

**2016 LEGISLATIVE REPORT
TRAINING CENTER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
ROBERT H. WOOD, JR. CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND FIRE SERVICE TRAINING CENTER
PITTSFORD, VERMONT
FEBRUARY 1, 2016**



Pursuant to Number 26, Section 45, on or before February 1, 2016, the Training Center Governance Committee shall report to the General Assembly regarding the operation of its powers and duties to date and recommend any further legislative action it finds necessary.

The Vision of the Training Center Governance Committee is to continuously improve the delivery of critical emergency response training to save lives and continue the hard work our predecessors endeavored to do making a training facility that will meet the training needs for the future.

**Richard Gauthier, Executive Director
Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council
Chair, Training Center Governance Committee**

**Michael Desrochers, Executive Director
Division of Fire Safety
Vice Chair, Training Center Governance Committee**

INTRODUCTION

This report provides information pertaining to work the Governance Committee has accomplished since the first meeting held on September 4, 2015. The report will focus primarily on the duties and powers of the governance committee. At the initial meeting a Chair and Vice Chair were elected and members were provided a general overview of the legislation creating the committee by Representative Butch Shaw. The legislative language creating the committee was reviewed and we discussed in general the history behind the legislation including the “Operational Governance and Planning Assessment Report” which was completed in accordance with Act 178, Public Acts of 2014, Sec. 13(g). In short, the assessment report in 2014 recommended the creation of the Training Center Governance Committee to provide a single voice for the governance of the facility.

SCOPE AND OVERVIEW

The duties and powers of the Governance Committee as noted in Chapter 19 §841(c) include governing;

- Use and access to the facility by various groups
- Future needs and capital investments
- Performance analysis
- Budget and rates
- Meetings

The main training facility structure was constructed in 1907 and was used as an infirmary. Although there is historic sentiment, the facility was clearly not designed with the current use in mind. There is overwhelming documentation in place relevant to the existing infrastructure deficiencies of the main building. Therefore, this report will focus attention on the duties and powers of the committee, and some immediate infrastructure issues. For example, the East Cottage space is not useable and the Division of Fire Safety is paying fee for space. The knob and tube wiring throughout the existing training facility needs to be upgraded, although we are told this is going to occur. The Main Building floors are pulling away from the walls and there is some noticeable deflection in the floor assembly. Initial non-destructive assessments of the Main Building floors revealed the structural loads are not transferred properly between floors. Although there is not an imminent threat of collapse repairs are needed. There exists a substantial amount of infrastructure data supporting inadequate heating and cooling, inadequate insulation, plumbing issues, old electrical wiring, inoperable windows, moisture problems, noise interference between classrooms, and a less than desirable learning environment which is not detailed in this report but extremely relevant as these deficiencies directly impact our delivery of training.

With support from the legislators and BGS, the campus has a new restroom/locker room facility at the fire station building, a new fire training administration building, and law enforcement has a newly renovated outdoor and indoor shooting range capability. These upgrades were necessary and appreciated and have certainly enhanced the ability to provide better training to first responders and law enforcement. The Training Center Governance Committee would like to thank you for this support.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Training Center Governance Committee** convened five times during CY 2015. During these meetings we discussed the committee's scope of our duties and powers in matters concerning *use and access, future needs/ capital investments, performance analysis, budget and rates, and our obligation to meet as a group*. We looked at each of these areas as it relates to the capacity and ability of the facility to accommodate training for our law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and other potential facility users such as; Corrections, Urban Search and Rescue, and Hazardous Material Response, just to name a few. It is also of note that several non-state agencies either utilize the facility and/or have agreements in place to do so during an emergency. These include, but are not limited to; agreements with both the Town of Pittsford and the American Red Cross to function as an emergency shelter, as well as ongoing support of activities with groups such as the VT State Firefighter's Association, Pittsford Recreation Department and assorted law enforcement cadet explorer programs. We explored potential users who are not using the facility due to inadequate amenities and spoke to how we might better track those who are not able to access and use the campus. To better understand some of these challenges, we toured space in Lyndonville, Vermont currently used by the Department of Corrections to conduct basic recruit training and walked through a lock up facility in St. Johnsbury.

We reviewed existing contracts as a group and reviewed several new use proposals that resulted in quick resolutions which reflected our willingness, desire, and commitment for all training center personnel to continue to work effectively in a cooperative manner as we have in the past. Although the committee has been tasked with *executing contracts* for the operation of the training center it's important to distinguish BGS executes contracts pertaining to land use and buildings and grounds.

The committee did not put forth a recommended capital construction request; however, the fire academy applied for FEMA's Assistance to Fire Fighter Grant (AFG) again for 2016. Capital funds in the amount of \$300,000.00 were secured last year and are available this year should the AFG Grant be awarded. These funds have been allocated to replace the existing burn building which is currently under a structural engineering reviewing program because it has exceeded its recommended safe operating life span.

The committee is convinced there is a need for *substantial infrastructure upgrades* to meet the training needs of today and tomorrow. The Committee is also aware that access and use limitation at the training center has sometimes been inappropriately perceived by Vermont's criminal justice and fire service constituents as lack of cooperation among on-site personnel, when in fact, lack of space and other infrastructure issues is the major contributing factor continuing to impact the center's ability to provide access. The Committee believes the *East Cottage should be renovated* into dorm space, alleviating an on-going shortage of dorm space. Renovating the East Cottage would also put money Fire Safety is currently paying fee for space to much better use.

Scheduling users and managing all the logistics (rooms, meals, classroom assignments, scheduling meetings, administrative support, reporting, evaluating current use, communication, assigning dorm rooms, accountability, and conflict resolution) is spread out among facility user staff who have other job duties for which they were hired to do. The committee is in agreement that we need a *facility*

manager responsible for operating the day to day logistics. In part, each facility user group has a different direct reporting supervisor and each user has different day to day responsibilities. This identifiable business management process above is creating by default, major inefficiencies and is a critical obstacle for moving forward to achieve maximum efficiency. The Governance committee was established to be a single voice for the training center and a facility manager needs to be created. Responsibilities of the facility manager would include but not be limited to:

- Scheduling use and access to the training facility (including meals and lodging)
- Facility utilization reporting to support future decisions regarding rates
- Establish policies for conflict resolution and identify potential sources of conflict
- Establish working groups to facilitate capital project discussions to present to the governance committee for consideration
- A communication hub for all day to day related activity of the training facility
- Administrative support and reporting to the Governance Committee
- Evaluate and compile data to support the effectiveness of training including future training and the potential for new users.
- Preparing contracts relevant to the use of the facility (food service, linen)
- Compile data and create reports to facilitate discussions on the effectiveness of the delivery of training and short falls of our training delivery
- Compile all curriculum related material between all facility users see if programs can be coordinated between present and future users
- Reach out to potential user groups increasing use and access to the facility

The existing main building infrastructure will play a vital role in the future sustainability of the training center. We are in agreement that a *needs assessment* needs to be completed addressing such issues as; possible consolidation of State resources, consolidating information technology, creating a central administrative position, future training opportunities, ergonomics, energy efficiency, infrastructure, and future use and access. With the establishment of the Governance Committee there exist a solid foundation for effective communication between the legislators and the committee members - a single voice.

The primary goal of the Training Center Governance Committee is to pave a path forward where we can work with the legislators to enhance the infrastructure of the 1907 training center to meet the training needs of today while building for the future. We are committed to self-evaluating ourselves to identify our shortfalls, but we are even more committed to making the training center a more viable learning experience for generations of emergency service personnel. We will also continue to foster a comprehensive relationship with the adjoining neighbors and the surrounding communities. The training facility has been a community partner which is extremely important. The Committee has been presented with an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring the delivery of critical lifesaving training and education to a higher level making Vermont a safer place, now and in the future. We owe this to the fallen responders and the leaders of yesterday who had the vision to continuously work toward transforming the 1907 facility to meet the training demands of the future.

DUTIES AND POWER OF THE TRAINING CENTER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Use and Access

There are a number of pressing issues regarding use and access to the facility. Use and access in the broad sense spans all aspects of managing the facility taking into consideration the needs of the State's various agencies and members of the public in using the training facility.

Business Process/Management

Currently the task of *scheduling use of the Training Center is not centralized*. Scheduling and coordinating facility usage, entering maintenance requests, serving as a host, coordinating outside users, completing administrative functions are all functions currently being completed by existing staff. These same staff members are employed by different agencies and are currently tasked with trying to connect dots to support scheduling efforts of the training facility. These functions have been acquired over time but nevertheless the staff still have their primary job to do. This process is inefficient and not cost effective. Staffing levels at the facility are currently at a minimum and staff are bogged down with these added responsibilities taking away from providing direct training support for our responders.

A short fall in the day to day operation of the facility is the *inability to track and document* entities who do not request use of the facility because they have been either turned down in the past because we could not provide the amenities (small class room space, no sleeping rooms, or no availability). Current staff simply do not have the time to *develop reporting strategies* capturing statistics. We have documentation pertaining to whom uses the facility, but more importantly we need to capture those who want to use it but cannot.

Vermont Police Academy Use and Access Impact

The following training and professional development opportunities are currently not available or substantially limited on-site at the *Vermont Police Academy* due to room, board, and classroom space limitations. Within the boundaries of this particular building's current training capacity, only 15 boarding rooms are available for training after mandatory Police K-9, Vermont State Police Pre/Post Basic, Full-Time Police Basic, and staff lodging is provided. This lack of lodging capacity seriously limits training provided by the *Vermont Fire Academy*, which also uses the boarding space, and limits the availability of any post-certification law enforcement professional development training opportunities.

- Due to the limited space in the Training Center's largest dormitory area (will accommodate 42 overnight participants), the number of Police recruits is currently restricted "at capacity" beyond what the need is for full-time law enforcement training in Vermont. The Training Center also has one large classroom (originally designed to be a weight room) available for full-time training which further limits the number of participants. These infrastructure restrictions on the availability of full-time police training ultimately compromise the availability of police services to the citizens of Vermont.

- Entrance testing for law enforcement is currently limited to the Police Academy’s gymnasium as the other classroom spaces are often occupied. In addition to restricting the gymnasium for its intended purpose, using the gymnasium for testing and grading can create unreasonable noise while those participants who finish the test early need to wait in the same testing area.
- The “Council Room”, or main meeting room at the Police Academy was not originally designed as a properly climate controlled four-season space, and therefore is not appropriate for meetings that require adequate temperature control and presentation supporting equipment.
- The Police Academy does not have a large conference room for accommodating groups of (50) or more, which significantly limits opportunities for national “best practice in law enforcement” seminars, as well as the Police Academy’s ability to host regional seminars and meetings.
- Training Police Officers in the skill of pursuit driving is a critical component in the overall police training strategy. Pursuit driving in law enforcement is one of the most high risk – high liability areas. The Training Center’s current training area does not currently allow police driving instructors to provide proper training at necessary speeds, skid control, and other maneuvers that are typical of pursuit driving. This training area would be used by other State Agencies for enhanced first responder training. (DMV, Fire Service, EMS, VTRANS)
- Other inadequate building infrastructure issues include an inefficient “1950s” steam heating system, lack of HVAC cooling in most areas, a current electrical system that is dangerously at capacity, outdated plumbing, no space to perform administrative function involving the creation of manuals, bindings, mass mailings, and other administrative functions, and a kitchen and dining area that can only accommodate (60) people.

Vermont Fire Academy Use and Access Impact

The Vermont Fire Academy uses “room and boarding” space in the Vermont Police Academy for residential training participants. Inadequate number of sleeping rooms at the training center has restricted training opportunities and has indirectly cost agencies more money by housing folks in nearby hotels. The following training and professional development opportunities are currently not available or substantially limited on-site at the training facility due to room, board, and classroom space limitations:

- First line supervisor, administrator, and top level management staff training and workshops
- Regional fire training meetings, national training meetings, and training organization accreditation meetings which would provide the opportunity for Vermont fire personnel to network with a variety of colleagues committed to fire safety across the nation.
- National fire service seminars providing information on “best practices” in fire services by top fire service researchers across the nation.
- Missed opportunities to provide week-day Hazardous Material (Haz-Mat) training.
- Missed opportunities to provide week-day Urban Search and Rescue training.

- Missed opportunities to accommodate more participants at bi-monthly Fire Safety Inspector trainings.
- Missed opportunities to provide multiple day training sessions for division staff.

Vermont Corrections Academy

The **Vermont Corrections Academy**. The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) is currently leasing warehouse space in Lyndonville for their basic recruit academy, and lodging participants at a local hotel. The DOC Corrections Academy certifies between 125 – 200 Corrections Officers. The DOC completes five or more five week academies a year, and supports the additional three week shadowing and FTO component of the training. In addition, the academy hosts and facilitates the completion of a multitude of multi-day trainings for the department. This includes all of the Training for Trainers certifications classes for; Suicide prevention, Crisis Intervention/Hostage Negotiation, Fire Safety ,First Aid/CPR, Nonlethal use of force, and Advanced Communication Techniques, to name a few. Below are some additional opportunities to combine efforts with a shared training center.

- Firearms.
- Special Teams.
- Field Officer Safety.
- Training for DOC Probation Officers, Community Corrections Officers

FUTURE NEEDS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The Training Center Governance Committee did not put forth a capital construction bill. The committee is in agreement that a ***needs assessment study*** (excluding the East Cottage renovation) will be the next step in an effort to move our vision forward. The Training Center Governance Committee has only met 5 times and much work is needed moving forward. The future needs of the training facility will be based on future enhancements/investments made.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Curriculum development and delivery of training remains under the jurisdiction of both the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council and the Vermont Fire Service Training Council. The legislation clearly emphasized the Governance Committee would not exert jurisdiction over training. In the legislative language specifically Chapter 19§ 841 (c) 3- Performance Analysis: Establish policies to ensure the facility training needs of those persons that use the Training Center are cost-effectively met, and establish performance measures for assessing on an ongoing basis how well those needs are met. This area of responsibility would be best handled by a facility manager.

BUDGETS AND RATES

The legislative language Chapter 19§ 841 (4) (C) directed the Training Center Governance Committee to *enter into and administer new contracts* on behalf of the Training Center regarding operations of the training center, and encourages collaboration among those persons that use the Training Center, and address major maintenance needs.

The Governance Committee recognizes *BGS is responsible for executing contracts and applying for permits* specific to land use and buildings and grounds. There is a direct correlation between land use and the ability for the Governance Committee to plan for additional expansion for future training opportunities at the site, and future emergency service exercises. The Governance Committee should be consulted on contractual issues that impact potential access and use to the training grounds.

The Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council has established fees and rates for facility users. The Vermont Fire Service Training Council does not set fees or rates. Moving forward the Training Center Governance Committee will evaluate potential new fees and rates as necessary.

In Closing

The Governance Committee was legislatively mandated to provide the Vermont Legislators with a single voice for future needs of the facility. This mandate includes future capital expenditure bills as well as ensuring all users have equitable use and access to the facility. The Governance Committee membership and other member participants continue to work effectively together. We feel the Vermont Legislature has provided us a unique opportunity to greatly enhance the overall service Vermonters receive in emergency services.

We look forward to continued discussions. The Training Center Governance Committee is committed to supporting the work of all our emergency service professionals, serving the needs and safety of all Vermonters.