

Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

Meeting minutes

Meeting – June 27, 2006 – 19:00

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:13 with the following representatives present:

Burrville Fire School – Rich Winn

Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Lloyd Niles, Al Hawkins

Hartford Fire School - Chet Haber

New Haven Regional Fire Academy – Bill Seward

Wolcott Regional Fire School – Jim Tzraski

Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – Rich Nicol, Jim Wilkinson

Connecticut State Firefighters Association – Ted Schroll, Charles Stankye, Jr.

Guest: Don Ouillette, D.P.W.

No one was present from the following organizations: Fairfield Regional Fire School, Middlesex County Fire School, Stamford Fire Department Regional School, Valley Fire Chief's Regional Fire School, and Connecticut Fire Academy

The minutes of the May 24, 2006 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved – motion by Haber second by Stankye.

1. Status of properties acquisitions

Willimantic site – Don Ouillette reported that the selection committee has made their recommendation relative to the selection of the most desirable site. Their recommendation will be forwarded to Commissioner Fleming tomorrow. If he is in agreement he will direct his acquisitions group to try to negotiate a sales agreement.

Don also reported that there will be no July bond commission meeting. There is a meeting scheduled for August but no other projects in the capital plan will be ready for funding. The Willimantic property purchase amount will probably be releases in September or October.

Derby site – Appraisers will probably be hired in August. It should take about six weeks to generate the appraisals.

Burrville site – Don reported that the D.E.P. bureau chief has agreed to a meeting with D.P.W.

Middlesex site – No additional information available.

Cheshire site – Since the legislative act that passed in the 2004 session provided for the transfer of the Cheshire Corrections property to the Waterbury Area Fire Chiefs Association, the language of that bill would need to be changed if the project was to be part of this initiative. We would need to request that change during a legislative session.

A discussion was conducted about the future plans for the Wolcott and Derby schools with respect to the geography of the Cheshire site, the Oxford site and the existing Wolcott site. Al Hawkins requested that the Waterbury Area Fire Chiefs and the Valley Fire Chiefs meet to coordinate efforts and discuss how the proposed school locations might impact upon the respective service areas of the schools.

2. New Haven Renovation – design

The Property Review Board met on the New Haven project today. DPW probably will be able to begin design by August. A pre-design meeting should take place in mid-August. There is still no M.O.U. executed between New Haven

and the D.P.W. Bill Seward reported that he will continue to put pressure on New Haven administration to execute the M.O.U.

3. Hartford County – design

Hartford County site – Pending a final agreement, the plan is now to add the property for the new burn building and storage building to the existing lease agreement for the Connecticut Fire Academy. DPW will probably be ready to hire a design firm by September or October.

4. Bond Bill status

There does not seem to be any consensus by legislators about the possibility of a bond bill for 2006. It is beginning to look like additional funding for the project will not be available until after the 2007 legislative session. Hopefully the 2007 – 2009 biennial budget will include bond funds to continue the project. Those funds will probably not be available for release until September or October of 2007. Bonding requirements of state agencies are due in September to O.P.M.

Rich Nicol reported that he called the Legislative Finance office this week and spoke with Linda Miller, who has a part in writing the bonding bill. She reported that O.P.M. is not interested in any mid-budget adjustments to the current bond bill. She feels that we should be prepared to request the needed funding through the legislative process during the 2007 legislative session.

Don Ouillette reported that he has the entire \$10 million from the 2004 bond bill allocated toward the various phases of the project.

Rich Nicol asked when the initial \$10 million would be spent. Don estimated that by May 2007 those funds should be expended. By consensus the committee decided to request a meeting with Representative Pawelkiewicz and Orange to develop a strategy and then to try to meet with the Governor.

There was discussion about the possibility of adding 2007 – 2009 required bonding fund to the agency request for the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Lloyd Niles reported that he had discussed the project with Jim Amann. Amann feels that we should go after the remaining \$50 million as one block. We would then be limited by the amount of capital that D.P.W. could spend each year. That amount would probably be close to \$10 million per year.

5. Other items from membership

Don Ouillette reported that the D.P.W. is revisiting their design build process. If Commissioner Fleming agrees to a new design build process management concept it could benefit the completion of this project.

Currently, because of the lack of action by the bonding commission to release designated funds several bids for service have expired before the funds became available (bids over 90 days). Some contractors have begun to express reluctance to pursue state contracts because of these delays. Rich Nicol asked Don if he felt that there would be an adequate number of suitable contractors available to complete the fire school project. Don answered that he did not foresee any problem finding acceptable contractors.

Bill Seward reported that he had received a phone call from staff at the C.F.A. about his quarterly state payment. Ed Bycenski and Fred Piechota had suggested that the check be made out to the city of New Haven. Bill explained that the fire school would probably never see the money if that occurred.

Charles Stankye reported that there had been some confusion about the change within the state budget this year. He thinks that the issue is resolved and that the quarterly checks to the regional fire schools should be cut and mailed out within days.

Bill Seward also reported that the New Haven Regional Fire Academy has historically served about twenty-two surrounding towns. He would like to see discussions by the New Haven County Fire Chiefs about how future training needs for the region could best be met.

Rich Nicol reported that the Career Chiefs Association wants to extend the recruit school to 14 ½ weeks starting September of 2007. They want a full day of practical skills training each week. The general feeling is that the cognitive learning is good but that some students complete the program without acquiring adequate competencies of psychomotor skills.

Rich also reported that Fred Piechota will be making a report back to the C.F.P.C. relative to his recommendations on the time limits for the practical skills testing process.

Rich also reported that following an apparatus accident in New Hartford there has been discussion with Connecticut O.S.H.A. about the roles of junior firefighters. There was a junior firefighter riding on the subject apparatus. The Commission has formed an ad-hoc sub-committee to discuss the issue of what activities are permissible for junior firefighters. Jeff Morrissette along with Commissioners Brady and Kawalski have been discussing the issues with O.S.H.A. representatives.

Jim Wilkinson offered that beyond the legal and regulatory issues that we have a moral obligation to protect young firefighters.

There was a brief discussion about the D.M.V. stand on the “Q” drivers’ license endorsement. Currently the endorsement is not required. The D.M.V. will conduct an examination and issue the endorsement upon request.

The meeting was adjourned at 21:32.

6. Next meeting date

Next meeting date is scheduled for August 24, 2006 at 19:00 at Wethersfield Fire Company #3.

Submitted by:
Al Hawkins, chairman