



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



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MINUTES OF THE MAY 27, 2008 MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Vice Chairman Kowalski called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blaschik, Dagon, Mitchell, Murphy, Nicol, Stankye and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewis and Morrissette were present.

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

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the April 29, 2008 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Murphy to approve the Minutes of the April 29, 2008 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report April 15, 2008 - May 14, 2008.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2008 – May 14, 2008. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski said if there were no objections he'd like to move to item 5b.

Moving to item 5b.) National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Program Update – Mr. Morrissette introduced to the Commission John Oates Battalion Chief with the West Hartford fire department and a state advocate for the Every One Goes Home program from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF).

Mr. Oates said he had a short conversation with Mr. Morrissette a few months ago and thought this would be a good venue and opportunity to bring Commissioners up to date with some of the resources the NFFF has that can help Commissioners deliver their mission and also help the NFFF make sure firefighters go home at the end of the day. He said since about 2004 he's been an advocate for the NFFF programs within the state. He distributed a handout along with a CD and gave an overview of The Courage to Be Safe a NFFF firefighter life Safety initiatives program. He said the program is designed to change the culture of accepting the loss of firefighters as a normal occurrence. Building on the untold story of LODD survivors, it reveals how family members must live with the consequences of a firefighter death and provides a focus on the need for firefighters and officers to change fundamental attitudes and behaviors in order to prevent line-of-duty deaths. The central theme promotes the courage of firefighters to do the right thing in

order to protect themselves and ensure that “Everyone Goes Home” at the end of the day. Additionally, the NFFF has also developed a project called Local Assistance State Teams (LAST) as they believe the best place for a department to turn for support is within its own state or region. Everything that happens immediately after a line-of-duty death affects the way the family, department and community recover from the loss. Lack of resources and planning often adds to the confusion and pain that occurs. Mr. Oates also referred to the National Fire Service Seat Belt pledge. He said one of the tools being used to encourage seat belt usage is the National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge. He said of the 169 towns in the state with over 300 fire departments there are only four departments listed as 100% compliant that have convinced their members that wearing a seat belt is the right thing to do. He said he knows it’s not that simple and he commends those four departments. He asked Commissioners to take the Pledge sheet back to their respective departments and get members to sign it. He said if Commissioners have any questions on what the Foundation does and what the state advocates do to contact him via email.

Mr. Morrissette asked if the seat belt pledge is on a specific website.

Mr. Oates said if you Google National Seat Belt Pledge it will come up and he believes the site is [www.trainingdivision.com/seatbeltpledge](http://www.trainingdivision.com/seatbeltpledge)

Vice Chairman Kowalski added that it may be worthwhile to send a message via the Listserv.

Mr. Oates said he could do that.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the budget. He said everyone is keeping an eye on the status of the state budget. The projected deficit continues to grow larger for the current fiscal year and there is an expected deficit for next fiscal year. He said we’ve been apprised of several Governor level initiatives including a hiring freeze which may impact our ability to fill the General Trade Worker position. He said we’re hoping that’s not the case because we only have one person in our facility division. He said it also impacts issues related to usage of gasoline and state vehicles. He said the Governor has authority to hold back or reduce agency budgets by 5% so we expect all those things to occur in the coming fiscal year and we are looking at potential hold backs for the current fiscal year. He said one impact of that which he had reported last month was the return of a Program Manager through the arbitration process. Although the individual was suspended without pay for six months, he said the back pay payout amounts to approximately \$61,000. He said we’re continuing to work with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and a small portion of that will come from our agency budget and an expected hold back already and the remainder may be made from a salary adjusted account from OPM. He said we’re trying to finalize that in the coming week. The individual did report back to work but is currently on a three or four month military deployment so he’ll report to work in October. Mr. Morrissette said we’re expecting a very lean and tight fiscal year.

Commissioner Nicol said he had heard about the Governor's hiring freeze and asked how that impacts the hiring of part-time adjunct instructors.

Mr. Morrissette said currently from the Training Division perspective we've done a significant amount of hiring during the past fiscal year. The Certification division just conducted interviews as they are attempting to fill about 20 part-time positions and those interviews were done about two weeks ago and more are in the queue. He said because they don't change the bottom line we hope that those will continue moving forward as selections are made.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson reported on behalf of the Education Committee. He said the Committee met last Thursday May 22<sup>nd</sup>. He gave an update on some of the various projects. The reviews have been completed for the initial step of the design and engineering for the New Haven project and the architect is now moving forward with the contract documents. As far as the new site for the Eastern Connecticut Fire School there are still two or three minor items to clear up between the state and the seller of the property dealing with environmental issues before they come to a purchase agreement. He said two appraisals have been completed for the new site of the Valley School and the figures were expected to be into the Department of Public Works (DPW) this week. As far as the project here at the CFA, the project manager who had been assigned to that project who was out on extended medical leave is now back to work so we should begin to see some movement on that design process. He said there was nothing new as far as Middletown is concerned. He said echoing Mr. Morrissette's comment about the state budget they heard from their Project Manager that the potential impact of the hiring freeze would create more work for less people and they certainly anticipate the next couple of years will be a very tough climate financially. He said there had been \$150,000 proposed for the Bond Commission agenda for this month to provide some seed money, to start the design build process for the schools in Burrville and Fairfield but that did not make it onto the agenda and they're not sure when the next Bond Commission meeting will be. He also said the Subcommittee that has been working on the curriculum review has been working at a steady pace and they anticipate coming back to the full Committee in June with a recommendation for a unified curriculum. The next meeting will be June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Nicol added that he was also at the CSFA Education Committee meeting and the Subcommittee is also looking at textbooks and they intend to talk with a lot of the publishers. He said the CFA Bookstore has been providing textbooks to Connecticut's fire service and we want to see that process continues. He said he's certainly concerned about that especially with the recent hiring of Bookstore personnel. He said he wouldn't like to see direct purchases being done with the Publisher to circumvent our Bookstore which could have an impact on our sales and ability to maintain staffing.

Moving to item 4c.) FY08 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the Supplemental Grant program. He said we've made a little progress from last month's meeting. There has been an additional \$8,000 in funding that was spent which leaves a balance of \$45,000 that will lapse at the conclusion of the fiscal year, if the individual fire companies do not utilize the funding. He said last week he

personally contacted the six fire companies we had not had any communication with. He asked Commissioners for their assistance in communicating to those fire companies in their area that they need to spend the money before the conclusion of the fiscal year. He also said there will be a change in the amount for next fiscal year because we had a fire company drop out of the program so there will be a very small increase from the current \$1250 for each of the eligible fire company.

Commissioner Brady asked if the reason \$45,000 will lapse is because of the six that have not yet responded and those that have not spent the funding.

Mr. Morrissette replied that in most cases it's the companies that have not used the full value of their vouchers. He said we've recently sent out reminders and hopefully we can reduce that amount, but we do expect to lapse a small amount of the funding by close of the fiscal year.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry-Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Entry-Level Training Reimbursements. He said we are still around the \$400,000 mark in terms of money spent or encumbered so at this point we will be lapsing a significant amount of money back to the General Fund. This will be our contribution toward the deficit. He said hopefully in the next biennium the Legislature and Governor won't look at the program and begin to take money away. Unfortunately, the Bill to provide a little bit of additional flexibility was tacked on, in the final hours of the Legislative Session, to a 911 Bill which did not get passed. He said we're hoping next fiscal year to give a little bit of latitude and maybe include FFII into the reimbursement language but that did not happen this year.

Commissioner Brady asked if New Haven fire department has changed their program and will they begin to certify now.

Mr. Morrissette said yes and he had a discussion with Chief Grant late last week and while the program has already begun they will be submitting a detailed syllabus for their program.

Commissioner Stankye added that this being the first year we're going to see more participation next year because he's sure a lot of departments are not applying for the reimbursement.

Mr. Morrissette said if we can we're going to try to do a cross reference on our certification records and if there is staff available and time we will certainly try to contact fire departments to remind them to put in for the reimbursement but it's going to come down to crunch time and the Business office only has one person that handles the program as well as his other responsibilities.

Moving to item 4e.) CPR/AED Training Issues – Mr. Morrissette said he doesn't have any additional information on this but Mr. Piskura and Mr. McGowan are both presently meeting with the Career Chiefs Subcommittee for the recruit program. They are debriefing on the last Recruit Class 41 and planning for the fall class. He said he's aware

that some information was discussed at the Education Committee by the Curriculum Standardization Committee and it seems there might be a change in the thought process in regards to the CPR/AED component for the NFPA 1001 standard. He said they probably won't have any solid answers until next month. The initial reaction when presented to the Education Committee was to leave it to the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) which was the sentiment we generally received from the Career Chiefs. He said as far as the CT Fire Chiefs Association he spoke to Chief DiPace about a week ago and he had not had an opportunity to bring the issue up at their last Executive Board meeting. He said tonight is their regular meeting but he doesn't know whether Chief DiPace can bring it up on the floor for discussion purposes without vetting it through the Executive Board so we may not have a definitive answer from the Chiefs Association in the near future.

Commissioner Brady added that they will have a Board of Directors meeting tonight before their regular meeting.

Moving to item 4f.) NFPA 1001 and 472 Updates – Mr. Morrisette said he's going to put this item on hold until Mr. McGowan is able to join us to provide an update. He said at the present time we've been meeting with as many different groups as possible to discuss the changes in the NFPA standards and looking at how to integrate those changes into the deliveries. He said some of the Regional Schools did report that their scheduled classes are just starting and will serve as PILOT utilizing the most recent edition of the standard while others will wait until the fall to actually implement any particular changes. He said the Haz Mat issue and the CPR/AED are the ones that are out there but other than that there are no significant changes.

Moving to item 4g.) Technical Rescue EMS Requirements Update – Mr. Morrisette reported that we did have some success in this particular area. He said Commissioners may recall some time ago the Commission established as a prerequisite for Technical Rescue CORE, EMT level training based upon skill requirements contained within the NFPA standard. He said a meeting with a Subcommittee of Doctors, who are the first step to having the proposed change blessed to reduce the requirement down to the MRT level with additional training. He said there was some good dialogue prior to and during the meeting but their next step is to move the issue forward to the full EMS Advisory Board. Mr. Morrisette said the hope is the new requirement would be MRT with specific training as per the standard which will make a lot of our customers happy.

Vice Chairman Kowalski added that he did attend the meeting and it was quite interesting working with the doctors. He said he wanted to commend both our staff Director of Certification Tom McGowan and Program Manager Jim Carroll who did an excellent job in briefing the specifics of the needs of the fire service and also past history of what the fire service has been doing. He said the bottom line is they agreed and it was a unanimous decision of the entire Board which consisted of 18 to 20 doctors. While they had their discussion as far as medical control goes they are going to formulate the actual statement of care change to allow it to be used with MRT with the Rescue Core site specific skill set requirement to that job. He said just because a firefighter has MRT, if he/she hasn't gone through the Technical Rescue module they are not allowed to do the

immobilization that's required. He said the only other question that came up was the fact of how are people going to re-qualify periodically. He said we explained that it would be a basic re-training on a periodic basis that's happening currently in the fire service and they stated that they would be comfortable with that at this particular point and that it would not be included with the MRT skill set as normally stated. He said they were drafting the language as the discussions took place. He said it should be out fairly soon and they would bring it up in June for another vote.

Moving to item 5a.) Mid-Atlantic Association of Fire Commissioners Conference – Mr. Morrisette said Commissioner Nicol had asked us to place this item on the agenda for a brief discussion.

Commissioner Nicol said the Commission agreed to host the 2010 conference of the Mid Atlantic Association of Fire Commission and we should begin to formulate some thoughts on what we're going to do. The conference this year is in Maryland and next year in Tennessee. He said the first step we should undertake is to form a Subcommittee and begin looking at possible sites to hold the conference and ideas for an agenda. He said the conference normally runs for three days primarily Friday through Sunday with participants arriving on Thursday for kick-off on Friday morning and then they leave on Sunday.

Vice Chairman Kowalski asked what time of the year is the conference held.

Commissioner Nicol said this year's conference unfortunately is scheduled for the same weekend as the Connecticut State Firefighters Convention. He said the host state has the latitude of selecting the date but it's usually held sometime in September or October. Maryland has selected to hold theirs September 17-21, 2008. He also said when we select the dates we should check with other states to see what activities they have planned so that we don't choose a weekend that conflicts with a major event going on.

Vice Chairman Kowalski asked how many people typically attend the conference.

Commissioner Nicol replied that it's can be about 70-80 people and it's usually held at a hotel.

Vice Chairman Kowalski asked if any Commissioners are interested in serving on the Committee.

Mr. Morrisette added that Commissioners don't necessarily have to serve on the Committee but if they have some ideas or suggestions for places to tour or any corporate sponsorship information to let us know. He also said he'll be submitting a Budget Option request as part of the Biennium budget submittal process to try and keep our guests expenses to a minimum. He said it's going to be very costly for the participants so we want to try to cover as many of the overhead expenses as possible.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called for members who would like to serve on the Mid-Atlantic Association of Fire Commissions Subcommittee.

Commissioners Brady, Dagon, Murphy and Nicol asked to serve on the Subcommittee.

Mr. Morrisette also mentioned that we had previously distributed the information for this year's conference to be held in Annapolis, Maryland on September 19-21 which is the same weekend as the Connecticut State Firefighters convention. He said if any Commissioner is interested in attending to let us know so we can register them.

Vice Chairman Kowalski asked if there is a freeze currently on travel.

Mr. Morrisette said yes from General Funded accounts but we have some flexibility due to our non-appropriated restricted accounts.

Moving to item 5c.) CPTV Initiative – Mr. Morrisette said Commissioners should have received a small handout with information from Connecticut Public Television (CPTV). He said our agency along with Deputy Commissioner of DEHMS Wayne Sandford and some of his staff and other representatives have been meeting with CPTV. He said they are looking to produce a program to be titled ***On Watch: Connecticut's Emergency Volunteers***. He said originally it was going to focus primarily on the volunteer fire service however it's grown beyond that and they're looking to also promote Civilian Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Red Cross components as well as other areas of emergency service volunteers. He said promotion of the volunteer fire service would probably be approximately 25% of the one hour show. He said Commissioners may recall some of the recent productions that CPTV has done for DEMHS. They did one on the hurricanes and another one emergency management related. They were both very successful. He said they're getting to crunch time now where they are looking to finalize their budget and there are several significant commitments already in. He said the budget is somewhere in the \$90,000 range and they are asking for support from the fire service. He said he told them that he would present the concept before the Commission. While earlier today we have been talking about reductions and cuts, as an agency we really don't invest much in the area of recruitment and retention. He said we do have the 800 Fireline program which doesn't cost us much because the CSFA, from time to time picks up the telephone bill for that. He said he believes as an agency we certainly could make a financial commitment to this initiative and he's looking for the Commission's support for about \$10,000. He said The Public Health Foundation of Connecticut is also expected to make a sizeable contribution as well as possible funding from the Red Cross. The most significant contribution is expected to be made by DEMHS in the \$40,000 range. He said seeing that the fire service would have about 25% of the time he's asking the Commission's support for a \$10,000 pledge.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol that the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control commits \$10,000 to the CPTV initiative. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Morrisette added that there is a state contract in place for this type of activity so the agency would only need to cut a purchase order for the amount. He also said CPTV would be facilitating a production brainstorming session in the near future so if there are

any Commissioners interested in participating let him know. The tentative date for their production to air is September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired whether we needed a motion for agenda item 4g Technical Rescue EMS Requirements to allow MRT.

Mr. Morrissette said he doesn't recall how we left it but the Commission did vote to require it to be the EMT level so at some point he believes it will have to be rescinded but it's not going to happen at the OEMS level right now so we could take care of it at the June meeting.

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

Moving to item 7 – Commissioner Nicol asked for the latest update on the Bridgeport firefighter appeals.

Mr. Morrissette said we did note in an email to Commissioners that we wouldn't have to host an appeals hearing today. He said we have communicated the decision of the Appeals Hearing Board to the three appellants. The Board upheld the failures of two of the three individuals. Due to conflicting testimony presented during the hearing the Board found in favor of the third individual. He said finding in favor of that individual in essence turns the issue back over to Bridgeport to make a decision. He said he's had an opportunity to speak with the Chief and the Training Officer. Based upon the protracted appeals process and the expected time to finalize a decision the Chief elected to bring the three back to retest. Mr. Morrissette said Bridgeport is already in contact with us and it appears they will contract with the Academy to provide three to four days of remedial training to the individuals. He said he's indicated that the Commission would provide staffing for conducting the test. We've had discussions with the Attorney General's office and we may consider video taping the test although it's not the norm.

Commissioner Nicol said he had an opportunity to attend the graduation ceremony of Recruit Class 41 and he thought it was well put together and very professional. He congratulated the staff that coordinated the event.

Commissioner Wilkinson added that he also attended the ceremony wearing two hats; one as a Commissioner and one as the customer and it was very evident to sense the pride and dedication of the instructors that worked through the recruit program and likewise the quality of the recruits that return to the local departments. He offered his congratulations and appreciation to all the instructors that worked with the recruit program for a job well done.

Mr. Morrissette reported regarding PA 08-131 which is the act concerning volunteer service by paid emergency personnel or paid firefighters that he's beginning to receive numerous calls on this particular bill. He asked if there is any feeling by Commissioners that we need to establish or reengage the Committee to review the Model Guidelines that were developed last year. He said those are referenced in the statute and people are calling asking for copies and he's referred them to our website.



Commissioner Stankye said it's probably not a bad idea if the document is mailed to Commissioners to review and have a discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Morrissette said we would resend a copy of the Guidelines to Commissioners electronically and asked Commissioners to review them and comment. He said there are a lot of unique questions being posed about individual situations and contracts which he's a bit hesitant to answer. He said he's going to attempt to schedule a meeting with Representative Nafis to go over some of the specifics with her.

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

Commissioner Wilkinson mentioned that the Executive Secretary distributed this morning documents regarding an attempt by the CSFA to establish a Hall of Fame and have an annual dinner of induction. He said they have a date reserved in October however they are coming up on some crunch time as far as having an adequate number of nominations in order to move forward. He said they are looking at sometime around the beginning of July to make a decision whether to go or not go and they are not only looking for people from far into the past they are also looking for people from the near past or the current time to encourage attendance at the event. He said if Commissioners or their organizations have anyone they would like to have considered to please submit a nomination form very soon.

Vice Chairman Kowalski adjourned the meeting at 10:44 am.

Dated:

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James P. Wilkinson, Secretary  
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control