

# Connecticut State Firefighters Association

## Education Committee

### Meeting minutes

July 24, 2008 – 19:00

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:08 with the following representatives present:

Burrville Fire School – Richard Winn  
Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Al Hawkins, Les Shull, Scott Burton, Eric Deschamps  
Fairfield Regional Fire School – Chris Tracy  
Hartford County Regional Fire School – Chet Haber, Jim Baldis  
Middlesex County Regional Fire School – Fred Dudek, Jay Woron  
New Haven Fire Academy – Chuck Howitt  
Stamford Regional Fire School – Tony Conte  
Valley Fire Chiefs' Regional Fire School  
Wolcott State Fire School – Paul Perrotti  
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – James Wilkinson, Rich Nicol  
Connecticut Fire Academy – Jeff Morrissette, Tom McGowan  
Guest: Geoff Herald - Danbury Fire Department  
Guest: Sub-Committee on Curriculum Standardization - Cathy Goetz

Minutes of the June meeting were distributed. Motion by Rich Nicol seconded by Chet Haber to accept the minutes. Motion Carried.

### 1. Status of properties acquisitions

Jay Woron reported that he and Chief Ouellette will attend the next city council meeting to discuss the transfer of the former Army property. They hope for a transfer of the property in August.

Eastern Connecticut Fire School - Former Rogers Manufacturing facility. Al Hawkins reported that the purchase agreement has been approved by both parties. DPW is waiting on state affidavits on campaign contributions and non-discrimination laws and policies of Rogers board of directors. Those are scheduled to be completed by the end of July.

Valley Fire Chiefs Regional Fire School - The second appraisal on the Beacon Falls property is due on August 8. A dialogue has begun between the DPW property acquisitions group and the property owner. A state traffic control permit will be required.

Hartford County design - The state property review board is scheduled to vote on approval on July 31.

### 2. Other projects status

#### - bonding commission activity

Bond Commission meeting scheduled for August 4, 2008 will reportedly authorize \$150,000 for the preliminary design for the Fairfield and Burrville fire schools. The next anticipated bond funding requirements will be for funds to purchase property for the Eastern Connecticut Fire School and the Valley Fire Chiefs' Regional Fire School.

New Have Regional Fire Academy - Design is proceeding on schedule.

### 3. Certification update - Tom McGowan

Tom McGowan reported on the progress to date by the Certification Office toward the NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operational certification programs. The Pro-Board and IFSAC need to weigh in. The direction has the support of the Education Committee and the Career Fire Chiefs' Association.

There is a draft set of practical skills assessment sheets. The written assessment will be dual level including 30 Awareness level questions and 70 Operational level questions. Each section will be scored separately with a 70 percent score necessary to pass each section. A failure of a student will require a subsequent set of tests consisting of a 50 question Awareness assessment and a 100 question Operational assessment.

Firefighters already certified to the Firefighter I level will be able to enter into the certification at the Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operational levels. Tom feels that the Hazardous Materials assessment should come near the beginning of the Firefighter I program. The concept that he is planning will provide for a practical skills evaluation consisting of a JPR designed for 4 to 5 students in a scenario designed to evaluate 10 to 15 skills sheets. Tom added that some of the skills assessed would place the system at odds with the Connecticut Department of Labor regulations. Evidence collection will also be an evaluated skill even though this function would fall within the purview of law enforcement and the fire marshal's office in Connecticut. Tom distributed draft copies of the skills evaluation sheets.

Tom advised that the Certification Office is considering a Train the Trainer for existing staff to get them certified to the Hazardous Materials Operational level. Tom also discussed the number of suggested contact hours determined to be appropriate for the desired competencies. Based upon the 2008 edition of NFPA 472, Tom feels that 48 to 50 hours would be necessary to gain competencies to the Awareness and Operational levels. The decontamination component would be used upon the state response team version of the technical decontamination.

Tom also noted that the Brady/IFSTA, Delmar, and Jones & Bartlett curriculum all adequately cover the hazardous materials subject matter. Specific skills required to meet the standard include:

- Level B suits with SCBA donned outside the suit
- SCBA donned with structural firefighter PPE
- Evidence preservation and sampling ( $\pm 6$  skill sheets)
- Metering based on the DEMHS metering packages
- Illicit drug lab awareness
- Victim rescue and recovery

Scenarios being considered for evaluating these skills include:

1. Transportation incident (driver down away from vehicle)
2. Industrial Accident (employee missing)
3. Bio-Chemical dispersion (pesticide exposure / criminal activity with several victims)
4. Illicit drug lab (Residence with attached garage)
5. 20# propane cylinder leaking in a vehicle
6. Small aircraft with fire
7. University Lab. (alpha particle release)

Tom also advised that all new programs would be tested to the new standard with the following exceptions: Cromwell, Harford, Burrville - all will be tested to the old standard.

The new Firefighter I training will require the successful certification to the Hazardous Materials Operational level prior to eligibility for testing to the Firefighter I certification.

Tom has evaluated the volume of students for evaluation based upon the past couple of years of data gathered by the C.F.P.C. Statewide there are 600 - 1000 Firefighter I students certified. Tom feels that the evaluations can be accomplished for 30 students in 6 hours. The text considered for reference is the IFSTA Hazardous Materials Operations, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Tom also spoke about the equipment necessary to accomplish this evaluation. He estimates that three sets of decontamination equipment can be purchase for approximately \$21,000. Les Shall distributed a list of comparable equipment that could probably be purchased for approximately \$2,100. for sufficient equipment to set up three decontamination stations.

Tom also reported that the Certification Office is not intending to evaluate CPR and first aid skills. Although these skills are included in the new NFPA 1001 standard, they are considered as skills that are subject to determination of inclusion into a training program based on the local authority having jurisdiction. In the case of Connecticut this AHJ would effectively be the local fire department.

The third level of student being considered is the non-fire service student as one of general government, law enforcement and EMS.

Tom expressed an interest in attending the August Education Committee meeting for an update.

#### **8. Standardization / Curriculum Committee**

Cathy Goetz reported on the activity of the sub-committee. There is no clear consensus about which publisher has developed the better product for use in fire service training by the regional fire schools. Stamford is delivering a Recruit Firefighter I and II together using the Brady/IFSTA curriculum. Burrville and the Valley schools are using Jones & Bartlett for Firefighter I programs.

Jay Woron reported that he felt that the Fire Engineering publication should provide a good publication when it becomes available.

#### **9. Other items from membership**

Chief Herald from the Danbury Fire Department was welcomed and asked to describe the training facility operated by the Danbury Fire Department.

The facility consists of a mobile home that has been converted into a classroom and a class A burn building. There is no training tower on the site which is on city owned land with room to expand.

The burn building has recently been repaired and put into service after being off-line for six years. Since the burn building was placed into service several area departments have requested access to the building for in-service training.

Danbury is a member of the Housatonic Valley Council of Governments. Danbury is also the home of the largest combination fire department in Connecticut. Chief Herald is interested in establishing the Danbury training facility as a regional fire school. There was a lengthy discussion about the process to becoming a regional fire school. Chief Herald was advised to contact his local legislative representatives since they would need to sponsor a bill in the legislature to establish the Danbury facility as a regional fire school and add it to the list of existing schools for funding purposes.

Jay Woron pointed out that the web site CTFIRE-EMS.com has extensive mis-information posted on its web site.

#### **10. Next meeting date**

August 28, 2008 at 19:00 at Wethersfield Company #3.

Submitted by Al Hawkins