



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



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MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 28, 2000 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Brammer, Gomeau, Haber, Kowalski, Munkenbeck, Nicol, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioner Maheu arrived at 9:48 a.m. Commissioners Johnson, Milewski, Mullen and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Lewandowski, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2000 Commission meeting.

Mr. Morrissette explained that due to some technical problems with the recording equipment, the meeting minutes have been prepared in a condensed version.

Commissioner Stankye asked that his inquiry at the October 30, 2000 meeting regarding the development and dissemination of a lesson plan on the Tactical Use of Thermal Imaging Cameras be recorded in the minutes.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the revised minutes of the October 30, 2000 meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the period of October 15, 2000 – November 14, 2000.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the Staff Report for the period of October 15, 2000 - November 14, 2000. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette reported on the status of the Firefighter Memorial project. He stated that as of Friday of last week, the balance in the account was \$89,803. An additional \$1,000 has been received over the last few days. The project received additional press this weekend from an article that appeared in the Hartford Courant. The story was also picked up by the Associated Press and by Connecticut Public Radio. Little by little publicity seems to snowball and get additional support.

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Mr. Morrisette stated that he spoke with the Lt. Governor's Office yesterday and they have identified two additional mailing lists for business and industry that they wish to use to send out a new letter of solicitation. They have some other fund raising ideas in mind. The initial goal was to have the funding in place by Thanksgiving, but that has not happened. We do want to pursue a couple of other fund raising avenues prior to the Legislative Session.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired how much money was needed to start constructing the memorial.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Committee Chairman had indicated within the last year that they don't want to start the project until they have the full amount of \$175,000 in hand.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrisette gave an overview of the Freelancing Policy and the Adjunct Instructor Agreement. At last month's meeting he reported that he confirmed with the Attorney General's Office that they see no problem with executing and enforcing such a policy on current employees as well as future hires. The agreement itself could be construed as a condition of employment. He indicated that he did not know what the ramifications would be once the final policy is implemented. He stated that the agency management feels very confident that this will address some of the major areas that we have a concern with. The Policy is also sensitive to instructors' roles as it relates to their activity in other areas such as teaching for Regional Fire Schools, Colleges, etc.

Commissioner Stankye inquired if the draft documents have been reviewed by any of the instructors.

Mr. Morrisette replied negatively.

Commissioner Kowalski gave an overview on some of the action of the committee assigned to review freelancing. The committee researched this matter and discussed it with representatives of the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors' Association (CFDIA). The committee came up with some common language taking into consideration CFDIA's input. This resulted in the document presented today.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the agreement itself is a compilation from a number of sources such as The American Red Cross and our peer agencies in other states.

Commissioner Munkenbeck inquired about items 4 and 5 on the Free Lancing Policy.

Mr. Morrisette stated that item 4 was taken out of the policy because there is already an agency policy that deals with the personal use of agency equipment.

Commissioner Wilkinson inquired if the Free Lancing Policy was part of the Adjunct Instructor Agreement.

Mr. Morrisette replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if it was possible to vote for these documents before the Commission today.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the Free Lancing Policy and the Adjunct Instructor Agreement. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette stated that under the Legislative Report agenda item he was hoping to have a compilation of the minutes from the State Firefighters' Association legislative meeting that was held in early November. Included in the Commission package for your review was a submittal by the consortium of Regional Fire Schools. This is their five-year capital budget plan which was a part of the discussions of the State Firefighters' Association legislative meeting. He stated that he felt it important that the Commissioners take a close look at this item.

Commissioner Stankye stated that this is the first concentrated effort on the part of all of the regional schools as a unit instead of all going off in their own direction. He feels this is a good idea, it is long range and gives the legislators a view into the future needs of regional fire schools,

Commissioner Wilkinson commented that at a Commission meeting last year it was brought to the attention of the Commissioners that Rocky Hill wanted to start another regional school. At this recent legislative meeting it came out that a grass roots group would try again to obtain money for Rocky Hill. This is an effort that the Commission may want to keep an eye on.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the State Fire Administrator or Director of Training had the opportunity to discuss any of the items contained in the five-year budget proposal for the regional schools.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the regional schools formed a committee to develop this budget proposal. Neither he nor the Director of Training participated in its development.

A discussion period followed.

Mr. Morrisette stated that when he receives the full legislative report from Ted Schroll he would distribute a copy to Commissioners for review.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette stated the Commission is required by the Secretary of the State's Office to submit an annual schedule of meetings. A proposed schedule is before you for approval. We did not specifically address evening meetings or regional meetings that the Commission has had an interest to offer in the past. Also, Chairman Carozza has discussed with him his interest to schedule a meeting at the Capitol as has also been done in the past.

Commissioner Nicol commented that recent attempts to hold an evening have not met with great success. However he would like the Commission to try again to hold a Commission meeting at night in an area that is more centrally located and publicize it more so that we can reach more people.

Chairman Carozza inquired if there was any objections to scheduling a night meeting at the Capitol also.

There were no objections raised.

Chairman Carozza stated if there's no further discussion he would entertain a motion to approve the 2001 Meeting Schedule.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Gomeau to approve the 2001 Meeting Schedule. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Piechota stated that the Commission's Pro-Board Reaccreditation application was submitted last week. It will take about 30 days or so to review it before the site visit is scheduled. Because of the holidays, it looks like our site visit will be conducted in January. Mr. Piechota stated that when he has a specific date he would notify the Commission.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the frequency of reaccreditation.

Mr. Piechota stated that we need to apply administratively for reaccreditation each year but a mandatory site visit takes place every five years.

Commissioner Maheu asked for additional information on item 6 under Administration in the staff report regarding the retraction of funding for the annual SERC Conference.

Mr. Morrisette explained that there's a new way of budgeting within the State Office of Emergency Management (OEM). In the past there's been a number of federal funding sources all being independent for specific identified projects. At the request of states, the federal government is now putting all grants into a single fund and delegating authority to the states' OEM to make decisions on how it should be spent. OEM indicated in a recent letter that they would continue to support the Academy's training that deals with hazardous materials. There is also some terrorism funding still available. What they have done is cut out the SERC travel as well as funding for the annual conference. This year's conference budget request was \$8,000. There is concern because this retraction was brought to our attention two weeks ago, after the fiscal year has already begun and plans already underway for the conference. Deputy Commissioner Leff of DEP did indicate that he feels he may be able to identify a separate DEP funding source to fund the conference.

Mr. Piskura stated that he had just been informed prior to today's meeting that the haz-mat and terrorism funding had also been taken away. The Training Division has been waiting for over three months for some funding and OEM is unresponsive to us.

Commissioner Maheu stated as a Commission probably we're in a wait and see mode at this point. Certainly all of us as representatives of the Commission can provide some type of support.

Commissioner Munkenbeck commented about his concerns of the military department's influence.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he would like to make a resolution to seek out and find out exactly what is happening to this funding and take the necessary action to receive funding to enhance the first responder programs that we've provided for many years.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to find out what has happened to the funding and take necessary action to receive funding to enhance the first responder programs.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that a letter should go to OEM from the Commission and a meeting scheduled to meet with the Director to find out why we are not receiving the funding.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he would forward to the Commissioners a copy of the letter provided to the members of the SERC.

A discussion period followed.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that during the committee review of the freelancing policy several issues came up. Now that the freelancing policy is set he stated that he would like, for the purposes of discussion to bring up another major issue that surfaced as a by product and that is the issue of instructors /state instructors/local instructors. One of the issues brought up was that there was no differentiation between a state certified instructor and a state employed instructor. In reviewing the information from the survey done by Mr. Piechota he noted that several states require some level of recertification. About 40-50% of the states surveyed require some type of ongoing training for instructors and this may be something the Commission could look at as a positive move on recertification.

Commissioner Maheu stated that he would support recertification. To do that the Commission would have to determine the details of what it wants recertification to consist of.

A discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza inquired what is the Commission's pleasure on this matter.

Commissioner Nicol stated if the Commission is going to pursue this issue, we should look at the monetary impact in planning for future budget process to include this for discussion with OPM.

Mr. Morrisette stated that if it's a legislative or a regulation change we have to provide a fiscal impact statement with the proposal.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that the committee reviewing freelancing agreed that once a freelancing policy was completed they would look into the instructor identification issue and the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association should be the lead organization involved in this review.

Chairman Carozza stated that this item would be tabled to to gather additional information on this issue for the next meeting.

Commissioner Haber read a letter from Mr. Ken Elmore, Fire-Rescue Chief from the Town of Palm Beach, Florida expressing his thanks to Mr. Morrissette for the wonderful hospitality extended to the NFPA Technical Committee on Fire Service Training during their recent visit to Connecticut. He stated that he heard many complimentary comments during their visit, but the one that he heard the most often was how well the facility was maintained. He stated that he recently attended a meeting at Palm Beach Community College where several local training officers were recommending the Connecticut Fire Academy as a model for a new training facility in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Commissioner Wilkinson inquired how the staff planned to implement the freelancing policy.

Mr. Piskura stated that he was currently revising the Academy's Operations manual. A draft of the Operations manual along with the freelancing policy will be distributed to the instructors for review and comment.

Commissioner Brammer inquired about the Commission's involvement with the five-year budget plan for the regional schools. He stated that he agreed with Commissioner Nicol that some of the numbers in the budget are not enough to substantiate some of the items in the budget. Can additional information be obtained and is the Commission expected to back this budget plan?

Mr. Morrissette stated that he did not bring it to the Commission's attention for backing. He stated that he was just communicating information from the legislative meeting that he felt was of significant importance to the future success of the Academy. He stated that he has some reservations and he thinks that conceptually we all agree that there needs to be an enhancement of the regional school system in Connecticut. There is no set policy in terms of our relationship with the regional school system or as it's administered through the State Firefighters Association.

A discussion period followed.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he extended an invitation to Jim Birmingham to address the Commission this morning. Mr. Birmingham has recently made his intentions known that he is looking to retire at the end of the current calendar year.

Mr. Birmingham stated that he has worked full time for the Commission for the past 5 1/2 years and that he and his wife made an agreement that they would retire at the same time. He began working for the Commission as an Adjunct Instructor in 1978. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity and the experience.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Birmingham for all his years of service on behalf of the Commission.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the Hartford Fire Department has extended an invitation to the Commission to attend an inauguration ceremony for Chief Charles Teale scheduled for December 11 at 4:30 p.m. at City Hall Atrium in Hartford. If any Commissioners are interested to attend, please let him know so he may respond.

Mr. Morrissette inquired if Commissioners had any questions regarding a copy of a letter from the Attorney General's Office that was sent to John Bolton.

No discussion followed.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he and the staff wished the Commissioners an enjoyable holiday season.

Chairman Carozza extended holiday wishes to the Commissioners, Commission staff and their families.

Commissioner Nicol inquired since we will not meet in December, is there anything that has to be done in December to prepare for the upcoming legislative session.

Mr. Morrissette stated as an agency no preparations are needed.

Commissioner Nicol stated that the CFDIA is planning to support and resurrect the training bill which would effect the Commission.

Mr. Piskura inquired if there was any informational papers on the training bill for distribution to the rank and file in the fire service.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the original task force study report has been made available. He added that his main concern, which he raised at the recent legislative meeting, is that it hasn't worked for five years maybe we need to take a new approach.

A discussion period followed.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Dated: _____

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