

FEMA National Advisory Council

February 2018 Meeting Minutes

NAC | February 23, 2018



FEMA

PARTICIPANTS

NAC Members	02-23
James Featherstone, Chair	Yes
Mike Sprayberry, Vice Chair	Yes
Jeanne Abadie	Yes
Gabriele Almon	Yes
Brett Bailey	Yes
Peter Barca	Yes
Sue Anne Bell	No
Donald Bliss	Yes
Donna Boston	Yes
Sarita Chung, P&P, Chair	No
Jerry Demings	Yes
John Doak	Yes
Paul Downing	Yes
August "Dutch" Geisinger	No
Peter Ginaitt	Yes
John Grathwol	Yes
Jeffrey Hansen, FI&M, Chair	Yes
Eugene Henry, FI&M, Vice Chair	Yes
Chris Howell, R&R, Vice Chair	Yes
Lisa Jones	Yes
June Kailes	Yes
Emily Kidd	Yes
W. Nim Kidd, R&R, Chair	No
Anne Kronenberg, P&P, Vice Chair	Yes
Anna Lang	Yes
Linda Langston	Yes
Linda Long	Yes
Suzet McKinney	No
Robert Salesses	No
Jeff Stern	Yes
Guy Swan	Yes
Tina Titze	Yes
James Waskom	Yes
Darryll Wong	Yes
DHS and FEMA Personnel	02-23
Katie Fox, Acting Deputy Administrator, Preparedness and National Protection, FEMA	Yes
Lisa Lofton, Preparedness and National Protection, FEMA	Yes
Jasper Cooke, Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)	Yes
Elizabeth Edge, Director, Office of Regional Operations (FEMA)	Yes
Marcia Hodges, Director, Office of Executive Operations (FEMA)	Yes
Deana Platt, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)	Yes
Kyle Symanowitz, ADFO, Office of Chief Counsel (FEMA)	Yes

Other Attendees	02-23
COL Joe Ignazzitto, Senior Liaison to DHS and FEMA (DOD)	Yes
Howard McMillan, Pipeline Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration, PHMSA	Yes
Aaron Mitchell, PHMSA	Yes
Gabriela Stermolle, Texas Department of Public Safety	Yes

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The FEMA National Advisory Council (NAC) met at FEMA Headquarters and by phone to discuss questions about one recommendation from the NAC Railroad Emergency Services Preparedness, Operational Needs, and Safety Evaluation (RESPONSE) Subcommittee. After discussion, the NAC moved to vote on the recommendation and it passed unanimously.

OVERVIEW

Deana Platt opened the meeting, followed by brief remarks from the Chair, Jim Featherstone. The goal of the meeting was to better understand and then vote on questions raised during the November meeting about one specific recommendation from the NAC RESPONSE Subcommittee.

Katie Fox, Subcommittee Co-Chair provided an overview of the response to the NAC’s question. Specifically, the question was about the impact to grants if paying for backfill and overtime is an allowable expense. For FEMA, there would be no effect because these expenses are already allowable.

Aaron Mitchell from PHMSA added that, due to small amount of grants that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration manages, they have concerns that it could exhaust the funds. However, moving forward, they could consider allowing it within specific parameters to mitigate that concern, such as putting a cap on the amount used for those expenses or only allowing it for certain types of training.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Platt opened the floor to comments from the public, including subcommittee members, then turned to the Chair for a NAC discussion.

Mr. Featherstone asked if there was motion to consider the recommendation? Gene Henry made a motion that was seconded by Peter Ginaitt. Mr. Featherstone opened the floor for NAC discussion.

Mr. Ginaitt said that based on previous discussions, allowing payment for backfill may help ensure that classes are filled, assuming there is a mechanism that would limit backfill.

Mr. Mitchell clarified that those are the parameters PHMSA would try to implement, stating that they would cap payments because they want states to maintain their flexibility, but also to make sure that states do not overspend on overtime and backfill.

Mr. Ginaitt again agreed with the approach.

Mr. Featherstone commented that PHMSA provided an interesting response because they are not saying that they would or would not cover it, but rather that they would consider. Mr. Mitchell confirmed that this is correct, and

that PHMSA has not taken a final position. They are looking at studies and discussing the issue because they want to be sure that if they implement the concept they are doing it in the best way.

Linda Long added that from a city fire-service perspective (Philadelphia), it could increase attendance and their propensity to host courses.

Mr. Featherstone said that his concern is also that if you do not have people, you do not have a program or process. Backfill and overtime are important to make sure you get the right people in the class.

Ms. Long stated that sometimes they will not run a class without a grant and it is important to keep hazmat training levels up.

Mr. Mitchell said that he agreed and understands the needs, and the idea is one that PHMSA will continue discussing in our chain. Mr. McMillan added that PHMSA can support this in principle, but also must clear any programmatic changes with DOT leadership.

Mr. Featherstone asked for any more discussion. Hearing none, he stated that they would vote by dissent. With no dissent the recommendation as proposed was passed: FEMA and DOT should consider allowing funding from grants, cooperative agreements, or other sources to cover backfill/overtime payments for career/paid emergency responders to attend training, based on demonstrated need.

Ms. Platt reminded the NAC of the next steps: the recommendations and material provided by the subcommittee will be included in a NAC report signed by the NAC Chair. The Chair will submit the report to the FEMA Administrator, who will transmit it to the individuals and committees named in legislation. The subcommittee will then terminate. The NAC will go through a similar process with IPAWS coming next November.


Ms. Fox thanked everyone for their work.

Mr. Ginaitt raised an issue with a recommendation in the presentation materials that did not reflect the language of the recommendation approved by the NAC. Lisa Lofton and Ms. Platt reviewed the language in the presentation materials and minutes from the previous meeting and determined that the presentation materials were incorrect and the meeting minutes contained the final approved language. Mr. Ginaitt agreed that the meeting minutes reflected the correct text: "Under the direction of PHMSA and FEMA, create a 'railroad emergency response toolkit' in a format that allows for the widest possible dissemination of real-time information to the emergency responder and emergency management communities." Ms. Platt stated she would correct the materials.

CONCLUSION

Deana Platt, FEMA NAC DFO, adjourned the NAC meeting at 1:25 pm Eastern.

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing summary of the FEMA National Advisory Council meeting from February 23, 2018, is accurate and complete.



James Featherstone, Chair
FEMA National Advisory Council