



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



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**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 30, 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, Hilbert, Nicol and Stankye.

Staff members Carroll, Lewis, Lewandowski, McGowan, Morrissette and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Carozza stated it appeared there will not be a quorum so the meeting would proceed on an informational basis. He called on the State Fire Administrator for an introduction of guests.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Barry Rickert, Retired Fire Marshal from Danbury and currently working with the New Milford Fire Marshal's office and Bruce Kelly, Fairfield County Haz Mat.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the April 29, 2009 meeting.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were any questions.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report April 15, 2009 – May 14, 2009.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were any questions.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the budget. He said everyone is aware the budget has not been voted upon as yet. He said the Governor did call a staff meeting for 11 am this morning in Rocky Hill so he will be leaving to attend that meeting and he's sure there will be some additional updates. He said he had received some questions from Commissioners and obviously the Governor did submit a second budget for consideration which did force a few additional reductions upon the agency. He said the Democrats passed a budget late last week which tacked on some additional cuts to the Governor's reductions so because there is no budget and they are beginning to negotiate possibly the end result may fall somewhere in the middle. He said the Democrat's budget did restore the Entry Level training monies to \$555,000 and added an additional \$100,000 to the Supplemental Grant program. Funding for the Regional Fire Schools was not touched so basically what was in the Governor's original Biennium proposal is still in place. Mr. Morrissette stated with the new fiscal year beginning tomorrow, the agency will operate under an Executive Order to be issued by the Governor. We would expect our budget allotment to be approximately 1/12th of the proposed budget. He said we should be satisfactory in terms of salary funding but we could run into some difficulty with our operating funds. He said he alerted the Regional Schools at their meeting last week that it doesn't appear there is any

funding for them at least in the first month. He said he asked them to prepare to operate without any additional allotments being made to them. He said if it continues beyond July he's already spoken to OPM that it will cause some difficulty to the operations of the Schools and they may want to consider making a monthly allotment to the Regional Schools if there is no budget by August. Mr. Morrisette also said we were asked to put together an operational plan as an effect of the Early Retirement Program. He said we didn't lose any full-time staffing with the exception of Ron Vietts who is technically a DAS SmART staff member assigned to the agency. We are trying to pick up the pieces and move forward with some procedural changes in terms of how we conduct business.

Commissioner Mitchell arrived at 9:45 am.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Nicol reported that the Education Committee met last on June 25. He said Don Ouillette from Department of Public Works (DPW) was at the meeting and stated that DPW had several staff discussing the financial situation that the state is facing and they have plans to go forward with the \$28 million bond appropriation for the projects. The New Haven project bid was approximately \$3.1 million and was scheduled to be on the agenda for the Bond Commission June meeting which was cancelled. The current low bidder is a company called PDS from Bloomfield. The next possible Bond Commission meeting for that project as well as some funds that would be required for Burrville and Fairfield design would be mid-August. The bids that were secured for the New Haven facility is good for 90 days however Mr. Ouillette indicated that they have intentions of requesting the bidders to extend their bids by 30 days which would give the project 120 days. He also said a meeting was held last week to finalize the design development plan for the Hartford School and the project is estimated to be around \$4.75 million. DPW will be scheduling a site survey for the Burrville School. He said Mr. Ouillette indicated that early retirements are causing some delays however the survey is expected to be conducted in August and design should begin after that survey is completed. The Fairfield project needs to hire a firm to conduct a survey and they also need to determine high water markings being in the coastal area. Commissioner Nicol said Mr. Ouillette also stated that DPW Commissioner Curtis had indicated that the only way they will move forward with projects is if they have funds to do the construction. DPW will not purchase any additional property unless there are funds in place to do the actual construction. He said that affects the Willimantic School because there is a commitment of only \$28 million and that money does not include the construction of a new facility in Willimantic. So that creates a problem. He said they also discussed doing some public relations work for the New Haven School once the project gets moving particularly for a grand opening and ground breaking ceremony. There was also a discussion relative to Hazardous Materials that has been incorporated into FFI. He said Mr. Morrisette mentioned that he would have the Director of Certification McGowan attend the meeting to discuss the issue. It was also mentioned that the legislation for the Danbury School did not get passed in the Session but it will be addressed with the budget. The next meeting is scheduled for July 23rd.

Commissioner Stankye added that for the Eastern CT School the Committee is going to pursue purchasing that School because it is an existing School.

Commissioner Nicol said Chairman Hawkins said he's planning to prepare documentation to the Governor's office, OPM and to Commissioner Curtis indicating that it is in the state's best

interest to purchase that property now and they could use the School as is until such time as monies can be appropriated for the construction. He said Mr. Hawkins also said that if the state is not willing to do that they are going to look at possibly doing local fundraising to make the purchase.

Mr. Morrisette added that he distributed copies of a site plan for the proposed facility expansion here in Windsor Locks. He said they shifted the location of the Burn Building, as Commissioners will notice, from the northwest corner to the northeast corner. He said they met with Hartford County and the staff here and all agreed that while it's not the perfect situation it's really the only option based upon some of the infrastructure that's in the ground. He said they also have to look at adding some filtration to the HVAC system within the Academy's Administration Building due to the close proximity of the planned Burn Building. This additional equipment/design was not part of the original master plan thus we may need to identify an additional funding source. Mr. Morrisette said as a back up plan he would ask the Commission to entertain utilizing the agency's Extension and Auxiliary funding for support of the air filtration system design/installation if it's not feasible to obtain funding from the original bond for construction or we are unable to obtain a special bond authorization for that particular project. He said first we need to look at the first two options; the New Haven project came in around \$700,000 under its original estimate in terms of the bid. He said depending on when the Hartford project goes to bid hopefully we will also see that same savings and value added. He said our Facility Engineer sent some estimates out yesterday regarding the cost of that and DPW is concerned that it is only one piece of the puzzle and we may also have to increase the airflow because of the impact to the system thus it may not be reflective of the entire need. We will have to look at it from an engineering perspective. He said potentially the cost is in the vicinity of \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Mr. Morrisette also reported as a follow up on the Danbury issue that the proposed legislation did not pass. He said Rep. Godfrey informed him a week or two before the Session ended that it was his intention to address it through the budget process, probably the budget implementer. He said no matter which direction that actually goes the other question that he posed to the Schools at the Education meeting last week is whether or not as an agency they would still be interested in us pursuing the original legislative proposal written and approved by the Commission about two months ago. He said there seemed to be interest and it would help us to address future requests from entities for consideration as Regional Fire School. He said it would be his anticipated action to follow up on that and put that into a legislative package. The normal timeframe to do this is mid-October to ship the package to OPM so unless we hear something otherwise from the Commission we will pursue the language that has been in place.

Moving to item 4c.) FY09 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette stated that today is the final day for entities to utilize their Vouchers. We were fortunate to have heard from an additional six or seven fire companies since our last meeting that previously had not responded to us. Several of them were in the form of a direct check or payouts to those entities. He said we will certainly be lapsing funds in that particular account, which is unfortunate, but that's the situation and the Democrat's proposal holds true the same amount of funding would be available next fiscal year. He thanked Commissioners for their assistance.

Commissioner Brady asked if we have an idea of how much funding will lapse.

Mr. Morrisette said not off hand but he would guess if Vouchers aren't spent in full it could be in the vicinity of about \$40,000.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrisette said he is pleased to report that there is a zero balance in the Entry level training reimbursement account. We've expended all the funding as of a week ago. He said Commissioners are aware once the rescission was made there was about \$13,000 to \$17,000 remaining. We made final payouts in the order of reimbursement requests received and date of certification. He also recognized Yvonne Lewis and Ed Bycenski for all their efforts in getting those payouts made.

Moving to item 4e.) New England Disaster Training Center Presentation- Chairman Carozza said if there were no objections we would defer the presentation until later in the meeting.

Moving to item 4f.) NFPA 1403 Tentative Interim Amendment (TIA) Proposal – Mr. Piskura reported that he has organizational approval to use the North American Fire Training Director's (NAFTD) to pursue the TIA with the NFAP and he's working with Pat Marlatt of Maryland Fire Rescue Institute to articulate the argument so that is in process. He said last week he went to the TRADE Region I and II meeting and this conversation was also brought up there and they were a little more militant. He said Nassau County School and New York City fire department training was there and they are also 100% in agreement that the TIA not only must be submitted but they expect it to be accepted. There is general agreement amongst the fire service community that's involved in Burn buildings that it is an onerous requirement. He said once our TIA is created the TRADE Region is also going to add their voice to it which then picks up the Metropolitan fire chiefs and training officers.

Moving to item 5a.) Mileage Reimbursement Policy Revision – Mr. Morrisette said he has this item as a place holder. He said based upon the status of the budget we would like to hold off on discussing it. It is readily apparent that we will have to make some significant cuts to our operational side of the agency but we don't know to what degree thus we will put this issue on hold.

Moving to item 5b.) Summer Meeting Schedule – Mr. Morrisette asked the pleasure of the Chair regarding summer meetings. Typically we don't meet in the months of July and August unless necessary. He said we will certainly keep the Commission apprised day by day as the budget process goes through the final stages and will forward to Commissioners electronically any of the information they may require.

Commissioner Brady remarked that Vice Chairman Kowalski had mentioned that at some point we might be meeting with the Legislator about the CPR/AED issue and asked if there is any movement on it.

Mr. Morrisette said he has not spoken to him about a possible date but he did tell him that he did solicit at the Education meeting last week the status of that training on a regional level. It appears out of the nine Regional Fire Schools only two offers the training currently as part of their Firefighter I programs so at least we have a general survey and the Regional School's account for well over 50% of the Entry level training that occurs statewide.

Moving to item 5c.) FY09 Annual Report – Mr. Morrisette said we typically would seek authorization to submit the annual report as it is due for submittal prior to our next scheduled meeting. He said we haven't yet received the directives in terms of the composition of the report, due date, etc but typically it is due for submittal around September 1 to the Governor and General Assembly.

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 this Friday is the Independence Day holiday observation so we will be off that day and Monday July 6 is one of the three furlough days required in the new fiscal year so we are ensuring that our customers are aware of that through our website, listserv, voicemail auto attendant. We are also asked to leave an emergency contact number on our telephone system which will be his cell phone number. He also said we have the Introduction to the Fire Service second program scheduled to begin on Monday so we will have activities ongoing even though it is a furlough day. Impacted staff will swap their furlough day to a later date.

Mr. Piskura reported on the June Fire School statistics. He said we offered 60 courses and of that 55 courses were delivered, five were cancelled. There were 896 students that participated but it didn't appear to be that many students on campus because there were significant numbers attending off campus classes. He said 896 students participated which is more than we estimated in this economy so we were very pleased with the results.

Mr. Morrisette added that registration was over 1,000 students but actual attendees it came down to 896.

Mr. Piskura also reported that we're involved with a project with Jones & Bartlett Publishers. They are going to be shooting a video here which will become incorporated as part of a training video that will be for sale in a CD or DVD format in the future. He said it is a companion series and we know the subject matter but we don't know what textbook it will compliment. He said they asked to use our facility and some of our resources and we're going to provide that for them in exchange for brand placement of the Connecticut Fire Academy in the background.

Mr. Morrisette said the Auditors are still here. He said he checked last week and they expect another three weeks here. There is only one of three Auditors remaining as the other two have been assigned elsewhere. He said we're very curious of the draft report which we will have an opportunity to respond to.

Chairman Carozza said we would now return to item 4e.

Moving to item 4e.) New England Disaster Training Center Update – Mr. Piskura said approximately two years ago we were approached by Lenny Guercia from Department of Public Health (DPH) about a project he was working on with the Military department. In exchange for using some of our classroom space they would incorporate some of our requests for project development at Camp Hartell. He introduced General Walter Lippincott of the CT National Guard to give the Commission an overview of the New England Disaster Training Center (NEDTC).

General Lippincott gave an overview of the NEDTC. The project encompasses a number of agencies such as the DPH, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, DEMHS and the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. It would be located on multiple properties at Bradley International Airport. Federal grant funding was secured by the DPH and Military department in the amount of \$8.1 million which predominantly will be used to purchase or build assets such as facilities as well as equipment. Typically federal funding related to Homeland Security goes to support what they call demonstration projects, successful local state and regional projects. Regionally located national asset will greatly enhance military and first responder capabilities. Current funding will be fully obligated this fiscal year and the NEDTC will be operational for military training and first responders this time next fiscal year. Current projects include design and construction, training curriculum, website and marketing. Additional funding in the amount of \$1,225,000 will be needed this fiscal year to allow for project completion as originally designed or the project will be phased-in as future funding is secured. There will be no funding after October 1, 2009 for change orders for current fiscal year contracts. Funding must be secured for operation and maintenance. Estimated sustainment funding needed is \$1.8 million per fiscal year.

A brief question and answer period followed.

Chairman Carozza thanked General Lippincott for his presentation.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:35 am.

Dated:

Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary