

Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

Meeting minutes

August 26, 2010

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:12 with the following representatives present:

Burrville Regional Fire School - Rich Winn
Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Al Hawkins, Les Shull
Hartford County Regional Fire School – Mike Jepeal, Jim Baldis
Middlesex County Fire School - Jay Woron
Stamford Regional Fire School - Tony Conte
Wolcott State Fire School - Chris Pepler
Connecticut Fire Academy - Adam Piskura
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – Rich Nicol, Tom McGowan
Connecticut State Firefighters Association - Jim Wilkinson
Guests: D.P.W. - Donald Ouillette
Danbury Fire Department – Mark Omasta

No one was present representing the Fairfield Regional Fire School, New Haven Fire Academy, or the Valley Fire Chiefs' Regional Fire School.

Minutes of the July meeting were distributed for review.

Motion was made by Mike Jepeal second by Rich Winn to accept the July minutes. Motion carried.

1. Status of properties acquisitions

Don Ouillette reported that the DPW is waiting for the probate judge to act on the purchase for the Willimantic property. Local politicians in Beacon Falls have been complaining about the fire school property being removed from the property tax roll.

2. Other projects status

Don reported that the New Haven project is 60% complete. The concrete for the burn building is up to the third story, the multi-use building shell, skin and roof are done. Don suggested that the Education Committee wait until October and hold their meeting at the New Haven facility to view the progress.

Don reported that the bid openings for the Hartford project are scheduled for September 22. He is still hopeful that there could be another bond meeting this year. The August bond commission meeting released funds for municipal school projects and for the Department of Transportation projects.

Don circulated a spreadsheet showing projected bond expenses for the project. The document shows the Wolcott and the Valley projects consolidated into one with a projected cost of \$9 million.

Don urged that all schools exercise caution through the design process to make sure that the needs of the school are carefully considered and articulated and to make sure that the design drawings are consistent with each schools needs.

Burrville Regional Fire School - The environmental remediation is complete. The Department of Environmental Protection staff seem to be pleased with the result.

Jay Woron reported that the city of Middletown has not yet acquired the property in Middletown.

3. Hazardous Materials training

Tom McGowan distributed a packet of information on Firefighter I and Hazardous Materials / WMD test scores for testing administered in 2009 - 2010. He also showed a powerpoint table showing scores on additional testing. The data showed a fairly high pass rate on the Firefighter I testing but a range of scores on the Hazardous Materials / WMD testing that was considerably lower. The regional fire schools, overall had a better pass rate than programs run by unaffiliated instructors. All of these results were significantly poorer than the Firefighter I test scores. Tom went on to discuss the data analysis that he performed on the tests.

Mike Jepeal reported that the hazardous materials training sub-committee wanted to have the ERG introduced into the written exams. Their rationale was that the intent of the Hazardous Materials Awareness was to help develop the students' ability to utilize the ERG as a tool for the initial response to an incident. Their consensus was that the testing should be consistent with that objective.

Tom also pointed out that effective January 1, 2011 that the equipment necessary for the Hazardous Materials / WMD testing will be provided by the host facility.

4. Regional Schools operations budgets

The Education Committee needs to work with staff from Office of Policy and Management and the joint committees of Public Safety and Appropriations to lobby for support for operation funding.

5. Other items from membership

There was a discussion about sites being utilized for practical skills testing for Firefighter I and Hazardous Materials / WMD. Several reports have been circulated that practical skills testing has been adjusted to fit the inadequate facilities that have been provided to accommodate the skills testing. Committee members were concerned that there was an impartial, independent testing environment should be provided for all candidates.

Jim Wilkinson reported that Chief Flynn has been developing a list of questions intended to help the fire service evaluate gubernatorial candidates with respect to their commitment to support for the fire service. It was recommended that this committee try to work with Chief Flynn to attempt to work with this format to see how candidates feel about support for fire service training.

6. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be on September 23, 2010 at Wethersfield Company #3 at 19:00.
Motion by Jim Baldis second by Mike Jepeal to adjourn at 21:17.

Submitted by Al Hawkins