



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 JANUARY 27, 2009 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blaschik, Dagon, Kowalski, Nicol, Stankye and Walsh.

Staff members Lewis, McGowan, Morrisette and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Carozza called on State Fire Administrator Morrisette for an introduction of Guests.

Mr. Morrisette asked guests to provide self introductions.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Earl Provencher, Chief of the North Thompsonville Fire Department in Enfield; Ted Schroll, with the Connecticut State Firefighters Association; Fritz Hilbert Chief of the Mystic Fire Department; a nominee to the Commission replacing Commissioner Wilkinson representing the Connecticut State Firefighters Association and Barry Rickert Retired Fire Marshal from Danbury and currently working with the New Milford Fire Marshal's office.

Director of Training Adam Piskura introduced Wayne Rioux Coordinator for the Public Safety Academy (PSA). He asked Mr. Rioux to provide a welcome and a brief orientation to the Commission.

Mr. Rioux welcomed the Commission on behalf of Bruce Douglas of CREC and Principal Bill Jaeger of the Public Safety Academy (PSA). He said he comes from 32 years of law enforcement. He said the PSA is a college prep school that has a theme for public safety. The students that attend the school are interested in going into a field somewhere in the public safety world. He said he's responsible for teaching the public safety training so he tries to spread it as far as public safety will go incorporating nursing, law, fire services, emergency preparedness and management, law enforcement, corrections and homeland security. He said he accomplishes that by bringing in different speakers every month to the PSA to teach the students what each entity is about so they can make an informed decision when they graduate. The school is currently comprised of 6th, 7th, and 9th grades and next year they will go 6th through 10th then 6th through 11th, and then 6th through 12th grade. He said they already have the funding for construction of a brand new school and they are just looking for a location to begin the construction of the school. He said they are currently accepting applications through the 17th of

February. He distributed copies of the school application and asked Commissioners if they had any questions.

Commissioner Stankye inquired as to what the total number of students currently enrolled at the school.

Mr. Rioux replied there are 105 students currently enrolled but next year that number will increase.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the November 25, 2008 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2008 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report October 15, 2008 – November 14, 2008.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the staff report for the period of December 15, 2008 – January 14, 2009. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the staff report for the period of November 15, 2008 – December 14, 2008. Motion carried

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the budget. He said the Governor's budget address is scheduled for February 4th. At this time there is nothing specific to report other than we continue to receive frequent questions from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) related to our agency budget and operations as well as those of the Regional Schools. He said we will find out more as to the status of the agency upon release of the budget. He said we could expect significant cuts and regardless of the status of the agency we are expecting anywhere from 5% to 20% reductions. He said we just had the third Governor's deficit mitigation plan with the continued impending budget deficit. The first set of deficits was addressed but it continues to grow exponentially so there's going to have to be additional budget cutting efforts during the current fiscal year. He said we'll keep Commissioners apprised and we'll have a more detailed report of the impact of the budget at the February meeting. He asked Commissioners if they had any questions.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if we've taken a look at damage assessment should a 20% reduction be imposed on the agency's budget.

Mr. Morrissette said no not at this time and that some of the reductions may be targeted so it would be pre-mature to do so. He said the Commission, as part of its budget reduction option submittal had developed a proposal for a 10% reduction so we know a 20% reduction would be devastating. He also said he doesn't think layoffs are beyond the realm although the Administration is trying to avoid that option. He also said currently the Governor has requested management and confidential employees participate

in a one-day voluntary furlough. Director of Training Piskura, Executive Secretary Lewis and he have already taken or scheduled their furlough day. He also stated that at the last Governor's staff meeting she indicated they would more than likely be seeking additional furlough days without pay.

Mr. Morrissette also reported on one additional item that he had reported on at the last meeting. The agency was directed to request an extension for individuals classified as Temporary Worker Retiree (TWR). He said we have six adjunct instructors that fall under that classification. These are people who are former state employees either with the Commission or other agencies and were hired back as part-time adjuncts. For years, the agency had them misclassified in the state personnel system and when the SmART team took over our HR functions they identified the misclassification as a problem and reclassified them as TWR. Back in December Mr. Morrissette under the direction of DAS SmART submitted a request to the Governor's Office for an extension of service for the six individuals through December 31, 2008. This Personnel Action was approved however we needed to obtain permission for continued service after January 1st. It appears the Governor's office will not grant further approval. This is disappointing in that these are individuals have been significant contributors to the agency for a long time.

Commissioner Nicol asked if that means the Academy will no longer be able to take advantage of their expertise. He also asked whether they will be able to work under a contract.

Mr. Morrissette stated they will not be able work for the Academy because retired state employees are not able to come back as contractors. They will be able to continue to collect whatever retirement pay and benefits may be due them. He said these are long standing employees and we're sensitive to their situation but ultimately this is not a Commission decision.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Nicol stated that the Committee held two meetings since they last met. The first meeting of the Education Committee was December 4, 2008. He reported that the Beacon Falls land sales agreement for purchase has been returned to Department of Public Works (DPW) unsigned. Project Manager Don Ouillette reported that the Secretary of OPM Robert Genuario forwarded a letter to DPW Commissioner Curtis stating that the Beacon Falls purchase was not in the state's best interest to authorize at this time. Commissioner Nicol also reported on the status of the Hartford school that 1.8 acres is required on the north side of Perimeter Road. An additional .66 acres will be included on the south side of Perimeter Road. A letter documenting the agreement should be sent by Department of Transportation (DOT) to DPW. As far as the Eastern Connecticut School Mr. Ouillette reported that there is still no agreement in place between Rogers Corp. and DPW.

Commissioner Nicol also reported on other project status. He said for the New Haven School a meeting is scheduled to complete review of documents prior to bidding the project for construction. The current construction estimate is \$5.3 million. He also reported that for the Burrville and Fairfield Schools Mr. Ouillette stated that it was the DPW staff's understanding that the Fairfield School will be scaled back to a new burn

building and a support building. The expectation is that OPM is planning on holding the cost of the total capital project at the \$28 million level already authorized. He said Mr. Ouillette reported that Commissioner Curtis is expected to meet with the Governor and Secretary Genuario.

He also reported that the members were advised of the scheduled December 11th fire service meeting to discuss legislative items for the forthcoming legislative session. He said a brief discussion was held regarding the Connecticut Fire Academy and Regional Fire Schools mission delineation and the 2009 calendar course offerings at the Regional Schools. Additionally, Commissioner Nicol reported on other items from the membership. He said Danbury fire Chief Geoff Herald reported on a meeting held with Danbury area legislators and the Housatonic Council of Government to discuss the Danbury fire department becoming a Regional School. He also said Director of Certification Tom McGowan presented potential changes to the certification process for Firefighter I and II. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 22nd in Wethersfield.

Commissioner Nicol also reported that he attended an informational meeting that was held at the Legislative Office Building on December 22nd. He said Chet Haber coordinated the meeting through his local Legislators and it was televised by the CTN Network. He said Commissioners can view the hour and half meeting on CTN's website. He said there was a lot of dialogue and most of the major players were in attendance including secretary Genuario of OPM as well as representatives from DPW.

Commissioner Nicol reported on the January 22, 2009 meeting of the Education Committee. He said the property acquisition has fallen apart for the Eastern CT School. Apparently Rogers Corporation has re-advertised their property for \$1.2 million. The state had offered \$1.5 million for the property. He also said it was reported that state Senator Crisco is currently looking into the land agreement issue for the Beacon Falls land. As far as the New Haven School, DPW is planning a February project bidding. The project estimated construction cost is \$5.2 million. For the Hartford School, Mr. Haber reported that a 50% design completion meeting had been scheduled for February 19th. Estimated construction cost is \$5.7 million. Bidding is planned for fall of 2009.

He also reported that CSFA Chairman Al Hawkins stated that he had a recent conversation with state Representative Denise Merrill at which time he requested to consider an additional \$10 million in bonding for the Regional Fire School Capital project. It was reported that some of the state Legislators have been told that the Education Committee has not been clear on what they want to do in regard to the Regional Fire School Capital Project. After a brief discussion it was decided to draft a letter from the Committee including the project metrics and former project Committee votes. He said it was further decided to request a meeting with OPM, DPW and the Governor's office to deliver the letter. He also said Mr. Schroll reported that at the Public Safety Committee meeting held on January 22nd an agenda was passed to allow for bills to be prepared for developing language changes in the current training legislation and bonding bill for the Regional Fire School Capital Project. Also, Mr. Schroll indicated that H.B. 5570 has been introduced for the proposed Danbury Regional Fire

School. Commissioner Nicol also said it was reported that the Danbury fire department officials are working with local state representatives to get their school recognized. The next meeting will be held on February 26th in Wethersfield.

Moving to item 4c.) FY09 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette gave updates regarding status of grant programs. He reported that for the Supplemental Grant program currently there are still 29 fire companies that have not responded to us. He said we've paid out almost \$98,000 to those fire companies that requested checks accounting for about 50% of the funding. He said he wouldn't be surprised if they take away any funding that is left in the next reduction for the current fiscal year and encouraged fire companies to utilize the funding before they lose it.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry-Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrisette reported regarding the Entry-Level Training Reimbursement program that we've currently paid out \$225,599 and have encumbered a total of almost \$355,000 which is about \$200,000 short of what was appropriated after reductions, etc. He said we have about \$200,000 remaining in the fiscal year. He said with the incoming Recruit firefighter training class that should take away about \$100,000 of the funding. He said we're hopeful that we will expend all of the funds which are available because we are still receiving applications from some of the old programs that were completed within the one year time period that the Commission approved.

Commissioner Nicol asked if the encumbered funds include monies for the recent hiring of the firefighter class in Waterbury.

Mr. Morrisette said he doesn't believe so as we haven't received an application as yet from the Waterbury fire department.

Moving to item 4e.) NFPA 1001 and 472 Updates – Mr. Morrisette asked Director of Certification McGowan to provide an update to the Commission. Mr. McGowan reported that there has been great interest by some of the Regional Schools and fire departments so we're busy trying to assist them to organize these. He said he was told this morning by a Commissioner that Fairfield may be about ready to deliver a program and they are looking at somewhere near 200 hours for the combined Firefighter I and II. We would administer a three part testing process for them probably mid-June. Additionally, we've updated the Commission's website for concerns and questions that had been posed from the previous semester. He also said we've added a third PowerPoint presentation on Technical Decontamination from the Certification division's perspective providing insight into what we would be looking at for a six to eight step process for wet decontamination.

Moving to item 4f.) EMS Advisory Board Vacancy – Mr. Morrisette said we discussed last meeting the vacancy of a Commission representative on the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) Advisory Board. He said he believes Commissioner Brady had indicated some interest however he didn't feel his schedule was going to be conducive to fulfill that appointment. Mr. Morrisette said we have a few key staff members that could fill that role if Commissioners schedules will not allow their

participation. He said we do need to fill the vacancy as soon as possible to ensure agency input.

Chairman Carozza asked if there was any objection to the Commission filling the vacancy with a staff member. There were none.

Moving to item 5a.) 2009 Legislative Schedule- Mr. Morrissette said we're very fortunate to have Ted Schroll join us at today's meeting to provide a legislative overview.

Mr. Schroll said there isn't a lot of action currently as we're only three weeks into the Legislative Session. There aren't any public hearings scheduled yet. He referenced a legislative Bill tracking chart that was distributed today to Commissioners and said that it was updated as of yesterday. There are a total of 62 Bills listed on the chart; 10 of them have to do with AED and another 10 have to do with building codes, wood stoves and approximately five have to do with "move over" legislation with the Chiefs Association. He gave a brief overview of fire service related Bills. He said one of the bills relates to funding of firefighter training. He said he spoke to Mr. Morrissette before the Session about changing the language in the Firefighter training Bill. We started out two years ago and only got as far as the state paying for half the cost of Firefighter I and Recruit training. He said last year we tried to get the funding increased to pay for Firefighter II, Fire Instructor I and II, Fire Officer I and it fell apart at the last minute so we're trying again this year to have the language changed. He said his thought was to get the language change this year and worry about the money in another year when things get better. He said there will be a Public Safety and Security Committee this afternoon at 1 p.m. and the Agenda has already been released. He said one of the Bills out there is an act requiring the revision of the state building code to incorporate revisions to the national electrical code. He also noted on page 11 of the tracking chart S.B. 553 that would require CPR and AED certification as part of firefighter I certification. He asked if Commissioners had any questions.

Mr. Morrissette added that S.B. 553 is the Bill that was requested by Jeffrey Bond the firefighter from Harwinton that had appeared before the Commission requesting the Commission mandate CPR/AED training as part of Firefighter I. Mr. Bond did make a courtesy call to him that the Bill was moving forward and that he is still trying to seek the Commission's support for this initiative. He also said currently there are two or three Regional Fire Schools that offer this training as part of their Firefighter I program. There would be a small fiscal impact for this training.

Mr. Schroll encouraged Commissioners to review the legislative Bill tracking chart. He said he's aware there are a lot of Bills listed but there are some Bills in his opinion the Commission is probably not interested in having passed. He said Commissioners should look at them and get back to their associations.

Chairman Carozza asked if we've made any progress when we talk about bringing the fire service together as far as legislation and do we still have individuals filing Bills or going to the Legislators to introduce Bills instead of coordinating it through their various organizations.

Mr. Schroll replied yes. He said there is a Bill permitting Fire Police to issue infractions and fines that were not brought up by the CSFA and they are not sure where it came from as well as a Bill requiring CPR and AED requirement that was just talked about.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Schroll for attending the meeting today.

Moving to item 5b.) Authorization for New Certification Levels (JFS-I, FSI-III, FO-III) Mr. McGowan reported that at the ProBoard Committee on Accreditation meeting held in Houston over the weekend he asked for an extension of certification for accreditation to the areas of FO-III, FSI-III and JFS-I. He said he attempted to contact ProBoard Accreditation Manager Fred Piechota via email but he did not respond. He said he went to the ProBoard's website and apparently we've been approved for that because there have been some adjustments made as to what levels we offer for certification. He said he's asking for the Commission's approval to move forward and offer those levels as certification.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik that the Commission authorize the JFS-I, FSI-III and FO-III as the three new levels of certification. Motion carried.

Mr. McGowan added that FO-IV is still in the pipeline and his hope is that it will be approved at the ProBoard's next meeting which is about eight weeks from now and is about the time that the FO-IV program gets off the ground here at the Fire Academy.

Moving to item 5c.) Rescue Technician Core Testing - Mr. McGowan said a number of years ago the former Director of Certification had asked for the Commission's approval for CORE competencies in Rescue Technician be done as a separate course and separate testing day. With this delivery model there would be no certification attached to CORE competencies. In other words it would be just a stepping stone and one would have to be tested out before they could move into any of the other specific Rescue Technician certifications that we offer. He said that in his review at several levels his biggest concern would be the cost-savings to the Commission. He said we have eight different offerings coming up for CORE competencies this spring and for the Certification division to deliver testing would cost approximately \$13,248. He said his proposal, as a result of that review, was to merge the Certification testing for CORE into the specific specialty training areas for Rescue Technician. He distributed a sheet outlining what those adjustments would entail. He said there are approximately 15 or 16 competencies that comprise CORE Competencies. He said all we're going to do is move the skill sets into the specific competency testing. He said this does not, in any way, change what is going on with the training. Training is still going to offer the CORE course but there won't be a certification test at the conclusion, we'll do the testing when we do the specific Rescue Technician program whether it is Confined Space, Rope, Trench Rescue, Vehicle Machinery, etc. We believe this will streamline the process and also affect a cost savings to the Commission. He requested the Commission's approval and authorization.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if there is any downside to this for the customer.

Mr. McGowan said he thinks it's actually an advantage. He also said when this was originally brought before the Commission a number of years ago there was perhaps some concern about whether we were going to be teaching and then certifying and would the student be able to retain their competency as they progressed within the specialty training areas.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if CORE would still be requirement.

Mr. McGowan said yes CORE would be a prerequisite to enter any Rescue Technician specialty training program and to be eligible for testing.

Mr. Morrisette added that the perceived downside would be from those who have completed CORE and were tested at CORE. While true, there are a limited number of persons who completed this training.

A brief discussion on the issue ensued.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Walsh to approve the change of Rescue Technician CORE testing. Motion carried.

Commissioner Mitchell arrived at 10:20 am.

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners or staff – Mr. Morrisette said he received a call yesterday from a marketing firm based in Connecticut who is working with a razor manufacturer also based in Connecticut. He said they've already worked with the police discipline here in Connecticut and they would like to donate 10,000 razors valued at \$9.99 each to the fire service. He said when he responded that there are more than 10,000 firefighters they replied that they would supply whatever quantity we need. He said there is no strings attached other than this being a goodwill effort. He said he'll be looking at either the CT Fire Chiefs or the CSFA to serve as the primary point of contact for the distribution efforts.

Mr. Morrisette said he also distributed this morning, for informational purposes, copies of an article that appeared yesterday on *Firehouse.com* regarding the state of Delaware which is significantly populated by volunteer departments. He said the Delaware state Fire Commission is looking at establishing some mandatory training standards and he wanted to bring it to the Commission's attention as something going on in other states.

He also said he wanted to acknowledge and he's aware that one or two Commissioners had mentioned to him that the phone system at the Academy seems to be failing. He said we've received a lot of complaints recently from customers and Commissioners that when they call in the system isn't functioning. He said we are trying to work on that and unfortunately the system may have to be replaced. He said we were told by the vendor about a year ago that there are very few spare parts for the phone system. He said he

knows it's not a good time to replace an expensive telephone system but that may be necessary. He said he apologizes for the problem as he's aware it's not good customer service but we're working on it.

Mr. Piskura reported that the IAFF is the license grantor for the operation of the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). He said over a period of time they are revamping and fine tuning how CPAT is administered and a lot of that was driven by a court case in Austin, TX where the Federal court ordered the IAFF to do certain things. He said our current CPAT license is expiring March 31st. One of the new requirements is a \$5,000 annual licensing fee. In addition, there are 10 bulleted items of which five or six of them are new or adjusted requirements that are going to cause us to change the way we do some of our transaction or our relationships with the individual fire departments. He said he believe there are currently 15 Connecticut fire department listed as licensed on the IAFF website but we believe far more than that have applied for a license because each time a fire department tries to use CPAT currently we assist them to fill out the online application for CPAT which is a requirement of CPAT. There is no charge now and there is no charge in the future for a fire department to have a license. He said we are doing a mailing to all the fire departments in the state indicating that they must execute a CPAT license online and we tell them how to do it. Additionally, we must have a written articulated agreement with each fire department every time they test and that's going to be difficult. He said most people in Connecticut test for multiple departments when they go through the CPAT and that's not the way it is set up currently. He said that change is going to make it very difficult on fire departments because they have to have a written agreement that we know that someone is coming to test for XYZ department. He said in good faith we've executed the application and requested a Purchase Order for the \$5,000 fee so we're moving ahead with the application process but he sees difficulty on the horizon as well as the Academy's possible consideration of getting out of the CPAT business. He said he can also see the Academy not getting the license from the IAFF as we may not qualify. He said the purpose of the \$5,000 is to conduct site visits so they can come into the state of Connecticut and observe our administration of CPAT and whether we're doing it according to the guidance documents.

Chairman Carozza asked for a copy of the letter so he may check into the new CPAT requirements.

A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Piskura reported that the Recruit class is approved to have veterans receive their payments for education and we're getting increasing amounts typically two to three students per Recruit class are claiming credit. He said to his knowledge the Academy had its first independent audit by a Federal Veterans Administration auditor who asked him to pull a specific record and a random record. He said they examined the record and the payment schedule and they were very satisfied. He said he received a letter four days later that our audit was perfect and they appreciated our cooperation so that was good news.

He also reported that the CFA Bookstore has been working on a four year project with the Connecticut Distance Learning Center (CT DLC) a quasi state agency to create software which would not only run the Bookstore from a point-of-sale aspect but would also expand to allow us to have internet online sales. He said it appears that project has failed and we're in the process of having conversations with CT DLC to see what if anything can be salvaged or where to go if there are any next steps. He said we're back on our original point-of-sale software system which does not accommodate online sales. He said he doesn't anticipate the Bookstore offering online sales in the foreseeable future. It was something we were striving for but coupled with the current economy it's not going to happen. He said as long as we can conduct sales within the Bookstore atmosphere we're going to be good. The sales for this month have already exceeded all previous January sales months of operation.

Mr. Morrissette added that we had invested some money in the CT DLC project and we're very disappointed and disturbed at the outcome.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:50 am.

Dated:

Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control