

**Meeting of Directors of Regional Fire Schools
Eastern Connecticut Fire School, Willimantic
February 21, 2001**

Present:

Burrville Fire School – Richard Winn
Derby Fire School – Peter Wols
Eastern Ct. Fire School – Jim Wino, Lloyd Niles, Bill Eyberse, John Salkiewicz, Al Hawkins
Hartford Fire School – Chet Haber, Tom Post
Middlesex Fire School – Fred Dudek
Connecticut Firefighters Assoc. – Neal Burrows

There were no representatives in attendance from the Fairfield, New Haven, or Wolcott Schools.

State Representative Walter Pawelkiewicz attended to give a status and overview on the legislative process with respect to the Raised Bill #6542 “An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for a Capital Improvement Program for the Regional Fire Schools.”

Rep. Pawelkiewicz advised that the bill was currently on the hands of the Public Safety Committee, and had been addressed at a public hearing on February 13th. Rep. Pawelkiewicz said that the public hearing went well. He expected that the bill would be acted upon favorably by the Public Safety Committee. The next step in the process will direct the bill to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding. Rep. Pawelkiewicz has discussed the bill with Lieutenant Governor Rell and Mark Ryan, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. It was Rep. Pawelkiewicz’s opinion, based upon those discussions, that the bill was not going to be funded this year. He made it clear that there is going to need to be a lot of support expressed in order for the bill to receive the necessary funding. Rep. Pawelkiewicz suggested that the regional school directors solicit their respective fire service organizations to get as many letters of support for the bill sent to the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Marc Ryan of the Office of Policy and Management. Rep. Pawelkiewicz also asked if the first year funding total of the five-year plan could possibly be reduced. He felt that this may make it easier for funding to be attained in the first year.

At this point Representative Pawelkiewicz left.

There was a brief discussion about the operations budgets for the regional fire schools. Four of the eight schools plan to run a deficit during the current fiscal year of greater than \$20,000. Total deficits for all eight of the regional fire schools will be approximately \$118,000. With the uncertain status of the capitol-funding bill it was a consensus decision to refrain from addressing the operations budgets at this time. It was agreed that our time and efforts would be better spent trying to muster enough support for the capital funding bill. All fire departments and fire service organizations should be requested to send letters of support for the funding bill. Al Hawkins offered to draft a sample letter of support for distribution to the directors at our meeting next Monday, February 26, in Wethersfield with the committee from the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

There was a discussion about whether there could be reductions made to the first year funding in the capital budget plan. It was the consensus that those figures were either start-up costs for land

acquisition and design for the three schools intending to build new facilities, and for necessary repairs for the other schools that could not be deferred. It was agreed to let the budget figures stand. There was a request that the Wolcott Fire School consider moving their proposed compressor purchase to coincide with those being purchased by Burrville and Hartford (Year 2). It was felt that this move could provide for some cost advantage by purchasing three compressors at the same time.

There was a discussion about formalizing this organization and requesting the President of the Connecticut Firefighters' Association to appoint a standing committee to deal with education and regional fire school financial needs. This committee would be comprised of two representatives from each of the eight regional fire schools and at least two members of the Connecticut Firefighters' Association, one of which should be the Treasurer. It was decided that a letter would be drafted so that signatures could be affixed from directors of each of the regional schools at the February 26th meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and their lack of support for the regional fire school system. There was a general feeling that the Commission had handed off the responsibility of basic level training for the 25,000 volunteer firefighters in the state to the regional fire schools (Firefighter I and Firefighter II). This being done they seem to be disinterested in how this training is provided or funded. Al Hawkins pointed out that the representatives from the CFPC who were appointed to the committee to meet with us on next Monday were volunteers to that committee. He felt that there was general support for the regional fire schools from the members of that committee.

Neal Burrows pointed out that Jeff Morrissette had offered the Connecticut Fire Academy web site to disseminate information to the fire service of general interest. There was discussion that this could be a good vehicle to acknowledge those state legislators that have been supportive of our funding bill.

Neal went on to point out two legislative events that we may want to attend.

On March 6th Fire Service Day will be recognized at the state capital from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm. Space will be provided for fire service organizations that wish to set up displays and approach the legislators.

On March 8th there will be a Legislative Reception at the State Armory from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm. This could provide another opportunity to approach various legislators.

The next meeting of this group will be on March 28, 2001, at 19:00, at the Hartford Regional Fire School in Windsor Locks.

Submitted by,
Al Hawkins