

Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

Meeting minutes

June 26, 2008 – 19:00

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:08 with the following representatives present:

Connecticut State Firefighters Association – Charles Stankye, Jr.
Burrville Fire School – Richard Winn, Tom Osborne, Robert Norton, Jr.
Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Al Hawkins, Les Shull, Scott Burton
Fairfield Regional Fire School – Chris Tracy
Hartford County Regional Fire School – Chet Haber, Mike Jepeal
Middlesex County Regional Fire School – Jay Woron
New Haven Fire Academy – Ron Dumas
Stamford Regional Fire School – Tony Conte
Valley Fire Chiefs' Regional Fire School – Peter Wols, Jr.
Wolcott State Fire School – Paul Perrotti
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – Rich Nicol
Connecticut Fire Academy – Jeff Morrissette, Ed O'Hurley
Guest: Ct. Department of Public Works – Don Ouillette
Guest: Sub-Committee on Curriculum Standardization - Cathy Goetz

Minutes of the May meeting were distributed. Motion by Mike Jepeal seconded by Chet Haber to accept the minutes. Motion Carried.

1. Status of properties acquisitions

Don Ouillette reported on the lack of progress toward a sales agreement with the Rogers Corporation. The negotiations have been continuing for almost two and a half years. Rogers representatives have been advised that if they cannot agree to terms of a sales agreement by July 15 that the deal is off and D.P.W. will advertise for property once again.

Don also reported that the D.P.W. Deputy Commissioner has requested a time line from Shane Mallory, Property Acquisitions Manager, for future property acquisitions.

Appraisals for the Beacon Falls property are in. Copies have been distributed to Pete Wols and Charles Stankye tonight. The property appraisal is \$990,000. Don has been told that D.P.W. should be able to complete acquisition of this property within one year. Don requested authorization from this committee to proceed. Although the budget contained \$600,000 for property, the fact that the subject property is in an industrial park with all utilities present will probably substantially reduce construction costs.

Jay Woron provided Don with a sketch of the parcel that the city of Middletown is working to acquire from the Army. The parcel consists of 28 acres. There are already utilities on site and an existing building. The intent of Middletown is to build a satellite fire station on the front of the property and the fire school to the rear.

2. Other projects status

Don Ouillette reported that test borings of the New Haven site revealed some soil contamination. Excavated soil will be removed by the city of New Haven. Additional expense will be incurred for material needed to replace contaminated soil.

Hartford County update. The lease agreement should go to the property review board the week after next, then to the Attorney General. Don anticipates mid-August for the first design meeting.

Jeff Morrisette asked about the status of the lease agreement with D.O.T. since several of the players have changed. Don reported that there has been an attempt to take the flexibility out of the designated parcel. The original intent was to allow some flexibility with the footprint of the parcel to accommodate the most efficient design. The earlier understanding seems to have been lost. Jeff asked Don to provide the latest version of the lease agreement so that he could review it with his contact in the A.G.'s office.

Fairfield and Burrville are still on hold waiting for the bond commission to authorize release of the \$150,000 in bond funding. Chris Tracy reported that he spent the day at the Capital trying to push for release of this funding. He unsuccessfully attempted to meet with Genuario but did reach some of his area legislators who agreed to push for release of this funding. Hopefully the funding will be on the agenda for the July bond commission meeting.

Chris also drafted letters requesting support from Governor Rell and Secretary Genuario. Al Hawkins will distribute those via email. Al asked that all regional school directors contact their supporters in the legislature and ask for their help in getting the necessary funds released.

3. Standardization/Curriculum Committee

Cathy Goetz reported on the work of the committee. She stated that the members of the committee were exceedingly committed to the objective. All of the members have embraced the charge of the committee and want to forward the best recommendation possible. Early on the committee decided to narrow its scope to the publication by IFSTA/Brady and Jones and Bartlett. There is no consensus by the members of the committee as to which publisher has the better product. Cathy wants to hold off on a final recommendation until the July meeting of the Education Committee (July 24th)

Cathy reported that the Wolcott State Fire School is conducting a summer program using the IFSTA/Brady materials. Stamford is offering a program using the Jones and Bartlett materials. The committee is looking for comparisons in the issues relating to use of the two sets of materials.

Other issues being evaluated are the hazardous materials skills detailed within the new standards along with prerequisite requirements for CPR and First Aid. The committee realizes that the regional schools will need to ramp up for fall 2008 course offerings.

Ed O'Hurley noted that the bank of test questions utilized by the Certification Division are predominately derived from the IFSTA publication. The study guide published by Jones and Bartlett also utilizes the Hurst question bank (Professional Testing Services) that also comes from the IFSTA publication. Through the test bank review process the intent is to continue to validate test questions against Delmar, Jones and Bartlett and IFSTA.

Cathy asked the members of the committee if their objective should be to develop the best test takers of the best firefighters. Most expressed that they really wanted both but the emphasis needed to be on developing the best firefighters. Everyone realizes that all students will not pass a certification exam. Chris Tracy asked Cathy if there was a consensus by the sub-committee members as to which product would help us provide the best firefighters. Cathy indicated that there seemed to be no clear answer and that the best answer is NO.

Les Shull pointed out that both texts were very similar.

Discussion continued about the projected contact hours necessary for hazardous materials training for the Firefighter I level. Staff at the C.F.A. estimates that the recruit school will require approximately 48 hours of haz-mat training. Al Hawkins noted that the recruit school is striving to train to Firefighter I and Firefighter II level. The committee does not have a clear picture of the number of contact hours necessary to achieve the level of training detailed in the new standard.

4. Other items from the membership

Jeff Morrissette advised that he had asked Ed O'Hurley to attend tonight's meeting in order to address questions from the last meeting regarding notification to regional school staff relative to equipment necessary to accomplish practical skills testing.

Ed advised that the integrity of the testing process necessitated that the students not be notified in advance of the specific skills to be tested at a given test date. Regardless, Ed is willing to respond to questions about equipment needs for a specific test on Thursday or Friday before the test.

Ed also distributed a new test application that included an entry as to the location and date of the live fire training. This is designed to better communicate the live fire date in order to afford more time to schedule live burn auditors.

Ed also discussed the hazardous materials testing for future certification. The new Hazardous Materials Operational test will evaluate over 30 practical skills. His intent for psychomotor testing is to set up four scenarios with twelve or thirteen skills included in each scenario. Each scenario will include from six to eight students. This will require a separate day in order to conduct the Haz-Mat Operational capabilities of the students. Next month Ed intends to conduct question reviews for Haz-Mat Operational questions.

Jeff reported that he is looking at methods to streamline the training reimbursement process. He needs input on the actual delivery cost for the Firefighter I program in reference to the appropriate reimbursement rate.

Charles Stankye and Peter Wols reported on lobbying efforts of the directors of the Valley School. They are planning a meeting with area legislators on July 9, 2008 in order to try to push the capital project forward.

Al Hawkins reminded the committee that Don Ouillette had asked for a decision by the committee about the funding for the purchase of the property in Beacon Falls for the Valley Fire Chiefs' Regional Fire School. Mike Jepeal made a motion that the committee authorize funding in the amount not to exceed \$990,000 in order to purchase the property under consideration in Beacon Falls for use by the Valley Fire Chiefs in order to build a new school. The motion was seconded by Chris Tracy. There was no additional discussion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Rich Nicol asked about the time table for the purchase. Al Hawkins reminded the committee that Don Ouillette has projected that the purchase should be completed within one year from the date that the process started.

5. Next meeting date

Next meeting will be on Thursday, July 24, 2008 at 19:00 at Wethersfield Company #3.

Submitted by Alan Hawkins