



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



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**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2004 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Secretary Haber called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Blashchik, Cantor, Haber, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Staff members Lewis, Morrissette, O'Neil, Piechota, and Piskura were present.

Secretary Haber asked attendees to take a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the meeting proceeded on an informational basis.

Secretary Haber turned the meeting over to Mr. Morrissette who said he would allow Adam Piskura to formally introduce Linda Kleinschmidt who is joining us to brief the Commission on her planned project. He also stated that Adjunct Instructor Jim McLoughlin would brief Commissioners on the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard initiative that was discussed at last month's meeting.

Adam Piskura stated that as referenced at last month's meeting there was a large project being contemplated in the state. He introduced Linda Kleinschmidt from Police on Patrol Days, Inc. a non-profit organization here in Connecticut that produces both a radio and cable television program on law enforcement.

Ms. Kleinschmidt gave an overview of Police on Patrol Days, Inc. This non-profit organization coordinates an annual Public Safety event that includes Fire, EMS and Police exhibits at various local malls. She stated that about a year and a half ago, the idea came about that because of moving the event around from mall to mall and pulling logistics together it would be nice to have a facility where the public could visit and learn more about public safety services. The idea of constructing a very small facility has now blossomed into a multi-faceted, \$80 million project that would include a 500 seat auditorium, a 350 room hotel, and space to accommodate every group from fire, police and EMS. Federal, state and municipal entities would be involved in this initiative. She decided to call this building the National Public Safety Educational Complex and stated that it would be completely separate from Police on Patrol Days, Inc. She presented some facility design renditions of the project to the Commission to give a general idea of the concept. This building would be an educational facility for children, parents and all public safety personnel. There would be training, museum areas for fire, police and EMS as well as numerous demonstrations and exhibits within the building itself. The complex

itself would occupy anywhere from 40 to 50 acres. Aside from the main building where the training will be conducted there would also be a separate hotel. There are plans to have a few other amenities such as some public safety related retail stores. This facility would be developed as a destination that would attract people to come to Connecticut.

William Abbatematteo, Chief of the Meriden Police Department was introduced. He is a Board Member and added that he is very excited about the concept. He stated that since September 11, they realized that Firefighters, Police Officers and EMS personnel need to work together and this location would be ideal to have these organizations under one roof where they all can receive training. It would also be a nice tourist attraction.

Linda Kleinshmidt stated that 3 towns that are centrally located have expressed an interest in housing the facility. She explained that after the building has been constructed they envision 3 sources of funding:

- Rental of specific areas of the facility for training
- Various rooms to be supported by corporate sponsorship
- Tourism - marketing to general public, finding grant monies that might be available

Commissioner Ouellette asked about Board members and the target date for opening. Linda Kleinschmidt responded that Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, and Congressman Rob Simmons are Honorary Board members. The Advisory panel would consist of 15 members from various organizations.

Commissioner Stankye asked how much they anticipated the project would cost. Chief Abatematteo replied that initially they estimate a cost of \$15 - 20 million to get started and by completion it could end up costing \$60 - 80 million. He added that there are several sources of grant funding available.

Linda Kleinschmidt thanked the Commission for allowing her to show the project and stated that if anyone had any thoughts or ideas she would welcome them.

Mr. Morrissette stated that at this point we would move down the Agenda items on an informational basis.

He indicated that he was asked by Vice Chairman Kowalski to check on the status of the appointment of the replacement for John Vendetta. He said that he had checked with the Governor's office and they don't anticipate any difficulties however, it may be sometime before Richard Morris is appointed to fill the vacancy created by John Vendetta's resignation. He said he had emphasized the lack of attendance by some members and the need for a quorum.

Mr. Morrissette asked whether anyone had questions on the Minutes of the January 27, 2004 meeting. There were no questions.

Mr. Morrissette asked whether anyone had questions concerning the Staff Report of January 15, 2004 through February 14, 2004. There were none.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget Update - Mr. Morrissette stated that the Governor's recommended budget for the Agency is enclosed as part of the staff report. He stated the budget reflects a few reductions and the permanent elimination of 2 staff positions previously lost in addition to some minor reductions to some of the accounts. The funding for Limited Access Highway has not been recommended for restoration as far as the Governor's budget, however, there is a bill pending in the current Legislative Session looking to restore that particular program.

Commissioner Ouellette indicated that there was an error to page 2 paragraph 7 and page 3 paragraph 2 of the minutes. The name should read Commissioner Ouellette instead of Commissioner Kowalski.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that we would make those corrections to the minutes.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update. Commissioner Wilkinson stated that Commissioner Fleming from the Department of Public Works (DPW) toured the facilities in Wolcott and Willimantic on Saturday. In regard to the status of funding, it appears that all the legislators cannot make up their minds whether there needs to be a new bill or not. In the inevitability that a new bill would be required because of the logistics, Al Hawkins indicates that Representative Pawelkiewicz from Willimantic will introduce a bill that equals the original bill from a couple of years ago. He also said it may require rallying the different organizations again and contact the local legislators to rebuild support. There is a meeting scheduled for this Thursday evening and updates will be given at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Morrissette stated that Representative Boukus had a meeting with the Governor approximately 2 weeks ago. The Governor indicated his continued interest and willingness to meet with representatives of the Committee. A call was made last Friday to check the status of that meeting but the date has not yet been solidified.

Moving to item 4c.) Instructor Certification Currency – Director of Certification Fred Piechota gave an update. He reported that a Committee has been formed on behalf of the Instructor's Association and has met one time to begin discussion of the concept of currency or continuing education for certified Fire Service Instructors. There are several concepts being considered, re-testing, CEU's, attendance at seminars and a whole wide range of options. A number of the Committee members have been tasked with contacting some of the entities across the country that do this sort of work to find out more specifically what they're doing in other states. They will be reporting their findings. The Committee will then make recommendations and bring them to the Commission for possible incorporation. Another meeting is scheduled for this afternoon and we will continue to update the Commission.

Moving to item 4d.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrisette reported that we have been posting daily updates to our Web Page, however, checking today he realized that the tracking chart sent by the State Library has only included new proposals. It's not the comprehensive list we're used to receiving. He stated that if any member would like to know what proposals are out there, he has a list available today. We hope to make a correction to the web-based list. He apologized for the error.

Moving to item 4e.) Service Voucher Update – Mr. Morrisette distributed copies of a Scope of Services that he provided to the Department of Social Services (DSS) for incorporation into a MOU. He reported that it is the Administration's desire to have the program up and operating by March 1 but there has been a two week delay in getting answers from DSS according to the Business Office. DSS finally responded and indicated everything appears to be moving forward. We should have an MOU transmitted to us for signature so we may be a few days delayed in getting a letter out to the Fire Chiefs eligible for this funding.

Commissioner Cantor asked how does DSS factor in on the Limited Access Highway Fund.

Mr. Morrisette explained that DSS is the recipient of a Federal Patriot Act Grant which the Administration has used for some of their faith-based initiatives relating to Homeland Security, issues relative to 911, the aftermath of 911 and dealing with families. This has been a very big push not only of the President but also our Governor. There was some Federal funding remaining within DSS from that original grant which they identified and are making a \$100,000 available to our Agency. He also stated that he had indicated to the Administration that even though there is goodwill behind this gesture, there could be some negative fall out.

Commissioner Cantor asked if the voucher becomes a vehicle for being able to move the money from DSS to the Connecticut Fire Academy (CFA).

Mr. Morrisette replied that the voucher is what we will be providing to the eligible Fire Companies to access services.

Commissioner Stankye asked if we're still planning to issue the vouchers for approximately \$600.

Mr. Morrisette replied that's correct. It probably would be just over \$600 per eligible Fire Company.

Moving to item 4f.) Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard – Jim McLoughlin, Commander of City of Hartford Honor Guard Society was introduced. Mr. McLoughlin stated that 2 years ago he started the Honor Guard Society with the desire to bring about organization and consistency. Over the past 2 years, the organization has been extremely successful and they have started to get noticed. The mission of the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard Network is to provide assistance to any Fire Department in the

state that suffers a firefighter death. They do not plan to force their services on any department that wishes to handle the event on their own.

The two major functions of the Honor Guard Society are Planning and Ceremonial.

A Planning team would be responsible for guiding a Fire Department through the process of a fire fighter funeral. Planning would be consistent throughout the state. They would ensure that the proper "order of services" is followed and provide an outline for a department to follow.

The Ceremonial team's primary function would be to identify a Departments honor guard team and train them in the varied functions needed i.e. Casket vigil, color team placement, Sergeant-at-Arms, flag folding detail, etc. The alternative function of the Ceremonial team would be to provide those services if requested.

The Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard is seeking financial support and sponsorship from the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. They would need some materials to be successful such as flags, axes, stands, 2-way radios, vehicle magnets, ID cards. Additionally, some preliminary needs of the planning team are business cards, briefcases, notebooks and letterhead. The biggest support needed is money to train some of the people that have stepped up and volunteered to be leaders within the organization.

He stated that his personal belief from being a part-time Instructor and knowing somewhat of the statewide organizations, the support of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and dealing with the State Fire Administrator would be the best way for this organization to be successful.

He indicated that they need to organize and train people and in a rough draft financial proposal, he requested four people to attend the National Honor Guard Academy that will be held the 3rd week in April this year. At the first Honor guard meeting thirteen people had indicated they would like to attend. He indicated his hope that either through the coordinated effort of the Uniformed Professional Firefighter's Association (UPFFA), the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA) in conjunction with the State Fire Administrator's office and the support the Commission they could send more people to the Honor Guard Academy in April. Another initiative they are working through with the UPFFA is support of Career Departments. If there is a member of a Career Department that is giving their time to the Statewide Honor Guard and is scheduled to work on a day that we need them they would not be penalized.

He also requested that agency vehicles be made available to people that need transportation for details. The next meeting of the Statewide Honor Guard is scheduled for March 11th at the Academy. After this meeting, Mr. McLoughlin stated that he would like to move future meetings around the state so the folks from the southern part of the state don't feel they have to keep coming to Windsor Locks. He concluded his presentation by asking if there were any questions. He again asked for the support of the Commission.

Commissioner Ouellette added that what Mr. McLoughlin has done already is a tribute to the department and the families as well.

Mr. Morrisette added that at this time we don't have any support other than from the Commission itself. Both the UPFFA and the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association have expressed interest. In order to get this service operational it will take support from all of the organizations. He asked that members take an opportunity at their organizational meetings to educate their membership about this new service. He also stated that Mr. McLoughlin would be willing to conduct presentations for any organization. Hopefully in turn they could pledge some financial support to this initiative.

Moving to item 5a.) New Business - National Public Safety Education Complex

Mr. Morrisette stated that it was important to mention that we had previously briefed Linda Kleinschmidt on some of the other initiatives ongoing such as the Regional Fire School Capital plan and concerns this may impact other efforts. He also informed her of his concerns relating to any conflict between this particular project and fire service projects already planned. He stated that he was unaware of any formal offer to serve on their Advisory Board. He added that about 6 months ago our Chairman sent a letter to indicate interest in the project. This did not commit the Agency in any way financially or otherwise. He mentioned that he also has put them in touch with other contacts such as those in the EMS area and the new University of Connecticut Homeland Education Center initiative.

Moving to item 5b.) Rescue Technician Certification – Director of Certification Piechota reported that a few months ago the Commission voted to adopt the newest NFPA standards for the purposes of Certification. One of those levels is Rescue Technician, NFPA 1006. Because that standard covers nine different specialty levels or Rescue Technician levels we felt it was appropriate to form a subcommittee to discuss what the standard consisted of. The subcommittee would make some recommendations back to the Commission to give us direction as to what levels we actually should offer. We brought together representatives of Career Chiefs, CT Chiefs, the Regional Fire Schools, the State USAR team and some other groups to discuss what levels would be appropriate in Connecticut. At the current time, this group is thinking that we would initially move forward with four levels of Certification out of the nine levels. Rope Rescue, Vehicle/Machinery Rescue, Trench Rescue and Confine Space Rescue would be the four levels for the general fire service population that would be offered. Structural Collapse Rescue Technician for the USAR team would also be offered. Further discussions will take place and eventually the subcommittee through him will make a formal recommendation to the Commission. Additionally, he stated that there were significant discussions at yesterday's meeting. The biggest amount of discussion centered around the training and testing interface and how that all works. It came down to three areas.

- The process for certification that would be conducted as a result of formal training offered by the Connecticut Fire Academy (CFA) for one or more levels.

- The certification/testing process that will be generated for those departments or organizations that wish to challenge the process.
- The certification process that will be conducted as a result of third party contract training.

It is possible that the Committee may recommend to the Commission that these three areas be addressed and then if the Commission wanted to go forward it would be the Certification division's responsibility to figure out how this would work so that participants are tested fairly and equitably. The subcommittee is scheduled to meet again in a month.

Commissioner Cantor asked whether an individual could challenge the certification testing based on job experience alone or whether they would have had to obtain training.

Mr. Piechota responded that the Commission currently does not have a process whereby anyone can challenge any level based on experience only. That option exists recently in the NFPA Standard 1000 that guides how we accredit. Some of the accrediting bodies have that as an option. Currently the Commission has not instituted such an option. He said he would keep the Commission informed.

Moving to item 6) Comments from the public – Mr. Morrisette wanted to recognize a few people. He asked if Commissioner Nicol who is in a wheel chair wanted to give any background on his recent experience.

Commissioner Nicol stated he has had a tough winter.

Moving to item 7) Matters to be raised by Commissioners and Staff – Commissioner Wilkinson inquired if there was anything more on the Decontamination Trailer status.

Mr. Morrisette replied that his understanding is that they have the final specifications for tow vehicles. He is unaware of when the purchase will be made. The actual protocol is being finalized for dispatch and deployment of those units will be from Tolland County Dispatch as previously reported.

It appears that the Fire Service may have a representative detailed to the Division of Homeland Security. He is not at liberty to release the name as yet but feels this may be a direct result of some of the pressure that the fire service organizations have been placing on Department of Public Safety Homeland Security. Many are not pleased with how things are going.

Mr. Morrisette indicated that there were a number of enclosures within the Commission packages that were mailed out including:

The Annual Report of the Connecticut Emergency Medical Service Advisory Board which Adam Piskura represents the Commission on.

The final draft for the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System was also included. He is not sure what the status is and how it needs to be integrated within the National Incident Management System and the Federal Response Plan. He advised members to acquaint themselves with this document specifically as it relates to Statewide Certification.

Also handed out was the White Paper from the Incident Management Task Force which was published back in October 2003. The Incident Management Task Force was formed by the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board. The Transportation Strategy Board has now made the Incident Management Taskforce a permanent Committee of that larger group. Mr. Morrissette stated that he was asked to serve on that Committee along with three other Fire Service representatives. He asked members to review the document and if there are any issues or concern to let him know. We will be looking to formally adopt a number of the recommendations in the document as well as look at strategies to providing training and education.

Commissioner Blashchik asked if there was any possibility for fire departments with interstates running through their jurisdiction to back door strategies through this taskforce for funding.

Mr. Morrissette replied that it is probably not a bad idea because the Limited Access Highway reimbursement program is referenced within the document itself. It was cited as one of the problems specifically that too many Fire Companies would respond trying to collect their \$100.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he also has an updated listing of Fire Act Grant Awards as of last Friday. Connecticut fire departments have been awarded in excess of \$10 million dollars thus far in fiscal year 03.

Mr. Piskura stated that planning for Connecticut Fire Weekend is ongoing and people are responding that they will use the buses. He also indicated that two grant workshops are coming up.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 AM

Dated: _____

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