



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



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**MINUTES OF THE MAY 29, 2007 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Peter Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Gomeau, Kowalski, Mitchell, Nicol, Ouellette, Schenck, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewis, Morrissette and McGowan were present.

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

Chairman Carozza asked the Commission to take a moment of silence in honor of Captain John Keane of the Waterbury fire department who died in the line of duty.

Chairman Carozza called on State Fire Administrator Morrissette for an introduction of guests.

Mr. Morrissette introduced one guest to the meeting as George Pohorilak, Director, Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications, Department of Public Safety. He said Mr. Pohorilak will be doing a presentation on the proposed Public Safety Services Data Network.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the April 24, 2007 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to approve the Minutes of the April 24, 2007 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Reports April 15, 2007 –May 14, 2007.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the Staff Reports for the period of April 15, 2007 – May 14, 2007. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza stated if there were no objections we would move to agenda item 5a.

Moving to item 5a.) Public Safety Services Data Network Overview – Mr. Pohorilak distributed a copy of the Public Safety Services Data Network Feasibility Study Report

and some key slides from the Power Point presentation. He gave an overview of the public safety services data network and how it began back in 2005. He said back in 2005 the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET) was approached by James Thomas then of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to look into the subject of data connectivity for public safety and they represented the police side of the equation. They wanted the Enhanced 9-1-1 Commission to provide some funding for that. He said their view was that 9-1-1 involves more than just police, it involves police, fire and EMS so they had to have the statutory references changed relating to what 9-1-1 could fund. The General Assembly and Governor Rell signed into law Public Act 05-181 which allowed funding from the Enhanced 9-1-1 Telecommunications Fund to be used for recurring and capital expenses related to public safety services data networks. The existing statewide systems in Connecticut are antiquated, incomplete and not integrated. The stand alone legacy network systems that Connecticut public safety agencies use today do not meet the bandwidth requirements for current uses and are grossly inadequate for near term future data transmission requirements. The Enhanced 9-1-1 system does not have data connectivity to provide for next generation 9-1-1 functionality to the state's 107 public safety answering points (PSAPs) therefore PSAP disaster recovery and business continuity needs to be improved. Mr. Pohorilak said numerous public safety first responders and providers including fire departments and emergency management and homeland security do not have any data connectivity to receive nor transmit critical data for emergency services. Public Act 05-161 enabled OSET to initiate a planning process for the creation of an integrated police, fire, EMS and homeland security data network. Initial funding has been used to develop this feasibility study, which identifies current stand alone public safety networks, projected bandwidth requirements for current network users and new network users and makes recommendations for network technology solutions for a new integrated public safety data network for all of Connecticut's public safety first responders and providers. The OSET began conducting some research regarding all the data networks out there and there is a multitude of data networks. OSET initiated the process which led to this report in the fall of 2005 by bringing public safety stakeholders together for general discussions. Surveys of current systems and needs were distributed and data was collected. Presentations to Department of Information Technology (DOIT) resulted in the determination that a feasibility study was necessary. Consultant services were retained to do a comprehensive feasibility study and began work in the spring of 2006. The study was completed in November of 2006 and the findings concluded that cost effective improved data transport services can be implemented while achieving substantial reduced costs. This presents a rather astounding win-win opportunity whereby the state of Connecticut could implement a vastly improved, state of the art network and save over \$100 million over 20 years. Mr. Pohorilak said the simplest way to understand the options which have been identified is to look at the table on page 16 of the report which details the comparison of selected technologies versus existing frame relay ATM networks. Over a projected ten year period a hybrid Resilient Packet Ring Network (RPR) – ATM Network would result in an estimated \$73 Million savings over the ten year projected period and \$102 Million over a 20 year projected period. The hybrid RPR option was determined to be the least costly, the most progressive, the most packet efficient and was ranked the highest of all options by the consultant team. Option C and option D also show significant savings over the

projected period but were not rated as highly. All option savings were calculated against Option A, which represents the status quo, a continuation of the existing legacy frame relay network with the new sites added on. It is a given that the need for public safety data networks will continue, it is also a given that the need for data and voice convergence, increased bandwidth (larger amount of data), and integrated interoperable data systems will grow exponentially over the next decade. He said the study is very technical and comprehensive and he's distributed hundreds of the report across the state because everyone needs to see and understand what we can achieve. He said the next step would be to get a Request for Information (RFI) which may result in a Request for Proposals for the 9-1-1 centers and get the connectivity which hopefully will push them to the next level. He said no one can deny that this is a good thing to do for the state of Connecticut and it would put us on the map as the leader in the nation. He said if anyone has questions, he's happy to answer them.

There was a brief discussion with questions and answers on what legislative and statutory changes are necessary to move the project forward as funding is limited.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Pohorilak for his presentation to the Commission.

Commissioner Johnson arrived at 10:05 am.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update –Mr. Morrisette gave a brief report regarding the budget. He said as most Commissioners are aware the Legislature is still in Session, hopefully coming to a conclusion next week thus we're awaiting approval of an agency budget. We haven't heard of any changes to what has been proposed thus far so we'll keep Commissioners up to date. He reported regarding staffing. We finally received a certified list of candidates for the position of Trainer. There were 37 individuals on that list and we had to send out a letter of inquiry to determine whether or not they met the Fire Service Instructor certification requirement for our agency. He said those were due by last Friday and we hopefully will be able to move forward in filling the single Trainer vacancy we currently have. Mr. Morrisette also reported that Tom McGowan in our Certification Division is working with DAS to expand the number of part time positions to begin the process of segregating our Adjunct Trainers from Adjunct testing personnel. That will eliminate individuals who provide both testing and training which at times, from a test validity and impartiality standpoint, could cause issues. He said that process could take approximately six to 12 months to build out but is something we're beginning to work on. He asked Commissioners if they had any questions.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if that is a retroactive arrangement.

Mr. Morrisette replied that the decision we had made is anyone who is currently on staff can continue to work for both Divisions. Any new hires would be required to work for one Division or the other. He said he expects over time once we build out those positions those personnel would be the priority staffers to be scheduled for the different test deliveries. He said it may come to a point where we really are very good about filling every request but it's almost to a breaking point now where we are behind with test

results approaching eight weeks which is beyond our regulatory cap of six weeks. Tests are scored very rapidly however to process all the paperwork involved and print and mail certificates is approaching eight weeks currently.

Mr. Morrisette also mentioned that we're working on an initiative with the computer consultant to have the ability to upload score information rapidly so students will be able to check online their results so they will have information whether they passed or failed possibly within a few days of a test. It would probably still take six to eight weeks during peak training/testing periods before the actual certificate is mailed. He said that doesn't exclude the possibility for the future of having people download certificates.

Commissioner Kowalski remarked that would be good because it becomes an issue when people are trying to get for example Firefighter I to apply for Firefighter II. He said they can't apply for Firefighter II until they know they've passed Firefighter I so it creates a bit of a problem.

Commissioner Ouellette asked if there is an advantage of merging or segregating Instructors because that could hinder our efforts in the future by not having one because you're on one side.

Mr. Morrisette said it comes down to the validity of the system. He said we began that way and somehow transitioned to begin using people who are involved with training to begin delivering testing. Somehow what began as a segregated group of people because of demand of services or unavailability transitioned to the system we now have. The average number of people we send to a local practical examination is probably three to four whereas originally it use to be just one person traveling throughout the state doing a spot check. He said its much more labor intensive but we need to begin from a test security standpoint segregating the workforce. He said he believes it will all work out in the end.

Commissioner Nicol asked if the eight week period includes all candidates.

Mr. Morrisette replied yes. He said if a candidate takes a test today they probably won't receive their results back for a couple of months and it doesn't matter what level. Recruit class participants are the only group that receives their results by the conclusion of the class.

Commissioner Nicol asked what is the situation with local municipalities when they are hiring people and how does this affect them.

Mr. Morrisette said the only anomaly is the Recruit class. As stated, we provide for immediate results as that is done internally so that is the only one that is different than any other. He said we really don't run into that problem often. Most department especially volunteer departments will have a probationary requirement that they be certified within a certain amount of time. He said fire departments or municipalities are well aware that it takes time to get results back and he's never heard of anyone's

membership or employment being in jeopardy. He said if that was ever made known to use we would work with that department or with the individual or municipality to ensure that they have the information that they need.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if there is anyway to provide a list of student grades to the lead Instructor of the class.

Mr. Morrissette said that Instructors are given the option to fill out a Release of Test Score form. He stated that brings to mind one item he forgot to discuss at last month's meeting relating to the Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC). He said they ruled against him in a request from John Bolton who was seeking test scores for a group of Bridgeport firefighters. He said he provided Mr. Bolton with information on whether or not the individuals were certified (pass). Historically we had been advised that we cannot provide test scores to anyone except the individual test taker. He said we actually received guidance from the FOI not to release scores. When it was time for the hearing, the FOI Commissioner found that we were in violation so he had to release the test scores for those individuals to Mr. Bolton. As part of this issue, Mr. Bolton was asserting that certain members who passed the certification test were not U.S. citizens therefore they shouldn't be firefighters. He said Mr. Bolton also requested that we revoke the certification of at least one Bridgeport firefighter because he's a non U.S. citizen. Mr. Morrissette said he sought some guidance from the Attorney General's office related to that and they cannot identify any federal or state law which prohibits a non U.S. citizen from being a firefighter so he wrote back to Mr. Bolton asking him for legal guidance as to where this prohibition exist. He said if he comes up with something we'll revisit the issue and bring it back to the Commission. He said in essence, the FOI Commission says we could post everyone's test score on the internet if we wanted to which historically we've only provided that information to the student. Also our regulation says that information only goes to the student by first class mail however if there is a release of test score form signed by the student allowing us to release that information to someone else we do oblige that.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson gave a brief report. He said the Education Committee last met on April 26th. The May meeting was cancelled due to no new development on any of the projects. The New Haven project is still in design. The Hartford County project was slated to have their first meeting with the Architectural Engineering firm last week and the land acquisitions for Eastern Connecticut and the Valley Schools are still pending. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 26th in Wethersfield.

Moving to item 4c.) Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the Limited Access Highway (LAH) Supplemental Grant Award program. He said we don't have a list of departments today but letters are being mailed to all eligible fire companies reminding them they have until the end of June to spend their funding. He said we're doing relatively well; we just have to remind people that if they don't use the funding they will loose it as we're not able to carry over any funds.

Moving to item 4d.) New London County Incident Management Team (IMT) Recognition – Mr. Morrissette said we have no new updates or meeting minutes from the meetings that the Commission had requested.

Moving to item 4e.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrissette stated that we distributed today an updated legislative tracking chart. At this point we have about one week remaining in the Legislative Session. The Joint Council has scheduled a last push lobby day tomorrow at the Capitol so representatives from the various organizations were invited to go to the Capitol and at least be visible in uniform. He said if Commissioners have questions on any Bill he would be happy to answer.

Moving to item 5b.) 2008 Legislative Session Initiatives - Mr. Morrissette said he just wanted to plant a seed for the next Session even though this Session is not quite over. He said planning for our next Legislative Session needs to be done over the summer months so we as an agency normally have to have any proposals in by August or early September. Because we normally don't meet in July or August, he said he wanted to remind Commissioners that if they foresee any legislative needs we need to begin discussing it in June to allow for research and planning over the summer. With the Training Bill or at least funding moving forward it may be time to revive discussions about mandating Firefighter I certification for all new active firefighters. He said people had been hesitant about moving forward with that concept from the standpoint that it would be an unfunded mandate. Therefore, if the funding comes to fruition, that argument goes away. Mr. Morrissette said from the last research that was done probably five plus years ago showed better than 95% of the departments statewide currently mandate Firefighter I certification thru either bylaw, probationary or contracts. He said he believes it is something we need to begin looking at. There are hundreds of other professions that mandate certain types of training or CEU's and the fire service other than what is identified through CONNOSHA isn't mandated to any standardized level. He said he offers this as one item for consideration of discussion.

Commissioner Schenck said in light of Mr. Pohorilak's presentation here and the potential down the road for these changes in communication it might be appropriate to work with them on that legislation that they are going to be introducing in terms of making sure that we as a profession get involved in terms of funding.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that is certainly something we need to be a participant in and OSET has been very inclusive of the fire service in the process. He said there has been a number of fire service people much more technically oriented than he is who have been involved and can see the future big picture as it relates to technology. Most of what is in the study as it relates to the fire service is really just a pipedream as there is nothing in existence currently. He said thru brainstorming, we were able to identify many of the things we would like to get involved in from training right down to instant messaging and regular communications, etc. if funding was made available.

Commissioner Schenck asked if we could quantify those in terms of dollars and then quantify in terms of adding two more cents on the 9-1-1 fee realizing we may get resistance to that.

Mr. Morrissette replied that the best way to do that is through professional consultant services. He said maybe at a future meeting we could invite Michael Varney who is more in tune with the bottom line on these things might be able to quantify. He also said there are a lot of parallel projects going on with DEMHS and Homeland Security funding for the Capital region. He said the Capital Region Council of Governments is using a piece of their funding for a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) project to expand upon the Police CAPTAIN system that the fire service will benefit from. He said he would do some more research and report back to the Commission next month or have someone present who can discuss with the Commission some of what they would foresee as necessary. Mr. Morrissette also stated that Senators Stillman and Roraback have a lot of ownership of 9-1-1 as they were the champions for the legislation back when the funding was increase and the network enhanced. He said he had spoken a couple of times with Senator Stillman about possibly using 9-1-1 funds for fire service training and she was adamant that she did not want those funds used for fire service training. He said maybe their viewpoints are a bit more parochial but it doesn't mean we can't ask or at least identify what our needs would be because there maybe a separate funding source.

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Commissioner Brady asked relative to the training bill if the Academy would be able to handle the Recruit training and what might be perceived as a significant increase in Recruit candidates.

Mr. Morrissette replied that we've looked at it from a general sense because there's really no way to predict. While the last Recruit class was significantly large, the numbers for the next class are reduced. Obviously, no funding is in place yet. He said he can't predict demand but some of the larger departments such as Hartford have a significant amount of anticipated retirements that will happen over the next two to three years where they would conduct that training themselves. He said historically in the past, departments like Hartford and New Haven have taken in Recruits from other municipalities to piggy back on their Recruit class if space was available. Therefore, he could foresee some of that happening. He said we would have to look at options of delivery methods here at the Academy but the lodging should not be an issue as we could find all the lodging we need on Route 75.

Mr. Morrissette also reported that one key concern he has which may not be addressed is the burden we will undertake in administering the program. When the fiscal impact statement was being written he provided input which indicated it may take at least a ½ time Business Office position to administer. He did not see this information carried forward in the bill, fiscal impact statement or anywhere else. We will need to be able to process reimbursement requests in a timely manner.

A brief discussion on the issue followed.

Commissioner Wilkinson took a moment to compliment the administration and Instructor staff for handling the last Recruit class so well, being that the size of the class was much beyond anything they've ever done before and he believes it was very successful.

Commissioner Nicol asked what would be the effective date of the training bill if it gets passed.

Mr. Morrissette said it appears the actual Bill is not moving but that funding has been included in the budget therefore it would take effect July 1, 2007. He also said if no funding is provided for support staff person we would have to go to the DAS SMART Business Office as they will need to provide assistance.

Commissioner Nicol asked if there is any way to get someone on staff here at the Academy because this will be a large sum of funding that needs to be administered.

Mr. Morrissette replied that we would have to check with OPM to see if any of that funding can be utilized to provide support staff. He said he's not sure what the bill specifically says but he hopes most departments especially the smaller ones will use the Regional Fire schools to support their entry level needs. He said he would prefer to deal with the nine Regional Fire schools and maybe a few metro type fire departments that would conduct their own training.

Commissioner Nicol remarked that one of the things we hadn't talked about is we shouldn't be paying for just the training. The training should be contingent upon certification. He said if we're going to reimburse for training it would have to be for successful completion which means to be certified. He also said there maybe departments out there that may do Firefighter I program and or rookie program that may not necessarily require certification and that is something we should look at and discuss.

Mr. Morrissette replied that we would attempt to layout a framework as to how we foresee administering this at least initially and it doesn't mean it can't be changed.

Commissioner Brady said the way the bill is structured right now it does tie the payment to certification.

Commissioner Johnson remarked that this is his final meeting as a Commissioner. As Commissioners are aware he retired from the fire service after 41 years effective February 22, 2007 and serve 26 years as fire chief. He said he served on the Commission for about 20 years and served with some very good administrators who have moved on to bigger and better things. He said we've come along way from Meriden and the Commission has always been dedicated to the fire service and Chairman Carozza has done an outstanding job and it's been a pleasure working with him. He thanked all the

Commissioners for their support and especially State Fire Administrator Morrissette for an outstanding job.

Chairman Carozza thanked Commissioner Johnson personally and on behalf of the Commission for his many many years of service to the Commission and to the Academy and certainly to the Connecticut fire service. He said he's certainly had a positive impact and thanked him for his friendship and support over the years.

Mr. Morrissette reported that the June Fire School brochures have been distributed and several of the classes are already filled and the Cadet Camp is full as well.

He also reported that we're still on for the July class for the National Registry Paramedic testing with 10 prospective students that have applied. He said we hope that number will grow as we promote it in Connecticut and within the region.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:45 am.

Dated:

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