addressing the CEU comments, every time an employee touches or review an application, there is a cost. Tracking CEUs on individuals every year would have a cost to the providers. Or if the providers started to send the rosters from their classes for the AES staff to track, as a fee for service program, there would also be a charge.

Amber Barrios replied that requires CEUs to be renewed every year would produce 2 additional years of fees compared to the current system. She added that she has always be a proponent that CEU providers should be submitting rosters to CalFire. Chief Henning responded that rosters are something they can evaluate, and that State Fire Training does something similar, but they are using a different program to track it. To get access to that program for FEI would require contracts and using the same model as SFT has additional requirements such as student fees and roster fees. This would be a completely new business model and would be its own separate conversation with the committee. This connects back to the discussion on evaluating potential replacements for GovMotus. Chief Henning asked the committee if a 2 year, \$300.00. 2 CEU renewal would be easier for the industry than the 3 years.

Todd Golden responded that it would be more manageable but still difficult. The already have trouble getting people to pay the \$150.00. But if it was explained that going to the 2-year renewal would prevent the price of renewal from increase then it would alleviate some of the issues. Going to a 2-year renewal and raising costs would be detrimental to the industry.

Vahe Zohrabian asked if digital automated record keeping could be used. Chief Henning replied that FEI would have to find and implement a system that could do that. Greg Andersen added that systems that can do things suggested have a high price tag. Vahe Zohrabian commented that a system like that is an investment and would save on staff time and cost. Chief Henning replied this comes back to having a system that has the capability to do that. But there is a cost to purchase that system, the cost difference between the new system and GovMotus, and the transition time

from GovMotus. This will force a rate increase on the industry. There can either be a continuous assessment or an increase in per-person cost on each of the CEUs. There would be a cost for course approval, each course delivered or each student in a course and the cost of our time to process and review those. Amber Barrios added that it seemed more reasonable to pass the additional cost onto the CEU providers rather than the fitters. Greg Andersen commented that they have to look at all the different equations and spread it out between all the different licenses and certifications. FEI has 5 main programs and 14,000 different license and certifications.

David Karrick stated that he thought that no changes would need to be made to GovMotus to switch over to an annual renewal for CEUs, but that the CEU provider list would shrink dramatically. This would make it easier to verify CEUs on renewals. Amber Barrios added that creating a window of when a CEU providers can submit their annual classes and creating the list for that year would assist in eliminate confusion. David Karrick noted that there are many different entities teaching CEU classes, some for free and some for profit. Increasing the fees on the CEU providers would also decrease the current large list of providers and classes by making them choose which classes they really wanted to teach. Greg Andersen responded that getting less CEU providers is not a goal, they want more to provide more opportunities for the fitters while being able to manage the CEUs available to them. David Karrick replied that there wouldn't be a barrier to becoming a CEU provider, just that they would have to submit their registration every year. Greg Andersen replied that based on analysis the cost of the annual renewal would become a barrier. David Karrick replied that the cost was being put on the CEU provider not the fitters in the field. Vahe Zohrabian added that fee increases not on the fitters in the field can be handled by the for-profit providers.

Chief Henning noted that if a new system where a fee was required to submit CEU certificates then the FEI would also have to track this system and be its register for the process. He asked if CEU classes were typically reimbursed by the employer? Multiple committee members responded saying that it depends on the CEU provider. Amber Barrios stated that if a fee was required per certificate for her CEU classes, then that fee would then be accounted for in what she charges for her classes. Vahe Zohrabian added that balancing the cost on the providers and how it affects the fitters is important. Chief Henning noted that the AES program was originally decided to support 8,000 sprinkler fitters and they are currently not close to that number.

Greg Andersen summarized that everyone has concerns about higher costs for future years and they would like to see CEUs become a yearly submission for sprinkler fitters and move to an annual renewal. There

were 2 options for renewal dates proposed, one when you got your license and the other everyone having the same renewal date. Add more cost to CEUs and have a system to account for that.

Peter Hulin noted that any increase costs will trickle down to the fitters. He asked if CEUs were required every year, would the 3-year limitation on retaking classes still be applied. Could a fitter take the same classes every year. Greg Andersen noted that everything right is just a proposal, that topic would be address in regulations. Amber Barrios stated that she thought they should not be allowed to retake the same classes every year and the verification of what classes a person took should be on the providers. Wayne Weisz added that a fitter could go to different providers that offered the same CEUs, like CPR, and take the same class every year.

Greg Andersen summarized that they are looking for plans to prevent raising costs, but a lot of the plans talked about today would require the raising of costs to accommodate the addition workload. Chief Henning added costs will continue to go up but the OSFM working to update costs more frequently, so the increase is smaller. The fee increases in the regulation package being worked on is not a large amount. Fee increases overall goal is to meet the programs operating budget needs, the program is currently trying to maximize its staff time while continuing to enhance the program and provide the customer service that is needed and expect.

#### F. AES NFPA 25 Staff Report

Chief Henning stated OFSM currently uses NFPA 25 2013 California Edition which was published in 2015. The California edition was based off NFPA 25 2011 edition. Since 2011 there has been 4 updates to NFPA 25 2011, and the Advisory committee is working on an update to the NFPA 25 California edition based on the 2020 edition of NFPA 25. Industry Professionals are assisting in updating the forms to meet the double layer triple A standards for ADA compliance per requirements of the state. Forms also need to be uniform now. The staff report outlines the pros and cons for 3 options: adopting NFPA 2023 with minimal state amendments, going forward with creating the next California edition based off the 2020 NFPA 25, or adopting the 2026 edition of NFPA 25 with minimal state amendments once it is published. Options 1 and 3 would move to the new editions as they were published.

Moving to NFPA 2023 would allow for the adoption of new technologies that have already been approved at the national level that the current California edition does not include. NFPA is printed in English and Spanish whereas the California edition is only printed in English. Faster adoptions with less amendments, within one to 2 years.

The California edition is easier to reference because the amendments are in the book. A challenge with the California edition is the licensing agreement and finding a publisher. This caused issues between the OFSM legal staff and NFPA. There is a strong likelihood that a non-California edition of NFPA 25 would be adopted faster than a California edition. He does not want to discredit the work that has already been done on the California edition. Going with option 1 or 3, the industry would need to assist in establishing what amendments to keep or get rid of, as well as identifying new amendments. A benefit of adopting the national code is for the training in ASFA and NFPA that meets California needs with minimal amendments. This will also allow for a national exam for ITM from ASSC, being at the national model code makes it easier for test takers.

There is no current timeline for going forward with a California edition. Greg Andersen added that the forms will still be needed in California and the forms will not count toward the page limits for amendments. The goal is to have the forms on the FEI website in PDF format. A lot of work has been put into creating the California edition by the committee, but it is a long process that after completion would still need to go through the Office of Administrative Law.

Vahe Zohrabian stated that the pros are they can craft the edition to their liking but it will take 3 or 4 years and millions of dollars to get it licensed and published. The cons are that industry cannot wait for the code book to catch up with technology that is already obsolete by the time the book is published. Adopting something is much better than waiting to create something over multiple meetings then adopting it years later. Chief Henning added that going with the national code would make it much quicker to update amendments and adopt the codes rather than creating and adopting a whole new California edition.

Wayne Weisz commented that option one seemed like the cleanest, easiest, most cost-effective course of action. Jason McBroom added he was not opposed to going with option one with a chapter 80 amendment section and keeping the forms that the committee has already worked on. Much of the California edition has already been adopted into the 2023 edition.

Jason Hudgins asked how the option one process was easier than the work already done on the California edition and would proposed changes to 2023 have to be reviewed again. Greg Andersen replied that option one has the support of statutes because they said to look at national standards. Instead of putting everything into statute, a small amount of amendments is added to reference NFPA 25 with no cost impact. Jason Hudgins replied that option one would not be faster because changes to title 19 would still have to be made. Chief Henning responded that not having to secure

licensing and publishing agreements would save a large amount of time. The last California edition took 2 to 3 years to publish after it was adopted and enforceable. Greg Andersen confirmed that getting the last edition licensed and published was a long process for the committee members who were assisting in the process.

Vahe Zohrabian asked if California was the only state making their own edition of NFPA 25. Greg Andersen agreed that as far as he knows California is the only state to do that. Vahe Zohrabian expressed that if 49 other states don't do this, why should California. Greg Andersen commented that NFPA 25 has expanded to cover a lot of the amendments from the previous California edition. Any modifications that need to be made for specific things can be made as long as it is ensured that the page numbers don't change. This also allows for removing amendments when the new edition cover them. He wants to keep the forms because they are extremely useful. With no strong opposition to this the next step is to select a group of people to go over the selected edition and start to narrow down the additions and modifications to what is important. Chief Henning stated the review between the California edition and a newer version of NFPA 25 must be done to establish if the California edition is a critical fire and life safety need. But having a 30 page print out people need to reference to ensure they are following the California edition verses 1 or 2 pages makes referencing much faster. Vahe Zohrabian added that adopting it is important because it will have an impact on Title 19. Chief Henning replied that it will shorten title 19 by quite a bit by only having to list the amendments and forms as reference documents.

Greg Andersen stated that this was an information only brief for this meeting but there will be an official staff report for the next meeting calling for a vote from the committee.

#### **IV. OPEN FORUM**

Chairperson Greg Andersen opened the floor for open forum.

Chief Henning explained the purpose of the staff reports for the committee and and their goal of keeping the committee informed and allowing them to prepare for the meeting beforehand.

Kim Stocking asked if a new AES program coordinator had been hired. Greg Andersen replied that they have flown the position and are hoping to have one by the next committee meeting.

Amber Barrios asked the status of the new CEU provider list. Brice Bennett replied that Chris Dale is currently working on making a user-friendly document for people in and out of the industry. The list has been completed, lists available languages and the CEU course amounts. The goal is to have it posted in the next 2 weeks. Amber Barrios asked if the classes that were paid for but not posted on



GovMotus were on the new list and Brice Bennett confirmed that they are.

Peter Hulin asked if all the ITM proposals were being used to form the best possible proposal. Greg Andersen replied that they are going to be used to form a proposal that would be brought back to the ITM group or AES committee for their input. Peter Hulin asked how many were submitted. Greg Andersen answered they 7 were submitted and they are looking at all the factors involving industry to find what will work best. Peter Hulin asked if going to the national standard of NFPA 25 will affect testing standards. Greg Andersen replied that it is something that will be investigated if they move forward with going to the national standard. Allen Quirk added that of the 7 submitted ITM proposals, only 4 quote nationally recognized programs and standards that could be easily transitioned to for training. Brice Bennett replied that there were 7 different people or groups that submitted proposals. The proposal that AES/FEI creates for the committee to review will be very clear and provided to the members well in advance, so they have time to evaluate it before the meeting. Allen Quirk asked if that proposal would be going to the ITM group, a special meeting or a future committee meeting to be voted on. Greg Andersen responded that the first proposal will come to the committee as information only 10 days before the meeting and will be discussed. If the discussion is productive, the next meeting will have a staff report on the proposal and the committee will be asked to vote on it. Chief Henning explained the process of the information only reports, allowing time for committee to review the information, add or take parts out during discussion in the meeting. Then the proposal will go back to FEI so changes can be made and then brought back to the committee for further discussion. When the committee is happy with the proposal, at the next meeting it will be submitted to them as an official staff report to be voted on.

David Karrick asked about the status on appointment layers. Greg Andersen replied that it is currently in the hands of legal review. Chief Henning added that additions to committees were put on hold while the charters were under legal review. Vahe Zohrabian expressed concern that if seats were not filled then it might be possible to not have an in-person quorum. Chief Henning replied with the information previously stated about Bagley-Keene in Announcements.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Wayne Weisz asked when then next ITM meeting was. Greg Andersen replied that it did not have a set date yet because things proposed in the ITM meeting were being brought to the AES committee for review.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Next meeting is July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Chairperson Greg Andersen thanked everyone for their participation and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**It was moved by Member Amber Barrios to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Member Vahe Zohrabian; all in favor of adjournment. Chairperson Greg Andersen adjourned the meeting at 12:04 P.M. PDT.**