

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College**  
**Fire Science Advisory Committee Meeting In person F2F**  
**November 18, 2024**

Present: Jeff Vanderwiere, Portage Public Safety Deputy Chief, Jairus Baird, Kalamazoo Township Fire Chief, Michael Phelps, Van Buren County Education for Employment Instructor; Kalamazoo Public Safety Chief Ryan Tibbets, and Karen Rivard, KVCC Faculty, Director LE/CJ.

1. The last meeting's minutes were approved.
2. The committee decided Karen Rivard would continue as the Chairperson of this Advisory Board and all declined the option of having a co-chairperson.
3. Director Rivard reviewed the Advisory Board process and explained that we will need to have two Advisory Board meetings each year to comply with KVCC's requirements. The board decided to hold the Spring meeting via Zoom and the Fall meeting will be in person. The next meeting will be on [April 16, 2025, via Zoom](#).
4. The committee discussed the current Fire Science for credit course delivery. Director Rivard described the student feedback for fully online delivery as overwhelmingly positive and that courses would remain fully online.
5. Director Rivard advised the board about KVCC's Fire Academy fully transitioned to include Live Fire Evolutions and the successful completion of our second academy. The board was supportive of this continued operation. The board discussed strategies to market the Academy and the Fire Science Program.
6. Director Rivard advised the completion of the Fire Academy and the result of 9 recruits completing and advised their information for future employment opportunities.
7. The board was asked for specific training ideas or skill areas that need improvement and the following was provided:
  - a. Chief Vanderwiere suggested a leadership course for firefighters. He is experiencing proficient hands-on skills on the fireground from his firefighters but they lack baseline leadership skills that could positively impact employee longevity.
    - i. Director Rivard suggested the implementation of a leadership structure in the Fire academy, the academic courses, and the development of an in-service leadership course. The board was supportive of these suggestions.
  - b. Chief Tibbets described observing new firefighter recruits need to improve on their mechanical ability as students.
    - i. Director Rivard listened to the boards' input on this topic and will provide feedback and ideas at the next Advisory Board meeting in April 2025.

End of meeting.