



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



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**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 25, 2008 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, Blaschik, Dagon, Kowalski, Mitchell, Nelson, Nicol, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewis Morrissette and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

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

Mr. Morrissette introduced Mr. Fritz Hilbert Chief of the Mystic Fire Department who is expected to be a nominee to the Commission replacing Commissioner Wilkinson representing the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. We are also joined by Bill Higgins who represents us as our State Fire Rescue Disaster Response Plan Coordinator.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the October 28, 2008 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2008 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report October 15, 2008 – November 14, 2008.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to approve the staff report for the period of October 15, 2008 – November 14, 2008. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol asked about item 1d under the Administration report whether there is a problem with the request for an additional .23 acres of land for the Hartford County facility expansion project.

Mr. Morrissette replied he had a discussion with Chet Haber, Director of the Hartford County Fire Emergency Plan who had spoken with DPW Project Manager Don Ouillette and that some changes may be necessary.

Commissioner Nicol also questioned staff report item 5a regarding the procurement of a trailer unit for the Statewide Honor Guard to store and transport equipment utilized by the unit. He asked if they are planning to tow the trailer with a private vehicle.

Mr. Morrissette replied that the majority of the time it would be pulled with a state agency vehicle; typically when they are activated to provide some level of service. We have approval from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for non-state agency personnel to drive vehicles.

Commissioner Nicol asked where they plan to store the trailer.

Mr. Morrissette said he anticipates the trailer would be stored on-site at the Academy unless we can locate a no cost indoor storage area.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the budget. He said most Commissioners are aware that a Special Session was held yesterday. He said it's impact upon the Commission were slated reductions of \$200,000 from the Entry Level Training Reimbursement program. He said he anticipates that occurred as he heard on the news this morning that the Legislature made \$78,000,000 million in cuts and secured another \$300,000,000 in additional revenue primarily through federal grants. He said we will continue to make payouts as the claims are brought forth and if we need to carry any over into the new fiscal year that's what we'll do. He also said since our last meeting he's had an opportunity to attend some county fire service organization meetings and we're beginning to see some of the old claims that were never submitted from last fiscal year. As approved by the Commission, we will pay claims up to one year from the date of certification. He said we lapse a significant sum of money last fiscal year but we probably won't be doing that this year. He said he expects to expend the entire appropriation this fiscal year. He asked if Commissioners had any questions. Mr. Morrissette also reported regarding staffing. He said last week we accepted the resignation from one of our full-time Trainer's Bill Auclair. He also reported regarding Eric Munsell's return to the agency from military leave effective December 5th. While it clears up one issue, it certainly leaves us short staffed and we do not anticipate refilling the other vacant trainer position. He asked Commissioners if they had any questions.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Nicol stated that he gave a detailed report last month and the Committee has not met since then. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 4th in Wethersfield.

Mr. Morrissette said the only additional thing he can state is we are getting almost daily questions from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) that relates to the agency's budget as well as questions related to the Regional Fire Schools.

Commissioner Murphy arrived at 9:40 am.

A brief question and answer period followed.

Moving to item 4c.) FY09 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette said as noted in our staff report we had a successful meeting with the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) permitting us to transfer \$100,000 from the agency's Other Expense Account to the Supplemental Grant Program Account. He said the good thing about the process is the money was immediately transferred and all backlogged claims have been paid to any fire companies that had submitted their request for direct payment. Payment vouchers have been issued for those fire companies that notified us. He circulated a list of fire companies that have not yet responded to us and asked Commissioners to reach out to them and ask them to contact us or their funding may lapse.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry-Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrisette said it appears that at this point in the year we have \$262,000 which has already or is in the process of being paid out. We've had a significant amount of recruit firefighters because of the recruit classes in some of the larger cities in addition to our recruit class in house here at the Academy. He said taking into consideration the Governor's reduction of \$200,000 we're probably about 45% through the funding to date and not quite half-way through the year. He said he thinks we'll expend nearly all the funds that were appropriated and not rescinded and we may have to carry some over into the new fiscal year.

Moving to item 4e.) NFPA 1001 and 472 Updates – Mr. Morrisette asked with the Commission's approval we would like to move this item under matters to be raised and Director of Certification McGowan will conduct a presentation for the Commission in the Auditorium. He said it's a brief presentation but we wanted to also highlight some of the audio visual upgrades we've made to improve the equipment that we have available.

Moving to item 5a.) 2009 Commission Meeting Proposed Schedule - Mr. Morrisette said Commissioners should have a proposed meeting schedule for 2009 which we need to submit to the Secretary of the State. He said the most immediate change is the January meeting where we have an invitation from the Public Safety Academy magnet school up in Enfield to host our meeting. He asked whether Commissioners had any questions, thoughts or ideas for any off site meeting locations to consider.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approved the 2009 meeting schedule as proposed. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5b.) Personnel Actions – DAS SmART – Mr. Morrisette said he doesn't see Tim Geary our Human Resources representative from the DAS SmART Team whom was invited to attend. He said Mr. Geary had brought to his attention an issue with positions classified as Temporary Worker Retire rehires These are individuals who may have been full-time or part-time state employees who retired and are permitted to continue working up to 120 days per year. He said we have approximately six of these employees, typically working part-time for the agency for 10 or 20 years who realize they can continue working and collect a pension. He said there's been an issue at a higher level where he's been asked to submit the names of all of those individuals to the Governor's office and request approval for them to continue working only through the

end of the calendar year. If approved, we will have to resubmit their names for continuation of their services. He said there are some long-standing employees in the group and we've not notified them as yet because he doesn't have enough background detail of what's prompting this or what the issue is. He said he wanted Commissioners to be aware in the case they hear from any of our adjuncts in the future. He said he assumes they will be contacted by our human resources representative to make them aware.

Moving to item 5c.) CT EMS Advisory Board Vacancy - Mr. Morrissette stated that Mr. Auclair had stepped down from that position about a month ago. He said we do have a vacancy on that Board and wish to determine whether any Commission member was interested in filling it. Mr. Morrissette asked Commissioner Dagon if he's still a member of that Board.

Commissioner Dagon replied no he used to represent the CT Chiefs but he stepped down when he became a member of the Commission and he's not certain if his position has been filled.

Mr. Morrissette said the EMS Advisory Board is charged to assist in coordinating the efforts of all persons and agencies in the state concerned with the emergency medical service system, and shall render advice on the development of the emergency medical service system when needed. He said it's a large advisory board who advises the Commissioner of Public Health for issues involving EMS. We've been an active player on that Committee over the years. Obviously the fire service provides a significant amount of emergency medical services so it's important that the Chiefs and others are represented well.

Commissioner Brady asked how often the Advisory Board meets.

Mr. Morrissette said he believes it's monthly but they probably take the summer off like our Commission.

Commissioner Dagon said they meet once a month the second Wednesday of the month from 9 am to 11 am at Connecticut Hospital Association in Wallingford.

Chairman Carozza added that if there is any interest to let the State Fire Administrator know and we will submit the name.

Moving to item 5d) N.E. Disaster Training Center - Mr. Morrissette said a very positive development has arisen where we have been invited by the Adjutant General to participate in an initial meeting regarding the creation of the New England Disaster Training Center which would be located here on multiple properties at Bradley International Airport. He said both the Military Department and the Department of Public Health (DPH) had been lobbying for a number of years in Washington for federal funding to support this initiative. He said most Commissioners are aware that the state had procured a Mobile Hospital back a few years ago to help with surge capacity. Typically a lot of the federal funding related to Homeland Security goes to support what they call demonstration projects, successful local state and regional projects which they

would like to try to replicate in other locations throughout the country. He said the military department was successful through Congressman Larson's office and others to obtain a grant of \$8 million dollars. He said the \$8 million predominantly will go to buy or build hard assets such as facilities as well as equipment. There is a cap on what can be spent for these of \$750,000 for building structures, ect. He said we had put together a wish list totaling approximately \$1.3 million for some planned projects here at the Academy. This project encompasses a number of items such as the Air National Guard base, the Connecticut Fire Academy, National Guard Aviation Support facility, the DEMHS USAR rubble pile as well as Camp Hartell. The DPH stores the mobile hospital at Camp Hartell located off of Rte 75.

He said we are a true partner and we told them how grateful we were because the fire service does not typically have a lot of federal grants available particularly to state entities such as us. He said our wish list includes some items that are part of the Regional Schools enhancement project such as a trench rescue prop. We are also looking at a long planned rail car prop, possibly to be located at Camp Hartell. He also said we expect some additional enhancement of audio visual equipment similar to what Commissioners will see later this morning in our Auditorium. He said we have proposals to upgrade the audio visual in the Commission meeting room as well as to complete the classrooms. DEMHS is also involved in this project particularly with possible enhancements or move of the USAR rubble pile. He said we're trying to get the synergy of all the facilities and pull them together. This is a multi-faceted project and they have to spend the funding by September of 2009 so they have less than a year to spend the funds.

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners or staff – Commissioner Nicol mentioned that we had a brief meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Association of State Fire Commissions at the end of the meeting last month. He said we had some general discussions and the State Fire Administrator had sent out a letter to the member states soliciting dates to hold the conference. He said it appears that the September 9-12, 2010 was the most favorable for most of the states so that will be the date we'll try to lock in. He said the next step will be to contact the Greater Hartford Convention Bureau to get some information from them on how they would like us to proceed maybe to either meet with them or put together a proposal. He said if any Commissioner has any thoughts or ideas to let him or the State Fire Administrator know.

Commissioner Brady asked if it would be appropriate to notify all the fire service organizations that we'll probably be looking for their support as they begin to plan for their budgets.

Commissioner Nicol replied that it might be premature to do that.

Mr. Morrissette also added that his budget proposal for some additional funding to support that endeavor has evaporated as would be expected in this very difficult fiscal climate.

Commissioner Wilkinson thanked members of the Commission and the staff that attended his retirement dinner. He said he appreciates it and hoped everyone enjoyed themselves. He said he'll cherish those memories very long.

Mr. Morrissette said Program Manager Mark Salafia from the Training division is here today to follow up on some information we had provided to the Commission a few months back regarding rumor of changes by the DMV to the Q licensure.

Mr. Salafia said State Fire Administrator Morrissette can probably provide more information on regulation changes. He said his information is through the DMV and awaiting the Secretary of the State's signature but basically this is a proposed regulation change that would require a fire apparatus driver of a vehicle over 26,001 lbs to either have a Class A or B commercial drivers license or have a Q Endorsement license. He said previous to this, it was his understanding that a Class B license was appropriate to drive an apparatus. He also said they are adding a section where if a person has a commercial drivers license and they want to down grade to a Q license that could be done without testing. He said this is going to require us to upgrade some of our training for the Q endorsement to provide proper training to the fire apparatus operators in the state that could require the Q Endorsement training. He said he feels one of the weak links is going to be getting Inspectors to come out to inspect these members even after they are trained so it's going to be a fairly large undertaking to get everyone up to speed.

Commissioner Brady said just for information he has a CDL that he had received through the grandfather provisions when they changed over and his license is now due for renewal and for the first time he is required to have a medical card which he's never had to get before.

Commissioner Kowalski added that Haz Mat individuals have to get fingerprinted so that's going to downgrade that license. He asked if we're teaching to the Q Endorsement.

Mr. Salafia replied yes.

There was a brief question and answer period on the issue.

Commissioner Kowalski asked a question relative to MRT certification and he knows we did this for Technical Rescue. He said he knows we got a very good response from DPH on making that transition. He asked if there is any consideration to have that mirrored in the Haz Mat certification.

Director of Certification McGowan said when we talked to DPH and they made their adjustments for us they said they would be reluctant to make any additional changes. He said he believes the way it was written, it was specific for the components under Technical Rescue but he doesn't mind going back and asking.

Mr. McGowan said he'll do some research and get back to Commissioner Kowalski.

Mr. Morrisette added that coincidentally he attended the State Firefighters Executive Board meeting last week and it was brought up that the Volunteer EMS Segment of the EMS community is opposed to what was approved for us. He said he's not sure if they are going to fight that or try to have it rescinded.

Commissioner Wilkinson said he doesn't recall the context in which it was brought up but whoever was talking about it reiterated that the Commissioner from DPH was still okay with it.

Mr. Morrisette said he mentioned that the doctors were in full support and served as our champions to bring the issue forward and have it approved.

Commissioner Kowalski said he doesn't want to open up a box if that's going to be a concern but if the Haz Mat could be inclusive that would be good.

Mr. McGowan said he will discuss the issue with his liaison to see if he thinks it's worthy to bring it to the Board and he'll inform Commissioner Kowalski of his findings.

Mr. Morrisette introduced Mr. Bill Higgins to provide a brief presentation on the DEMHS Credentialing Committee's progress on developing statewide position descriptions for Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) 4 and 10.

Mr. Higgins distributed copies of the draft documents created for the two ESFs, and described the development concepts used in creating them. The committee has been working on position descriptions for critical ESFs over the past six months, taking into consideration what has already been developed within the five Regions. He asked Commission members to provide feedback on the document before it is distributed for public comment.

A brief question and answer period followed.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Higgins for his presentation.

Mr. McGowan provided an update on the NFPA 1001 and 472 standards and "The Value of Combining Firefighter I and II Levels of Certification". The presentation came as a question from Commissioner Stankye after last month's meeting and from a couple of Regional Schools interested in combining the Firefighter I and II training curriculum and how that would affect the certification process. Mr. McGowan was also asked by Mr. Morrisette to analyze the present process based on the state's fiscal climate. Three factors were detailed during the presentation--curriculum, fiscal and impact. Mr. McGowan cited that with the revised NFPA 1001 standard there are a limited number of competencies remaining in the Firefighter II. As part of the analysis, the format of five examination visits by the Certification Division could be compressed to three visits whether testing for Firefighter I or the combined Firefighter I and II. This would result in a fiscal savings on vehicles and mileage, scheduling personnel, and office operations. It would be the responsibility of the instructor or Regional School to determine how the Firefighter II curriculum is delivered.

There was a brief discussion period and Commissioners Kowalski, Brady and Nelson stated concern for the additional time on learning for the student/firefighter and number of programs that could offered per year. This testing process would be implemented to meet a constituency request and would not affect or replace the present Firefighter I.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nelson to allow the Certification Division to test to a combined Firefighter I and II level of the NFPA 1001 standard without diminishing the Firefighter I testing process as it stands today. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. McGowan for providing the update.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.

Dated:

Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control