

**Connecticut State Firefighters Association**  
**Educational Committee Meeting**  
**Willimantic, September 6, 2001**

**Present:**

Burrville Fire School – Richard Winn, Robert Norton  
Derby Fire School – Peter Wols  
Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Lloyd Niles, Al Hawkins  
Hartford Fire School – Chet Haber, Tom Post  
Middlesex Fire School – Fred Dudek, Jay Woron  
New Haven Fire Academy – William Seward  
Connecticut State Firefighters Association – Neil Burrows, Charles Stankye, Jr., Ted Schroll  
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – Commissioner, James Wilkinson  
Connecticut Fire Academy – State Fire Administrator, Jeff Morrissette

**Guests:**

State Representative, Walter Pawelkiewicz  
D.P.W. Project Manager, Donald Ouillette.

There were no representatives in attendance from the Joseph S. Elias Fire Training Center of Fairfield or the Wolcott State Fire School.

**Fire school study**

Donald Ouillette introduced himself as the D.P.W. Project Manager for the study of the regional fire school facilities. He explained the process that will be used to facilitate the study. The regional fire schools will be treated as state agencies by D.P.W. during the project.

1. The first step will be to conduct a scoping meeting with this committee. This meeting will be to determine the needs of the regional fire schools.
2. Next will be the development of a “Request for Quotation” to solicit quotations from various consulting firms to conduct the study.
3. The request will be advertised, as well as distributed to any consultants that this committee wishes to consider.
4. After responses are received by D.P.W. a selection committee will be assembled. One person from the educational committee will be able to sit on the selection committee.
5. The selection committee will review all proposals submitted by consultants. After review the list will be shortened to four to six firms.
6. These four to six firms will be given an opportunity to make a presentation to the selection committee and answer questions about their services.
7. After a successful consultant is selected, Don Ouillette will negotiate a fee for services.

Don urged that the Educational Committee try to narrow the scope of services since this will help to contain the associated costs. Directors of each fire school should communicate their specific needs. All attempts will be made to hire a consultant with experience in fire service training facilities. Don advised that he has personnel available to serve on the selection committee that have fire service background. The designated funding has not yet been released by the state bonding commission. **(NOTE: The bonding commission released the funding on September 28, 2001)**

September 6, 2001

Bill Seward asked if Don believed that the \$200,000 would be adequate to complete the study. Don said that he thought that it would if the scope of work was detailed sufficiently.

There was a discussion about the time required to facilitate the study. There are specific time requirements for advertising for the R.F.Q. and for the amount of time for consultants to respond. The selection process will add additional time, and the negotiation and award of the final contract will begin the study. The amount of time required by the consultant selected will need to be determined.

- Develop RFQ - ± 30 days
- Advertise / allow for responses - ± 30 days
- Contractor selection - ± 30 days
- Award contract – to be determined
- Duration of project – to be determined

With the projected timetable it is probable that a contract will not be in place until mid April 2002. This will create a problem since the state legislature is in session February through May.

Walter Pawelkiewicz pointed out that several legislators felt that the regional fire schools needed a professional analysis to determine their actual needs and the associated costs. A realistic time-line also needs to be developed. Once this is complete the results will need to be submitted back to the legislature for the needed funding. Walter would like to see the study report available for the next legislative session, which begins in February, 2002.

Don Ouillette felt that the study would take too long to be available for the upcoming legislative session. He added that an interim report may be made available to be submitted for funding of some short-term projects. This could help to maintain the momentum of the funding effort. The repair to the New Haven burn building was cited as one possible example. Don offered that the more detailed the plan, the more likely that the funding would be forthcoming.

Walter Pawelkiewicz added that immediately after the study report is completed, a detailed plan including the budget and time frame needed to be completed. He advised that site acquisition could take as long as two and a half years. He also pointed out that the state legislators realize the urgency of our requests but we need to try to keep up the momentum.

Don explained the process to acquire property if state funding is involved. The DEP properties review board needs to evaluate the subject site. This board would need to certify compliance with the transfer act, which included an environmental assessment. The review board would oversee the entire transaction process. Don is unsure where the regional fire schools fit into the state property acquisition process since we are not public agencies. Don also advised that the D.P.W. served as a clearing house for surplus state property. This property is offered to other state agencies before it is sold. Representative Pawelikiewicz felt that remaining within the established state purchasing framework would allow for a desirable system of checks and balances necessary to assure appropriate use of public funds.

Tom Post asked who would own the new, or newly renovated training facilities. It was generally felt that ownership would be retained by the existing governing bodies.

September 6, 2001

Ted Schroll advised that the Educational Committee should strive to retain unity. We all need to disseminate the same information. He pointed out that someone had approached him the prior week who is well respected within the Connecticut Fire Service and said that they did not agree with what is happening at the Willimantic School. Ted also urged that Walter Pawelkiewicz remain the single point of contact to the state legislature.

Don feels that the Educational Committee should attempt to develop a generic plan for training facilities. A substantial amount of cost savings could be realized if the basic burn buildings, training towers, and other training mock-ups were a standard design. Don also suggested that a design-build contract be negotiated during the construction phase. He indicated that with a suitable site, construction could be completed in approximately two years. The selection process for a design-build contractor is nearly the same as the selection process for the consultant for the study. Design-build contracts are not awarded to the lowest bid, they are awarded to the lowest cost for an acceptable design.

Neil Burrows brought up that three schools would need to be relocated. He questioned whether the school directors should work on site selection or if the consultant would address this issue. Don mentioned that there have been several "brownfield projects" completed in the state. These projects reclaim former manufacturing sites with contamination present. Don said that there are funds available to reclaim these sites. He also observed that open spaces are more difficult to acquire.

Don also agreed to research the permitting required for burning at new training facilities. There was a brief discussion about possible site engineering design to control emissions. Don also addressed the issue of water runoff. He did not feel that this would be a major problem since the technology exists for full water reclamation.

Neil Burrows advised that as we proceed with the capital planning we need to develop a realistic budget for maintenance and operations. Neil also mentioned that there are parties in the state that he believes are attempting to acquire state funding for construction of a fire school. He also pointed out that although early stages of our plan would fund the building of three new fire schools, the long term plan should include funding to build improvements at the remaining schools to bring them all to the same level of design.

Submitted by,

Al Hawkins