



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



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Page 1

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 25, 2003 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Blaschik, Cantor, Haber, Johnson, Kowalski, Milewski, Nicol, Stankye, Vendetta and Wilkinson. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Piechota, and Piskura were present.

There were no guests in attendance at the meeting.

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

Returning to agenda item 2.) Chairman Carozza called for questions or discussion regarding the September 30, 2003 and the October 28, 2003 Meeting Minutes.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2003 and October 28, 2003 Meetings. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza moved to agenda item 3.) Staff Report for the period October 18, 2003 through November 14, 2003.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to approve the Staff Report for the period October 18, 2003 through November 14, 2003. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza moved to item 4 a.) Unfinished Business - Mr. Morrissette gave a brief update regarding budget and staffing. He reported that there were no updates on the budget and the reduction options submitted over the past 30 days. Budget Narratives were submitted to the Office of Policy and Management as required. There are continued concerns regarding potential consolidation efforts during the 2004 Legislative Session.

Commissioner Nicol inquired whether there were any Legislative Committees currently charged with reviewing agency consolidations. Mr. Morrissette reported that at a recent Commissioners meeting at the Governor's Office it was mentioned that there is a committee currently charged with reviewing savings within state agencies. It was not

clear whether this is a Legislative Committee. The issue of consolidation was also recently mentioned at the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs meeting.

Mr. Morrisette also stated in regard to staffing, letters of invitation to interview for the position of Executive Secretary have been mailed to five candidates. Interviews will begin Friday, November 28th and conclude the following week. Also, a request has been submitted requesting permission to make a provisional appointment for the position of Trainer.

Moving to item 4b.) Mr. Morrisette reported that the Connecticut State Firefighters Association Education Committee plans to schedule a meeting in early December. The Committee has not met in approximately five months. They are waiting out the legislative process and are still hopeful the Bond Commission will meet and authorize funding for the Regional Fire School plan.

Commissioner Kowalski arrived at 9:49 a.m.

Moving to item 4c.) Mr. Piechota stated that at last month's meeting, a handout was distributed highlighting the current NFPA Standards edition. Agency Regulations state the most current NFPA Standard must be used for Certification when accepted and adopted by the Commission. Commission approval to adopt the new Standard editions is being sought.

Another discussion last month was in regard to the NFPA Standard for Fire Service Instructor I. Both the current and previous editions do not require a candidate for Fire Service Instructor I to be certified as a Firefighter II. The current agency Regulation does require Instructor candidates to be certified to the Firefighter II level. A survey of other states does indicate that all states allow direct entry of their Fire Service Instructor I candidates as long as they are members of the fire service.

Mr. Piechota stated that at this time he is seeking adoption of the new NFPA Standard editions. He would also like the Commission to decide whether Fire Service Instructor I will continue to require the prerequisite of certification of a Firefighter II or whether it should become direct entry. He recommends maintaining Firefighter II as the prerequisite thereby ensuring Instructors have fire service experience.

Commissioner Cantor underscored that the Fire Service Instructor I program prepares instructors to teach from prepared lesson plans and that subject matter expertise is not required at all times.

Director of Training Piskura requested that Commissioners seriously consider leaving the current Firefighter II prerequisite in place. Connecticut has in excess of 3,000 certified instructors, probably more than any other state. Often, when students graduate from the Fire Service Instructor I program they immediately begin teaching. It is not uncommon for these individuals to request Officer level teaching materials when they have never been officers themselves. This is a concern.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired what the position of the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association was as it relates to this issue. Commissioner Nicol indicated that he has not discussed this issue with his organization but felt the organization would support the continuation of the prerequisite.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Kowalski to adopt the new standard editions for the purpose of certification and to maintain the Firefighter II prerequisite for Fire Service Instructor I candidates. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4d.) Mr. Piechota stated that discussion began last month that the Commission currently has no re-certification policy for any level. He reported that there is a lot of discussion taking place nationwide regarding re-certification requirements particularly for the level of Fire Service Instructor. Of those states that he recently surveyed about half have some type of re-certification requirement. It would probably be appropriate for the Commission to explore this further.

Commissioner Vendetta inquired whether a new requirement would be imposed on those already certified. Mr. Piechota responded that implementation could grandfather those already certified and impose the requirement only on newly certified persons.

Commissioner Cantor commented that this would be an excellent direction to begin moving. He referenced the re-certification requirements for law enforcement officers. He inquired whether re-certification would be pursued for other levels. Also, he was interested to learn whether the cost for continuing education would be passed onto those certified.

Mr. Piechota stated that he is currently only interested in re-certification for instructors. The cost to implement would be minimal and could be passed on or possibly absorbed.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he agreed that re-certification is needed however he feels that it should incorporate all those certified. He felt it important to better define the overall impact and what you do with the individuals who do not maintain compliance. This is something the fire marshal community went through many years ago.

Mr. Piechota also stated that we may wish to look at the issue of currency. He will look to further develop this idea over the next several months.

Commissioner Nicol indicated that since this issue will impact his organization the most, he would like to have the opportunity to discuss this in greater detail with the membership. To date he has brought the issue up at a couple of regional meetings and the only comments he has received have been negative. The concern is that with all the issues the fire service faces today, all they are doing is going to school. This would just add to the burden.

Commissioner Nicol stated that management of such a system could be an administrative burden. He was also interested to learn how re-certification would impact reciprocity and whether the accrediting boards will be requiring this in the future.

Mr. Piechota indicated the accrediting boards are mainly interested in the process of testing. Currently they do not require accredited states to mandate re-certification.

Commissioner Nicol also stated that there could be labor issues for the career fire service. Chairman Carozza indicated that there could, but those could be worked through with enough advance notice.

Commissioner Vendetta stated similar issues were brought up when the fire marshals enacted continuing education for that group. At that time it was a legislative committee that recommended re-certification. The fire marshal community was able to work through the issues.

Commissioner Cantor stated as background from outside the fire service, the Community College system has been looking at four to five dozen licensed or certified occupations nationally in terms of re-certification/continuing education. This is most definitely a trend from virtually all trade, technical, professional, and public safety professions. Mandatory continuing education toward re-certification is the trend we are seeing.

Mr. Piskura indicated that he wanted to state for the record and reinforce what Mr. Piechota stated earlier is that many people submit for reciprocity thinking that the state of Connecticut is going to issue them a Connecticut certificate and that is not the case. Individuals can submit to the process of review but only if they are employed or a member of a department in our state.

Chairman Carozza asked how Commissioners would like to proceed.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that it would be appropriate to put together an informational package for review by the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association and the Connecticut Fire Chiefs as they are impacted the greatest.

Commissioner Nicol indicated that his organization has a meeting next week and he intends to bring this issue up for discussion.

Moving to item 5 a.) New Business – Juvenile Firesetter I Certification. Mr. Piechota stated that there is desire among those that offer juvenile firesetter intervention services to have the Commission begin testing and certifying to the NFPA 1035 Standard for that level.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Vendetta to implement testing to the level of Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 b.) Live Fire Suppression requirements for Firefighter I and II. Mr. Piechota stated that we do not have facilities statewide to appropriately test the eight types of fires required in the standard. To date, the Commission has permitted a sign-off by the fire chief or Regional Fire School Director that the objectives were met in training or on-the-job. Looking ahead, we may face some problems for the sign-off from our accrediting boards. He stated that he was uncomfortable with permitting a sign-off for on-the-job suppression as it cannot be adequately evaluated. Also, it may place candidates in violation with ConnOSHA. At this time he is proposing that we no longer permit a sign-off for on-the-job suppression to meet the live fire requirements.

Commissioner Nicol inquired what type of activities are required to meet the standard. Mr. Piechota stated that the requirements are stated on the sign-off form.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired how many candidates document compliance with a sign-off for on-the-job live fire suppression. Mr. Piechota indicated that he couldn't fully document that at this time as a single form is utilized and it does not differentiate as to how or where the objectives were met.

Commissioner Vendetta stated that we should revisit our reporting method. Possibly a sign-off could be delegated to a Company Officer as that person would be in a better position to evaluate the individual firefighter.

Through the Chairman, Mr. Piskura inquired whether the form could be modified to better capture what is taking place in the field. As a matter of public policy, it is difficult to take options away.

Mr. Piechota stated that he would modify the reporting process to better capture what is taking place in the field.

Moving to item 5 c.) DOJ Needs/Capabilities Survey. Mr. Morrisette stated that he was tasked with coordinating the collection of data from the state agency fire departments for the Department of Justice Needs and Capabilities Survey. He stated that he received excellent cooperation from the state agency fire chiefs and the data was submitted.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he could not over emphasize the need for local fire department to participate in their local data collection efforts. Future federal funding will rest with the data that is submitted.

Moving to item 5 d.) 2004 Meeting Schedule – Mr. Morrisette stated that the proposed Commission Meeting Schedule for 2004 was mailed to all Commissioners. At this time he is seeking approval to allow him to submit the schedule as proposed to the Secretary of the State.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the Commission's 2004 Meeting Schedule. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 e.) Executive Order 30 – Reduction of Printing and Mailing. Mr. Morrisette stated that the Governor signed Executive Order 30 in an effort to reduce printing and mailing by state agencies. We were required to submit a strategy to comply with this order as well as participate in new reporting requirements to verify compliance. Use of the internet and email provide a big savings. As an agency, we are a bit ahead of the curve as compared to other agencies in embracing technology. We could do so much more if we had dedicated Information Technology support personnel. We regularly attempt to make this case to our budget people.

Commission activities such as minutes, agendas and support documents are very paper intensive. We would like to begin transitioning Commission meeting materials to an electronic format for those that have that capability. Mr. Morrisette distributed a Commission contact list to members for update requesting that those Commissioners that would like to begin receiving meeting materials via email to identify themselves. This effort will not begin for some months when our new Executive Secretary is in place and trained.

Moving to item 5 f.) December Meeting Status – Mr. Morrisette stated with the holiday season approaching it has typically been the Commission's desire to cancel the December meeting, scheduled for December 30th, unless warranted by something unexpected.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkenson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to cancel the December 30, 2003 meeting unless warranted by something unexpected. Motion carried.

Moving to item 6 Comments from the Public. There were none.

Moving to item 7 Matters to be raised by Commissioners and Staff.

Commissioner Blaschik stated that he had an opportunity to just return from the first PARADE Conference held at the National Fire Academy. The new group is similar to the TRADE organization and has representatives from each State Fire Marshal's office, Metro Fire Marshals and representatives from the International Fire Marshals Association. This conference provided opportunities for networking, discussion on prevention and public education initiatives and updates on federal activities. Discussion on the FEMA grant program was very active. It was encouraged that departments that receive a grant should make every effort to send a thank you letter to members of their Congressional delegation. Feedback is very important to the future success of the program. Commissioner Blaschik also stated that representatives from Disney were at the meeting to report on a new interactive fire prevention exhibit being constructed at EPCOT that is expected to open at the end of 2004.

Commissioner Blaschik also reported that the National Association of State Fire Marshal's is trying to actively track, through their web site, fires on a local level involving the activation of a sprinkler.

Commissioner Johnson arrived at the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Commissioner Wilkinson inquired about a rumor that production and delivery of the Mass Decontamination Trailers has been suspended due to a whistle-blower complaint. No attendees had any information on this issue.

Commissioner Johnson apologized for being late as he had to attend a late scheduled meeting to establish a combined fire/police dispatch center in his city. He stated he had received a letter from Chief Wayne Sandford, who had requested the Commission approve a motion to assist the six regional haz-mat response teams in being designated as jurisdictions by the Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security. The purpose of this is to ensure that the response teams continue to receive equipment and or funding from the Division of Homeland Security. Without this recognition, the regional teams would not be eligible to receive future funding funneled down from the federal government. The six teams include the New Haven area, Norwich area, Hartford area, Waterbury area, Fairfield County and Northeast areas have all received equipment up to this point and their data has been recorded in the assessment process in one of the communities within their areas. For these regional teams to continue to receive funding, they must be designated a jurisdiction.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Johnson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to send a letter in support of the regional haz-mat teams to be recognized as jurisdictions.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired whether any legislative support would be necessary. Mr. Morrisette responded that a letter to the Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security should be sufficient.

Commissioner Nicol stated he had thought regional teams were the desired direction. Mr. Morrisette responded that was the case, however responsibility for administering the federal grant money has been transferred from the Office of Emergency Management to the Department of Public Safety.

There was no further discussion on the issue. Motion carried.

Commissioner Haber inquired whether all Commissioners are receiving correspondence from Mr. John Bolton. Mr. Morrisette reported that he is in communication with the Office of The Attorney General and it is their position not to take any action until Mr. Bolton's current litigation is acted upon.

Commissioner Vendetta stated that this would be his last meeting serving as a Commissioner. He will be sending the Governor a letter of resignation. Very shortly he will become a resident of Florida. He stated that it has been both a pleasure and privilege to serve on the Commission.

Chairman Carozza stated that on behalf of the Commission he thanked Commissioner Vendetta for his work and support and wished him well in his retirement.

Mr. Piskura thanked Commissioners Ouellette and Wilkinson for representing the body at Paul Nyerick's retirement party. He stated there has been a total of seven turnovers of personnel over the past year due to layoffs, retirements, bumping and a death.

Mr. Piskura passed out copies of the annual training calendar and asked Commissioners to assist in its distribution.

Mr. Morrissette reported that as a follow-up to the presentation last month by Certified Ambulance Group on Rescue Revenue Recovery, he would like to distribute a copy of the enabling legislation recently enacted in West Virginia.

Mr. Morrissette also reported on a call he had received from the Office of Policy and Management regarding potential funding to aid departments that previously participated in the Limited Access Highway Program. Nothing definitive is in place but there is activity in this area.

Mr. Morrissette also reported that Congress has re-authorized the U.S. Fire Administrator's position. He also reported that the agency is coordinating a program featuring the fire chief from Belfast City Northern Ireland who will be conducting a presentation on Civil Disturbances and Terrorism at the Legislative Office Building. Commissioners are invited to attend.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Dated: _____

Edward F. Haber, Secretary
Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control

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