

**Meeting of Directors of Regional Fire Schools
and
Special Committee of the C.F.P.C.
and
Representatives of the C.S.F.A.
Wethersfield Co. #1, February 26, 2001**

Present:

Burrville Fire School – Richard Winn
Derby Fire School – Peter Wols
Eastern Ct. Fire School – Lloyd Niles, Al Hawkins
Hartford Fire School – Chet Haber, Tom Post
Middlesex Fire School – Fred Dudek, Jay Warren
Connecticut State Firefighters Assoc. – President Ernest Bunnell, Scott Potter, Ted Schroll
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – John Vendetta, Charles Stankye, Jr., James Wilkinson, Wayne Maheu, Jeff Morrisette

There were no representatives in attendance from the Fairfield, New Haven, or Wolcott Schools.

Jeff Morrisette discussed the January CFPC meeting and the decision by the commission to withhold a letter of support to the Office of Policy and Management for the capital funding bill for the regional schools. Jeff explained that the main issue of the commissioners was that they felt that they needed additional information on the plans of the regional fire schools.

Jeff Morrisette distributed a document entitled “2/26/01 Meeting with Regional Fire Schools” (copy attached). This document describes concerns brought forward by the C.F.P.C. and the commission staff relative to the future funding of the eight regional fire schools. There was a lengthy discussion about the various issues raised in the document.

There was a discussion about the history of the regional school system, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, and the Connecticut Fire Academy. The Hartford County Regional Fire School was formed in 1950, the Eastern Connecticut Fire School in 1954. Commissioner Vendetta asked that information be solicited from each regional fire school for compilation into a reference book for use by the C.F.P.C. He asked that this information include: a history of the organization of each school, a description of the organization and governing body of each school, a listing of the fire departments and other organizations served by each of the regional schools, and an activity report for the most current year available.

Jeff Morrisette pointed out that there was no policy in existence to lend direction by the commission on support or lack of support for construction and support of additional regional fire schools. He felt that this issue should be addressed and a policy should be developed. Al Hawkins pointed out that the commission has had a “hands off” approach to issues relating to the regional fire schools. It is clear that the commission has been sensitive to the local fire service politics and has been reluctant to initiate any communications with any of the regional fire schools. Most communications is handled informally between the commission staff and the directors of the regional schools.

There was a discussion about the shortfall of the operations budgets for the regional fire schools. The regional school directors pointed out that they intentionally did not address the operations budgets at this time since they felt that it would confuse issues regarding the capital budget bill. Commissioner Wilkinson asked how the regional schools make up this shortfall. The answer is to increase in the class tuition costs.

Ted Schroll advised the regional fire school directors that they should direct pressure for support of the regional school capital funding bill to Senator Penn and Representative Dargan.

At the close of the meeting Commissioner Vendetta observed that the questions in the hand-out could not be answered tonight. He stated that several of these issues could not be addressed by this group at all, but that he felt that the regional fire school directors had already identified most of the same issues. He concluded that he was impressed with the amount of work that had been done by the regional school directors. Commissioner Maheu agreed that an impressive amount of work and planning had been accomplished by the regional school directors. He observed that this was the first time in history that the regional school directors and the Connecticut State Firefighters Association had worked jointly in order to plan for a comprehensive funding package.

Submitted by,

Al Hawkins