

2009 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

HB 1056

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1056

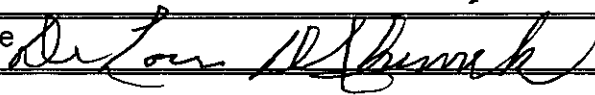
House Political Subdivisions Committee

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Hearing Date: January 8, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 6695

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Wrangham opened the hearing on HB 1056.

Roxanne Woeste, Legislative Counsel: Explained and read some of the bill. The bill was introduced on the recommendation of the interim committee. During the interim the committee did ask the adjutant general to study the feasibility and desirability of establishing recommendations on the needs of establishing a multi discipline emergency task force.

Rep. Koppelman: Do you know how that was arrived at the fiscal note or what it would be used for?

Chairman Wrangham: Was this study and appropriation considered by the governor in his budget and if so is it included in his budget?

Roxanne: No it is not.

Dave Sprynczynatyk, Adjutant General: Just here to introduce my deputy director for emergency services Greg Wilz and explain the interim committee asked the adjutant general to set up a task force to address the future of emergency services in ND. The task force is comprised of 15 different organizations. The task force meet 6 times over the course of a year and looked at all areas of emergency services for the state and future of those emergency services and how best to improve upon them. As a result of that task force we sent 15

recommendations to the committee and in turn they addressed each and 12 of the recommendations were put in the form of the draft bill that was provided to you. The question you asked about whether Mr. Chairman regarding whether or not it was included in the budget of other agencies. None of the recommendations were high on the priority list of emergency services for the agency so in response to your question, no they are not a part of the agencies budget that will be heard later today. We are providing to you the background information on behalf of the task force and try to answer any questions you have.

Rep. Koppelman: What do you see as the needs for the emergency services?

Dave Sprynczynatyk: The task force was representative of 15 different organizations including law enforcement, fire fighting and communications. All of the first responders in the state if you will. There is a need for adequate facilities for training them.

Rep. Koppelman: Why would that cost \$100,000 just to study? Do you know where that number came from?

Dave Sprynczynatyk: From past experience and best guess we thought this was the right amount.

Rep. Zaiser: You indicated this was not in your budget. What do you suggest dropping from your budget if this was funded?

Dave Sprynczynatyk: We have a lot of needs for Emergency services in the state and this does not meet the threshold for priorities to be included in our budget so I would not suggest dropping anything from our budget. I chaired the task force and I would not suggest that this be adjusted into my budget.

Rep. Conrad: Do you think this is a good investment for the future of ND.

Dave Sprynczynatyk: We have higher priority needs for our budgets at this time.

Greg Wilz: Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Services. (see testimony #1).

Rep. Conrad: Where do they get training now?

Greg Wilz: Right now they get training at his unit and also through regional training schools and once a year the ND Firefighters Assoc. conducts a 3-4 day training session here in Bismarck.

Rep. Conrad: Is it for volunteers?

Greg Wilz: It is for volunteers and full time fire fighters.

Rep. Kilichowski: Who puts on the training?

Would that program still be going on or would this study eliminate that?

Greg Wilz: I do not believe it would eliminate it, but they are completely run by different programs or things that we are trying to accomplish. Over the last couple of years the Homeland Security dollars that have provided a large amount of money for ND to conduct training and exercises has really narrowed the focus and right now as we testify on another bill you will see here today, those dollars are really being geared toward national items. We are trying to get all the entities across the state to be much more efficient and more accessible for our first responder community to get the training that they need when they need it and where they need it.

Rep. Kretschmar: Do you have information where lack of training increased the seriousness of an accident or situation?

Greg Wilz: I would say the answer is yes. Not necessarily has it injured more people, but with the lack of training in my opinion it has created an environment in which that could happen.

Rep. Headland: Did the task force do any research to see there would be any federal money through homeland security that would help fund such a study as this?

Greg Wilz: We have good knowledge of what we are able to use homeland security dollars for and in our opinion the grants that we receive now are not acceptable to be used for this type of thing.

Rep. Klemin: The bill we are looking at includes all emergency responders not just first responders. Could other responders such as the Red Cross, participate and to what extent.

Greg Wilz: Clearly the Red Cross and the Lutheran Disaster Services, Salvation Army are all a part of the first responders and part of the solutions today.

Rep. Corey Mock: Could we not use existing facilities such as Grand Forks?

Greg Wilz: We did and there are a lot of good facilities out there. We are not advocating that they close or be managed other than by local, but we do think they do need to be tied into a centralized level to be able to support in time of emergency to be available for first responders across the state.

Rep. Corey Mock: The academy is what location of idea?

Greg Wilz: I don't know if we have an idea. I think that is what the study needs to do. Is it just managerial where we bring everything together on a location somewhere for people to contact?

Rep. Jerry Kelsh: This sounds like a worthy idea. What bothers me is that it does not seem to have enough priority to be included in anyone's budget. Why could it not be included and it introduced by the Legislative Counsel and who would study it?

Greg Wilz: I believe in the state of ND we have been lax in investing in this for quite a while. We have so many priorities in the agency now it did not hit the budget since it was not specifically tied to our agency. That academy would not benefit our agency, but it benefits all services setting behind it like the fireman, law enforcement and first responders. It is a great bill. I think the Legislative Counsel could take on the study however, we have had some

experience in our agency and with some of the associations that we have been working with. The \$100,000 was based upon some study's that were on going at the time. One we did for \$65,000 and another one for \$80,000. Clearly the Dept. of Emergency Services does not want to singly so it.

Rep. Koppelman: Are there not FEMA guidelines existing to use instead of having to do a study?

Greg Wilz: There are practices out there. The task force took a look at those. There are so many big differences between ND and other states. We looked at So. Dak. They have a brand new academy in Pierre that is open for all their first responders.

Rep. Koppelman: Could not the study be done by just having a meeting with the state wide personnel instead of a study?

Greg Wilz: I do not know if we need \$100,000 but my experience with our agency and what it has on our plate now we can not spend a lot of time with something like this.

Rep. Zaiser: Homeland Security has layer upon layer to do something. My concern is that sometimes this kind of thing can get in the way of progress.

Greg Wilz: When the recommendation was made to the committee it was not made to where the \$100,000 should go. Frankly this study needs to occur whether the Sheriff's Assoc does it or the Firefighters Assoc.

Rep. Zaiser: Do we need to create an academy and what training and who is going to be involved?

Greg Wilz: There is no place for them to go now locally in the state in their towns if they need to do training or exercises.

Chairman Wrangham: Who selected the members of the task force?

Greg Wilz: We asked each association and agency to pick the members. Rep. Porter recommended that we reach out to these and include other response organizations as well.

Chairman Wrangham: So you do not know if there was some consideration for the public at large on the task force?

Greg Wilz: they were public meeting they could attend, even if they were not on the task force.

Lois Hartman, Executive Director: (see testimony #2).

Rep. Koppelman: Define the facility whether academy or not. Also would like to know about the training that would be used.

Lois Hartman: Academy is a multi-type training facility that you could use in the community. This would bring people together in training and ND. We do not have a big facility or capability right now in the state that would meet our needs . My wish for the study is that it would encompass an academy for this use.

Rep. Zaiser: Assuming the study is completed and it called for this level of participation and facility; how do you envision paying for that?

Lois Hartman: I have not had the capability or time to do national searches for grand funds. My experience from other states that have these multi-training facilities there has been federal, state, community dollars involved in it to make it work.

Rep. Zaiser: Where would the lions share come from?

Lois Hartman: We are not sure.

Rep. Corey Mock: Working with community based programs and regional facilities, in the event that this academy is more of a manageability program, what would the operation costs be? Do you have any idea? What is the cooperative attitude?

Lois Hartman: We have an agreement with the ND Firefighters Assoc. with everyone that visits their facility when they use it for regional training and they welcomed that. We do pay a usage fee to help get their costs back.

Rep. Conrad: With the ND Firefighters, is this study going to go into the planning?

Lois Hartman: Absolutely. I have said this is not strictly for firefighters. As I have traveled in other states to see how they used their facility as the fire responders have worked training together they have a better working relationship.

Rep. Kilichowski: Are they mandated?

Lois Hartman: They are federal standards. They are not mandated, but if you want the federal grant dollars you will comply with these standards.

Rep. Hatlestad: How many regional training facilities do you have now?

Lois Hartman: We have Fargo, Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Minot and Dickinson.

Chairman Wrangham: No opposition.

No neutral

We are going to closed the hearing, but I did speak with Rep. Porter and he will be submitting further information to the committee since he was Chairman of the Interim Committee.

Hearing closed.

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill No. HB 1056

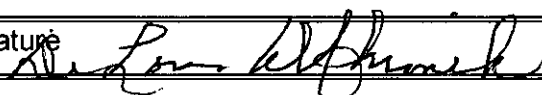
House Political Subdivisions Committee

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Hearing Date: January 15, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 7102

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Wrangham reopened the hearing on HB 1056.

Rep. Klemin: I am not sure what the \$100,000 is going to do so I am uneasy about section 2 of the appropriation part. Maybe someone else can help me out with this.

Rep. Koppelman: My recall this money was included in the adjutant general's budget. My question is I think there might be some grant money out there and think we are getting the cart before the horse.

Rep. Kaiser: I think there was confusion on the facility or the feasibility of process. I do believe homeland security has money available someplace.

Rep. Klemin: I think it should be a legislative counsel study as opposed to an agency study? Maybe we should just amend it to delete section 2 and turn this into a legislative counsel study as opposed to an agency study? I thought I heard they were not excited about it being a legislative counsel study because they felt they would not have the knowledge.

Chairman Wrangham: The cost of the study came from the legislative counsel study.

Rep. Kilichowski: We heard all three bills; HB 1056, 1055, and 1054 and they stated 1056 was the third on their rating.

Rep. Koppelman: I can support a legislative study but this bill came from an interim legislative committee so the committee has looked at this issue and said we studied it and we think the adjutant should study it and give them some money to do that. Do we fund that or ask appropriations to fund it do we say it was the 6th priority and go that way. They can study this any time they want to within an agency. They do not need a bill.

Do Not Pass Motion Made By Rep. Koppelman Seconded by Rep. Kilichowski

Vote: 12 Yes 1 No 0 absent Carrier: Rep. Koppelman

Hearing closed.

Roll Call Vote #: /

Date: 1-15-09

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1056

House Political Subdivisions

Committee

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Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken

Do Pass

Do Not Pass

Amended

Motion Made By

Rep Koppelman

Seconded By

Rep. Kilichowski

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Rep. Dwight Wrangham, Chairman	✓		Senator Kari Conrad		✓
Rep. Craig Headland, Vice Chairman	✓		Senator Jerry Kelsh	✓	
Rep. Patrick Hatlestad	✓		Senator Robert Kilichowski	✓	
Rep. Nancy Johnson	✓		Senator Corey Mock	✓	
Rep. Lawrence Klemin	✓		Senator Steve Zaiser	✓	
Rep. Kim Koppelman	✓				
Rep. William Kretschmar	✓				
Rep. Vonnie Pietsch	✓				

Total (Yes) 12 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment

Rep Koppelman

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1056: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Wrangham, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (12 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1056 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

HB 1056

#1

TESTIMONY – HB1056
HOUSE COMMITTEE – POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS
JANUARY 8, 2009
BY GREG WILZ
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Greg Wilz. I am the Deputy Director of the Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) and Director of Homeland Security for the state of North Dakota. Today I am here as a representative of the task force established at the request of the interim Public Safety Committee. The Public Safety Committee asked that the task force be established to request improvements to emergency services by adding organizational changes, system upgrades, process or protocol changes and statutory changes to ensure the future viability and capability of emergency services in North Dakota. Fifteen organizations were represented on the task force and are listed on the back of this testimony. My intent is to provide background information as was discussed within the task force and not to take an agency position on HB 1056.

The task force concluded there is a definite need in North Dakota for improved responder training statewide. In order to meet this goal, members of the task force felt the most efficient, cost beneficial method to implement consistent levels of performance now and in the future is to provide an academy with the necessary equipment, training areas, and mobile curriculums to support the needs of all responder disciplines.

First responders are required to be more knowledgeable and technically proficient to meet the public safety demands of citizens. In North Dakota, we have great people meeting the challenge to serve as responders and fine agencies and associations providing good training but there are deficits. A large number of responders are simply not equipped with the necessary training to meet expected standards. Into the future, the state will be forced to rely upon fewer emergency services personnel due to demographics, an aging population, and cultural changes resulting in a rapidly diminishing volunteer base.

HB 1056 authorizes a study of the feasibility and desirability of such a facility without preconceived ideas concerning its physical design, location, and management. The study is intended to determine the best course of action to secure an array of training options ranging from entry to advanced certification levels for North Dakota's 15,000 fulltime and volunteer responders. The study will also consider if the concept would provide an optimal setting to introduce cross discipline training in which personnel from fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and specialties such as bomb squads train with one another to engender a real understanding of the complexities involved in response efforts in emergencies and disasters of significant magnitude.

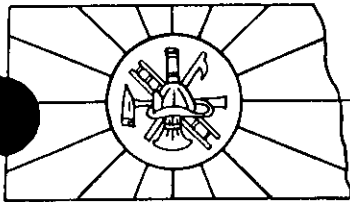
Consolidating efforts to develop and study a comprehensive plan for a responder training facility is a sensible approach to determine the efficacy of providing training for first responders.

Thank you, I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Task Force Membership

N.D. Department of Emergency Services
N.D. Division of Homeland Security
N.D. Division of State Radio
N.D. Police Chiefs Association
N.D. Sheriffs Association
N.D. Fire Chiefs Association
N.D. Metro Chiefs Association
N.D. Emergency Medical Services Association
N.D. Healthcare Association
N.D. Emergency Management Association
N.D. National Guard
N.D. 911 Association
N.D. Public Health Association
N.D. Highway Patrol
N.D. Bureau of Criminal Investigation

#2



Organized June 4, 1884. Incorporated January 20, 1901.

North Dakota Firefighter's Association

P.O. Box 6127 • Bismarck, ND 58506-6127

Phone: 701-222-2799

Fax: 701-222-2899

HB1056 Lois Hartman Executive Director

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Political Subdivision Committee, my name is Lois Hartman. I am the Executive Director and State Training Director of the North Dakota Firefighter's Association. I appear before you today in support of HB1056.

The North Dakota Firefighter's Association supports a study to determine the need of a joint emergency services training facility. The fire service community and NDFA are currently visiting with BSC concerning the need for an academy based program. Therefore, we welcome this study and expect that it will provide the impetus to develop a fire service training facility along with the educational foundation for those wishing to enter this career field.

Mr. Chairman, I urge a do pass on HB1056. I would be happy to answer any questions you or the committee may have.

Thank You