



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION



TEL: (860) 627-6363

Jeffrey J. Morrisette
State Fire Administrator

34 PERIMETER RD. WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT 06096

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 26, 2005 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Peter Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Cantor, Johnson, Nicol, Ouellette, Kowalski, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Staff members Auclair, Lewandowski, Lewis, Morrisette, O'Neil, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Mr. Morrisette welcomed Robert Walsh, Deputy Chief of Hartford Fire Department who was formally appointed by Governor Rell yesterday to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control representing the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut (UPFFA) replacing Daniel Milewski. He also welcomed back Commissioner Johnson who had been ill and was recuperating in Florida.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to approve the minutes of the March 29, 2005 meeting. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cantor to approve the staff report for the period of March 15, 2005 through April 14, 2005. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget Update – Mr. Morrisette stated there was nothing new to report regarding our proposed Budget for the new Biennium. We received notice that the Agency will be reimbursed by FEMA for snow removal the declared snow emergency back in January. He thanked Peter O'Neil for his assistance with paperwork and follow-up. Also as reported last month, we received the preliminary audit report and have responded as required. We are waiting for the integration of our formal response into their final report. He has notified the Chairman that the Auditor would make available an exit interview if so desired.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Mr. Morrisette stated he was on vacation last week and did not attend the meeting and asked Commissioner Nicol and Stankye who were in attendance to report.

Commissioner Nicol reported that there is a problem with land acquisition in Willimantic. They made an offer to the property owner who is reluctant to discuss the issue and it now looks like Willimantic may have to search for new property. The Hartford County Fire School Property is still on hold and he was informed by the State Fire Administrator that there is a meeting scheduled at Department of Transportation tomorrow. The Wolcott School has possible sites in Cheshire and Waterbury. It appears the Waterbury site is preferred. Middlesex is working on their site. Derby Fire School is still pursuing property. Fairfield and Burrville are on existing sites, but Burrville has to put together the lease with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). New Haven Fire School is on existing land and they have selected an architect and are discussing the fee structure for the project design. It may be a six month period for the design work and they should go online for construction sometime next year. He said that Project Manager, Donald Ouillette indicated at the meeting that New Haven, Willimantic and Hartford Regional Schools will be separate design projects and the rest of the Regional Schools will be grouped together as the funding becomes available. Also, there was a brief discussion on the fatality that occurred in Wolcott.

Commissioner Stankye added that the Committee is still planning to pursue another ten million dollars in bond money to keep the projects moving along.

Mr. Piskura reported that Program Manager, Mark Salafia is our subject matter expert for National Incident Management Systems (NIMS). He said he is on two Department of Emergency Management Homeland Security (DEMHS) Committees one of which is a NIMS Committee that developed a NIMS compliance training matrix for Fire Service personnel in the State of Connecticut. A draft of ranks, functions and recommended NIMS compliance education was distributed with the caveat that it is not for redistribution. He said this is not about the Connecticut Fire Academy. It is about the Fire Service. He reminded attendees that this document is just a draft and he does not have permission to formally release it at this time until the DEMHS Committee approves it.

Commissioner Johnson arrived at 10:05 a.m.

A question and answer period followed.

Moving to agenda item 4c.) Service Voucher Update – Mr. Morrissette reported that letters were mailed to the 165 eligible fire companies in early March outlining the procedure for this years' round of funding which is \$530 per eligible fire company. They were requested to notify us no later than April 8th selecting the option of either a voucher, like last year or as a direct payment. As of today, only 55 companies have responded. We will send another letter to those companies that have not responded to inform them as stated in the original letter, the money goes away at the end of the fiscal year. The funds have not been officially transferred to our agency as of yet so we're fulfilling the voucher requests, but direct payments will not be made until such time that the funding has been transferred by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Moving to item 5a.) EMS Advisory Board Appointment –Mr. Piskura stated that he has represented the Commission on the EMS Advisory Board for the past seven years. There is a new national scope of practice in its second draft being floated around and because it requires more, it proves to be controversial and this is not just in Connecticut. The EMS scope of practice will be rolling across the United States and will be a discussion item for quite some time. He said he has removed himself from practicing in the field but our Program Manager, Bill Auclair is a practicing Fire Chief, and EMS in his town and is more directly connected to what is going on in what he would call, street delivery. When the time comes for reconfirmation of an agency representative, he suggested the Commission consider appointing Bill Auclair who can participate more in-depth conversations and represent the Commission at the EMS Advisory Board.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette appointing William Auclair to represent the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control at the EMS Advisory Board.

Moving to item 5b.) Hazardous Materials Technician Certification Testing - Mr. Morrisette reported that this item was discussed at last month's meeting and as Commissioners may recall, they passed the new policy as it relates to training and certification for a host of levels. He said it came to our attention the day following Commission action there was training planned by the Fairfield County HAZ MAT Team for the Stamford Fire Department. When the original policy was passed, we had identified two outstanding programs we were aware of. One was Middletown Fire Department which was utilizing the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) for provision of training and the second was the Guilford Fire Department which was already underway again being delivered by Fairfield County HAZ MAT Team. Following the Commission's action we received a number of phone calls from individuals that felt aggrieved. Mr. Morrisette said at that time, he communicated to Assistant Chief McCabe of Stamford Fire Department as to what the Commission action was. He advised him if they felt aggrieved they could either appear before the Commission or send a letter communicating their position. The letter was received last week and is being presented today for review and consideration. He also said he believes it was brought up as a general point of communication at a recent Education Committee meeting.

Commissioner Cantor added that this may not be directly related to the issue on our table but somewhat indirectly and the reason that the Community Technical Colleges has a place on this board is because several years ago, the Community Technical Colleges ventured forward on establishing public safety training academies to help their regions and the towns therein. Stamford falls into the jurisdiction of the Norwalk Community College. He said they've invested a full-time staff and an additional part-time staff to assist local agencies such as the Stamford Fire Department with advanced training needs. They've also worked with the Fairfield County HAZ MAT Team in delivering this course several times over the last few years and they were not aware that this course was planned and scheduled to be delivered. This is a concern to the Community Technical Colleges in that we're spending public tax payer's money to staff these programs and this

kind of Academy. As such, Norwalk Community Technical College is somewhat taken back that this action happened and while they'll deal with it locally it is something that has to be put on the record.

A discussion period followed.

Following the discussion, Mr. Morrisette remarked that at last month's meeting following the vote, the issue of policy implementation was discussed. He believes it was the Commission's desire to implement the policy immediately upon passage. The problem that presented was that it did not give us any time to communicate what action took place so he is sensitive to this particular program. He said implementing the policy immediately placed us in a difficult position. We were told this program has been in the planning process for a lengthy amount of time.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to deny the action requested in the letter from Stamford Fire Department and send a letter to Assistant Chief McCabe offering to meet with them to provide options such as partnership with either the Community Technical Colleges or the CFA that is consistent with our philosophy of offering classes. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Wilkinson asked relative to the issue we just voted on if we should send a letter to the Fairfield County HAZ MAT Team advising them of the change in policy so they are notified so they don't actively solicit additional presentations.

Mr. Morrisette said a meeting needs to take place first.

Mr. Piskura added that looking into the future on the same subject DEMHS has made a decision to take \$1.2 million dollars and make it available to the six designated regional HAZ MAT Response Teams and the Bomb Squads. We've already begun work with New Haven Area Special Hazards (NHASH) and Fairfield County is also one of these teams so we're already being approached by these teams to satisfy their training and education requests. He said at a meeting run by DEMHS/UCONN, he brought up the subject on behalf of some Chiefs that had approached him wanting to use some of the federal money to train HAZ MAT Technicians within their departments and his presentation received no merit. The decision was already made before the group was empanelled that this money was all going to the regional HAZ MAT Teams.

Commissioner Ouellette asked if the six Regional HAZ MAT Teams are being tasked to do emergency response to an area or are they being tasked with training.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that they are tasked with emergency response.

A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Piskura reported for informational purposes that Chief McGrath, of Stamford Fire Department contacted him discuss Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). The Chief

shared with him that some of the Fairfield County Fire Chiefs got together and decided that Meriden is too far to go for CPAT so they are investigating the purchase of either a fixed or mobile CPAT testing equipment and that he was currently looking for warehouse space in the Stamford area. Mr. Piskura said we've been invited to submit our specifications and needs for an indoor CPAT test as part of the renovations of the New Haven Regional Fire School should funding be available. We will know whether we're apart of that or not once the Architect prices whatever design was approved. It was very nice of the New Haven Regional Fire School to think of us by incorporating our requirements into that need and it made the Chief of Stamford happy.

Commissioner Johnson asked what is the minimum square footage needed.

Mr. Piskura remarked twelve thousand (12,000) square feet.

Commissioner Cantor added that in the continued interest of building partnerships, Norwalk Community College has been approved by the state Bonding Commission to put a new health and science technology building up on the Stamford side of their campus. That facility will also have a physical fitness training center built into it. He said they've reached out to the public safety folks in the area hoping that they'll come to the drawing board in helping them design the new public safety academy facility within that building. This project is already at the architect stage and will be opening in 2007.

Mr. Piskura offered to email the specifications he sent to New Haven to Commissioner Cantor. There is also a height requirement in one portion to extend a 24 ft ladder and the surface has to be continuous with no transition surfaces. He said that Commissioner Cantor's initiative might be a solution to their issue.

Commissioner Cantor said he would be happy to sit down and discuss the issue with the Chief of Stamford Fire Department.

Moving to item 5c.) May Meeting Location – Mr. Morrissette stated that we've discussed the possibility of having the May meeting at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) on May 31st. A Legislator has to reserve the meeting room as the Legislature is still in session. A preliminary request has been made to secure a room and he asked if that is something the Commission wanted us to follow through on.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Ouellette and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to allow the State Fire Administrator to either coordinate having the May Commission meeting at the LOB or at the CFA. Motion carried.

Moving to item 6 –Comments from the public – There was none.

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Commissioner Nicol asked for an update on Fire Service Day at the Capitol.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that the Joint Council's Fire Service Day at the Capitol will be May 11th. He said a notice is already published in the Legislative Bulletin for Legislators but we haven't done much in terms of advertising to the Fire Service. He suggested that Commissioners ask their organizations to participate and provide representatives to staff tables with handout information and giveaways. The Joint Council still needs to decide if they want to develop an issues brochure like they've done in the past. It was also discussed at the last meeting to have coffee and more in the morning.

Commissioner Nicol asked about the status of the meeting to establish a Fire Service Caucus.

Commissioner Kowalski reported that we met with the representatives from the Pennsylvania Fire Service Institute who traveled to Connecticut to inform us how to establish a Legislative Fire Service Caucus. He said they were very informative and it was excellent time well spent. We explained the Joint Council concept to them and they said that was our beginning to forming a Caucus and that's how they started. They gave us a list of suggestions for our review if we decide to move forward with it. Also the Congressional Fire Service Institute is interested once we've established some partnerships with legislative folks on the legislative list. They are interested in coming to help us set up the program. He said over the next year or so we can progress to the level in which we'll have a lot of assistance from the legislative staff available to us and we'll press on.

Mr. Piechota reported that a letter was sent to Chairman Carozza from a Danbury firefighter speaking on behalf of a few Danbury firefighters who are currently enrolled in a Fire Officer I (FO-I) class conducted by the CFA. These few persons are not certified as Fire Service Instructor I (FSI-I) at this current time. The standard for FO-I today requires that a person be certified as FSI-I before they can be certified as a FO-I. Due to some scheduling conflicts, the Danbury Fire Department contracted with the CFA to do FO-I first and follow with FSI-I in September. This individual is asking the Commission to make an exception for a few people to be able to take the test for FO-I and we hold their scores until such time as they become certified as FSI-I and then the Commission would release the scores to allow them to be FO-I certified but not for a period to exceed twelve months. He said this is contrary to what we currently do and we do not have a process in place. In the past the Certification Division did hold scores periodically but as we've grown to the fifteen levels that we currently offer, the ramifications of doing that could be fairly large because we have many prerequisite levels that have to be met, it would be very difficult to track. Some options for the Commission if they deny the request is to allow the persons to take a test to the previous edition of the FO-I standard which does not require FSI-I certification and allow that certification to go forward as FO-I based on the previous edition of the standard. When they become certified to FSI-I you could allow them based on their certification to the previous edition of the standard test out to the new edition.

Commissioner Stankye asked if there was a reason for not having the prerequisite course first.

Mr. Lewandowski replied that when Danbury requested the Instructor course we had too many FSI-I classes running and we didn't have the resources to provide the program. At the time, the Training Officer had also requested a FO-I program which we provided. We explained to them that personnel not meeting the prerequisites would not be tested so they were aware of that.

Mr. Piskura added that the Chief was trying to be proactive because they are having promotional exams and he wanted his people trained to FO-I.

A brief discussion followed.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Cantor and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette that the Commission deny the Danbury Fire Department request for testing and extend the offer of a remedial refresher course at no charge.

Mr. Morrissette also reported that we had a number of full-time and part-time staff that participated at the recent TOPOFF 3 Exercise and thanked all those that participated. We were very well represented and overall, the exercise went well from our perspective.

Mr. Piskura informed members that graduation of the Recruit Class is scheduled for May 18th at 1:30 pm at the Air Museum and invited all to attend.

Mr. Piskura also reported that Connecticut Fire Officers Weekend will be held at the National Fire Academy this weekend.

Commissioner Nicol mentioned that a retirement party has been scheduled for Norwalk Fire Chief, Sanford Anderson this Friday and the other for East Haven Fire Chief, Wayne Sandford on May 10th. He said the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association (CFDIA) has a table reserved at Chief Sandford's event and if anyone is interested in sitting at that table they should inform Mr. Piechota.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Ouellette and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:25 AM.

Dated:

April 26, 2005

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Edward F. Haber, Secretary
Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control