



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



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MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26, 2002 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. on an informational basis in the absence of a quorum. The following members were present: Commissioners' Haber, Milewski, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioner Kowalski arrived at 10:04 a.m. Commissioners' Brammer, Gomeau, Johnson, Maheu, McDonald and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Lewandowski, O'Neil, Ouellette and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag

Moving to item 2 on the agenda Chairman Carozza called for questions on the minutes of the February 26, 2002 meeting.

Moving to item 3 on the agenda Chairman Carozza called for questions on the Staff Report for the period of February 15, 2002 through March 14, 2002.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Fallen Firefighters' Memorial project. He stated that he had received for the Commission's review a set of plans for the memorial depicting the shift from the west side to the east side of the administration building. These plans do not include the lighting or the landscape plans. As an entity that leases from DOT we are required to present all plans to them prior to commencing with any construction work. Essentially nothing can happen until DOT approves the project. Chairman Herrick has already spoken to Mr. Jaworski, DOT's Head Engineer to fast track the review, however the lighting plan is required before he can give an approval. The next meeting of the Memorial Committee is scheduled for next Thursday. In a recent conversation with our Facility Engineer, Mr. Herrick indicated that as of today he has not heard back from any of the contractors he had been in touch with about doing work. Our Facility Engineer has done some leg work on his own and has spoken with one of the on-call state contractors to bid on the project as a backup. We'll have to wait until next Thursday's Committee meeting to see if the Chairman is still talking about May 5 as the date for a formal dedication.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about landscape plans.

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Mr. Morrisette stated that the landscape and lighting plans have not yet been finalized.

Commissioner Nicol expressed concerns over the fact that the plan shows concrete curbing to be installed in front of the memorial instead of granite curbing.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he would pass this information on to the committee.

Moving to item 4 b.) Commissioner Wilkinson gave an update on the CSFA Education Committee. He referenced an email he received from Al Hawkins that stated that the process for selecting the consultant has moved along as expected. Last Thursday all the prospective consultants did a walk-through at the Eastern Connecticut Regional School to familiarize themselves with a typical regional school. Interviews were conducted in Hartford at the Department of Public Works last Friday. According to Mr. Hawkins they came to a consensus in a selection for a project consultant. The name of the consultant cannot be announced yet because the contract has not officially been awarded.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about a proposed bill to build a regional fire school in Danbury and whether this would be part of the regional school study.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that the study being done is just for the existing regional fire schools.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette gave a legislative update. He stated that the bill tracking report they received today may not be 100% inclusive of all bills being proposed, but is the most up to date information he has received to date. He reported that the Fire Service Day at the Capitol held last week was probably the most successful to date in terms of attendance. All the agencies and organizations that participated felt that it was worth their efforts.

Commissioner Stankye inquired about a proposed bill concerning the Commission.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the bill is just a standard implementer bill for the agency's budget.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the status of the EMS Commission proposal.

Mr. Morrisette stated that it appears the proposal is not going anywhere. The regional councils were hit with significant reductions in their budget, therefore they've all had to shift their focus to try to recoup. For the time being they are not looking at the Commission concept.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette stated that the Domestic Preparedness Senior Steering Task Force met about two weeks ago. The equipment for the first round of distribution is beginning to be received. They are currently looking at the FY '02 grant and considering three options that may change for the next round of funding. They are considering a change in philosophy in terms of how the equipment was distributed the first time around. The next round of money will probably be

equivalent to the first three years combined. A final decision was not made, however input was solicited

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrisette stated that he was looking for questions or reports of action on the part of any organization as it relates to the Statewide Disaster Response Plan.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors' Association voted to support the Statewide Disaster Response Plan.

Commissioner Kowalski arrived at 10:04 a.m. establishing a quorum for the meeting.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2002.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Milewski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2002 meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the period of February 15, 2001 through March 14, 2001.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the Staff Report for the period of February 15, 2001 - March 14, 2001. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Thermal Imaging Camera program. He stated that some of the vendors have begun shipping. The break off point for state subsidization was \$8,400. There are two or three models that were above that amount and the state sent out invoices to departments. They are waiting for payment to come back prior to ordering. He stated that he received information yesterday indicating 13 departments have not made payment. Upon receipt of these checks the orders will be placed. In addition, Mr. Morrisette stated that he was waiting for guidance from the Office of Policy and Management as to how they want the cameras distributed.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 g.) Mr. Morrisette stated that specifications for the regional foam trailers have been forwarded to DAS Procurement. He expects them to be placed out to bid in the very near future. The funding remains in place for the trailers. He stated that he met with the Attorney General's Office about two weeks ago to develop a memorandum of understanding for the communities that will eventually host these trailers. We would expect delivery of the trailers and begin training by late summer.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were no objection he would like to hold discussion on item 4 h.) for a later part of the meeting.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. O'Neil gave an update on the Limited Access Highway Account. He stated that \$240,000 is allocated to this account for the fiscal year broken into quarterly allotments of \$60,000. The agency received the third quarter allotment January 1st. As indicated in the report distributed earlier, 1,800 claims have been processed which represents \$180,000 paid out through the

end of January. So for February and March we had claims coming in but no funding to process them. We will get our fourth quarter allotment next week that will help to clear about \$40,000 of the backlog and leave just \$20,000 for the remainder of the fourth quarter. If we need more funding beyond that we will have to go to the Financial Advisory Committee to request the transfer of money from another account. Because of the two vacant positions over the past six months we may have funding that can be transferred.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that this may sound like a broken record but he is totally against taking money out of our funding to support this program.

Mr. O'Neil stated that money not spent in an account such as personal services is money that the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will require we return. OPM may allow us to use this money to clear up this backlog of claims.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he was surprised that the projected deficit was occurring this year because of the mild winter. In reviewing the claims it was noted that there's a number of departments that historically have been relatively low in the number of claims submitted are now high. He stated that he thinks that all of them are now looking at this as a source of revenue where maybe in the past they haven't. From a legislative perspective, unfortunately the task force that was established to review this program never finalized their final report. Some of the potential recommendations from the task force would alleviate many of the current problems. On the other side, a number of departments are starting to question why the amount of reimbursement has not gone up since the early 1970's. We concur with Commissioner Kowalski's comments and are aware of those concerns.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Piskura gave an update on the Fire Service Leadership Summit. He stated that on February 27, 2002 he attended a Fire Service Leadership Summit in Fairfax, VA where most of the conversation centered on the federal fire focus with the Fire Act Grant. He reported on several other significant changes that impact the fire service community. The Urban Search and Rescue Teams have been removed from FEMA and have now been assigned to the United States Fire Administrator (USFA) R. David Paulsen. Another significant change also announced at this summit is that the National Fire Academy shall now also report to the USFA.

It was reported that the 2002 Fallen Firefighters' Memorial ceremony would be moved to the MCI Center in Washington, D.C. on October 6, due to the anticipation of over 20,000 attendees. Also connected to National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, recently Congressman Curt Weldon sent a note to Chief John Buckman, President of the IAFC expressing interest in creating some type of fire service memorial in Washington, D.C. A letter will be sent to Congressman Weldon affirming that the National Firefighter Memorial is to remain in Emmitsburg and that the fire service leadership summit would like additional details about his proposed memorial for Washington, D.C.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update of the State USAR Team initiative. He referenced the documents distributed in the Commission package. Prior to a meeting that was convened on March 12, 2002, Mr. Morrisette stated that he had a conversation with Deputy Commissioner DeRosa regarding the fire service's concern as a result of some newspaper articles

stating the Department of Public Safety is taking the lead role in this effort. He stated that he indicated to Deputy Commissioner DeRosa that this was somewhat damaging to the team effort that would be necessary to pull this off. Chairman Carozza has also had this same conversation with Deputy Commissioner DeRosa as well as a number of other fire service representatives that have called him directly. Deputy Commissioner DeRosa indicated to Mr. Morrisette that the Governor had tasked the Division of Protective Services within the Department of Public Safety with putting the war team together and that he felt that they had the horsepower to get this up and running. He also indicated if it was the desire of the advisory board to task the USAR Team to another entity, the fire service or somewhere else, that he would entertain that and follow through if that was the wish of the majority.

The organizational meeting went off without any controversy. Chief LaVecchia, Chief Weber, Chief Brady were in attendance as well as Chief Klauber and Kerry Flaherty. There was a general discussion on where we're going. The outcomes were that several working groups were formed to begin moving forward. Five working groups were formed as follows:

<u>Committees:</u>	<u>Headed by:</u>
Selection Committee:	Chief Thomas Weber
Equipment/Assessment:	Agent Tom Martin
Training Coordinator:	Jeffrey Morrisette
Operations Manual:	Chief Louis LaVecchia
Legislative Committee:	Brian Mattiello

This group has been tasked with putting together all working groups and preparing a framework to discuss at the next meeting sometime in April. Mr. Morrisette stated that there is some funding in place already, but it's not clear exactly how much is available. He asked if anyone knows of someone who may have an interest to serve on one of these groups to call the chair of the working group directly. Messrs. Piskura and Lewandowski have put together a list of individuals from our agency that can assist Mr. Morrisette as well as the Equipment Working Group.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the responsibility of the selection committee.

Mr. Morrisette stated that, as he understands, their responsibility will be to define all the roles and requirements to participate on the teams.

Commissioner Nicol expressed concerns about the fire service role and how it is represented in the proposed USAR organization chart.

Mr. Morrisette stated that Chief LaVecchia had brought up this issue to Deputy Commissioner DeRosa. He stated that he did not know how you change that and he thinks significant controversy in the early planning phase may be damaging. There's a desire to see something happen. Again there's a number of Fire Chiefs that are working actively on the committee, the Connecticut Fire Chiefs and the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs. If and when the point needs to be raised adamantly, it's going to be done.

Chairman Carozza stated that he echoed Mr. Morrisette's comments as he has had several meetings not only with the Governor's staff, with Deputy Commissioner DeRosa and General Cugno. The fire

service's position from day one has always been that it will not be left out of the loop and that we will need to take a very active role in what's happening with these committees. The good that's come out of this Advisory Committee is that the working group committees are all being chaired by people related to the fire service. He stated that he was especially pleased with Chief LaVecchia being chosen to be Chairman of the Operations Manual. Chief LaVecchia has been very active and very vocal concerning the fire service's role.

A lengthy discussion period followed.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that he believes that we have key fire service personnel in key positions and he is confident that we will be going in the right direction.

Mr. Piskura gave an update on the Fire Act Grant program. He stated that the Fire Act Grant for this year is \$360 million. The President of the United States proposed \$3.5 billion to be distributed to law enforcement, fire, EMS and other first responders for training and equipment. The \$360 million is folded into the \$3.5 billion proposal. What this means to the fire service is competition will now be open to law enforcement, EMS and other first responders. He recommended that fire service organizations contact their congressional representatives and make the following requests:

- That you want to maintain separate and identifiable funding directly to local fire departments without going through the state.
- You would like to see the original \$900 million proposal maintained as dedicated funding.
- You want to maintain the integrity of peer review process – you want other firefighters screening firefighter applications.

The only way to maintain assistance to firefighters grant money is to talk to your congressional representatives. To make sure that in the United States' Congress grant money continues to be sliced out of the \$3.5 billion as a direct to local fire departments.

Chairman Carozza stated that he just returned from Washington, D.C. and met with both our Senators and Congressional delegation and he thinks they are pretty much on board with the same philosophy. He stated that he is in agreement with Mr. Piskura we need to as the Connecticut fire service express through all our organizations our position to our congressional delegation.

Commissioner Wilkinson recommended that this information regarding fire act grant money be communicated via the list serve to reach a lot of the grass roots people.

Commissioner Stankye inquired about the status of the Haz Mat Awareness Operational lesson plan.

Mr. Lewandowski presented a disk to Commissioner Stankye and stated that everything was on the disk (i.e. Instructor Guide, Participant Manual and PowerPoint Presentation). He stated that this disk would be distributed to all regional fire schools.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired whether this lesson plan was available in a hard copy.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that this lesson plan was only available on a CD.

Mr. Piskura stated that interviews have been conducted and two offers made to fill the two vacancies in the Training Division. He stated that he was not able at this point to share the names of these individuals because the offers have not been formally accepted.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Legislative Reception is scheduled for April 11 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Officers' Club at the State Armory.

Mr. Ernie Herrick arrived as a guest to the meeting.

Mr. Herrick stated that the memorial stone was complete and would be delivered when we are ready to accept it. The panels that will bear the names of the LODD are nearing completion. The bricks for the memorial walk are complete and being held by Volpe Monument Company until a place is found to store them. All engraving to be done at the base of the monument will be done by Volpe Monument as soon as the committee has a complete list. The perpetual flame that will be placed in front of the memorial has been manufactured and is being tested. As soon as testing is complete it will be shipped. He stated that he and Chris Johnston were making inquiries with different contractors to obtain price quotes to build the base of the memorial. Fundraising is ongoing for the memorial. Lighting for the memorial is on order. The total cost to purchase the light for the monument was \$25,000 but the Vendor sold it to them at a 50% reduced cost of \$12,000. The flagpoles in front of the Academy will be moved to the site for the monument and reset at a lowered level of five feet. Additionally he stated that he sent a letter to Chairman Carozza requesting that the Commission consider paying for the gas to fuel the eternal flame. He asked the Commission to consider his request for support of the gas for the flame.

Chairman Carozza asked that Mr. Herrick send him a copy of the request because he does not recall receiving it.

Mr. Herrick stated that he was planning to hold the dedication ceremony on May 5 but the contractors said they could not have the work completed by that date. The monument will definitely be dedicated either in late spring or during the summer.

A discussion period followed.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to authorize the Commission to provide the natural gas for the flame in front of the memorial monument. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Motion carried.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to close the executive session with no action taken on the matter. Motion carried.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.