



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



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**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2005 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Peter Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Brady, Blaschik, Morris, Nicol, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewandowski, Lewis, Morrissette, and Piskura were present.

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

Chairman Carozza asked if there were no objections he would like to move to Agenda Item 6, Comments from the Public to accommodate guests present at the meeting.

Moving to item 6a - Comments from the public – John Bolton Letter - Felony Prohibition
Chairman Carozza asked Mr. Bolton to address the Commission. Mr. Bolton said he was present to request the Commission establish a new rule to prevent felons from becoming Firefighter I. He stated the City of Bridgeport hired felons even after their announcement said no felons should be hired and this is the first time volunteer or paid that felons would be joining a fire department. He said this opens the door to the hiring of other felons like child molesters and arsonist because you can't exclude one; if you hire one you have to hire them all. He said if it starts in Bridgeport it will end up in every town in Connecticut. In other states like South Carolina, Virginia and Chicago you cannot obtain Firefighter I if you're a felon. Mr. Bolton said this is something new and he thinks there needs to be a rule that bans felons from receiving Firefighter I. In Connecticut if you are an EMT, MRT and paramedic and a felon, you have to go through the Board and most of the time they are never approved. He said he would like the Commission to set a new rule which prohibits felons from becoming firefighters in Connecticut.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were any questions from any members of the Commission. He remarked that the Commission will take a look at the issue and thanked Mr. Bolton for appearing before the Commission.

Moving to item 6b – Mr. Morrissette said that Chief Denis McCarthy is here this morning and would like to speak on behalf of a letter received from the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs Association previously distributed with the Commission packet.

Chief McCarthy referenced a letter drafted by the Career Chiefs and sent by the President, Chief Ed Richards. He said the issue of Recruit training comes up every

month and they receive updates from Director of Training Piskura and the Career Chiefs Association is very supportive of the Commission's Recruit Training program. Chief McCarthy said they see the future of firefighting in the state of Connecticut tied very closely to Recruit Training. It is the belief of the association that every firefighter that comes on the job should go through the Recruit Training program. He said he had just changed patches on his uniform and joined a department that previously had a spotty record as far as whether they send people to the Academy. He was able to convince the chief elected officials that it is a good thing regardless of whether they hold pre-certification and formerly held certification as firefighter 1 and II because of the experience they get at the Academy. He said his comments to the graduating class last week was there is no other profession in the state or in the country like the position firefighters are in right now. They stay on the job for 30 years and it's worth the investment. He said one of the topics of discussions is should the recruit training and certification programs be longer because there is so much information firefighters need to have before they come to the job and they are recommending that the classes be 14 or 16 weeks. They also recognized that there is a financial burden on everyone involved. He said the proposal today before the Commission lessens the financial burden of every community and it encourages every community to send their firefighters to the Academy for recruit training but more importantly, recognizes the changes that will evolve in the fire service over the next 20 years. That evolution can only be managed well by a great educational program for Recruit firefighters and that's the reason for the proposal. Also, he said that as the fire service changes we have an obligation to give our firefighters the very best education and that can only happen through the Recruit Program and the Chiefs Association is hoping that this could be incorporated the next time there is a review to the Commission's Budget.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were any questions from any members of the Commission for Chief McCarthy. He remarked that the Commission will take a look at the issue and thanked Chief McCarthy for appearing before the Commission.

Chairman Carozza indicated that we would return to Agenda Item 2, Approval of Minutes.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the minutes of the May 31, 2005 meeting. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2005 meeting. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the staff report for the period of May 15, 2005 through June 14, 2005. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the staff report for the period of June 15, 2005 through July 14, 2005. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Blaschik and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the staff report for the period of July 15, 2005 through August 14, 2005. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the staff report for the period of August 15, 2005 through September 14, 2005. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrisette remarked that he would report on the budget under new business. He said that he wanted to bring Commissioners up to date regarding the OPM/DAS Business Office consolidation initiative. As you are aware, there is a new state initiative to centralize the human resource and financial sectors of small to medium size state agencies. There were a number of agencies that were targeted for review including ours. Coincidentally, as part of the consolidation initiative, we received notice from Peter O’Neil, Fiscal Administrative Supervisor and head of the Business Office that he has elected to transfer to the Department of Public Utility and Control (DPUC) effective this Friday. Mr. O’Neil is at the DPUC today undergoing orientation. An agreement has been made with the DPUC Executive Director to mutually support each other to permit a smooth transition. Mr. Morrisette said as Commissioners may recall, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, himself and Mr. O’Neil met with the Commissioner of DAS, who is heading up the centralization effort, to try and justify the continued existence of our internal Business Office. He said the meeting went relatively well and that it appeared, at face value, that a final decision had not been made and that an objective evaluation of the duties and responsibilities of our employees would be performed. He said one known fact is that all of the human resources functions, regardless of any positions coming or going will be transferred to DAS and that all personnel records will be moved to Hartford within the next week. Mr. Morrisette also said as of last Friday, when he checked with DAS, he was told through their evaluation “much progress has been made in determining what needs to stay and what will go, although the final decision is that of the Commissioner of DAS”. He said he told them that the Commission would be meeting this morning and that it would be helpful if they could have a decision by then. Ultimately there is a final appeal to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), although in most cases the decision is pretty much final. There is a Finance Advisory Commission (FAC) meeting on October 6th which is a formal action that needs to occur to transfer funding and personnel from one agency to another outside of a typical memorandum of understanding. Therefore, it will be our assumption that a decision would need to take place before that meeting.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson stated the Education Committee’s September meeting was cancelled due to the fact that there was nothing new and worthy to place on the meeting agenda at the time. He said

his last discussions with Chairman Hawkins were that there was still hope that the money appropriation for the architect and engineering fees for the New Haven school are going to be on the September Bond Commission agenda but he's unsure if that meeting has been held or still scheduled. He also referenced a draft of the Letter of Intent between Bradley Airport and the Office of State Fire Administration for expansion of the Hartford County facility here at the Academy. He also reported that Chairman Hawkins indicated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) was almost ready to advertise via RFP for property acquisition for the Eastern Connecticut school. The next Education Committee meeting is scheduled for October 20th.

Mr. Morrisette commented on the Letter of Intent forwarded to him by DOT for review and possible signature. He said he did not sign the document as of yet because the question still remains about the fee they wish to impose for lease of the property. He and Commissioner Fleming met with the Governor's Chief of Staff to discuss this and possible ramifications and she was looking to work through the Bradley Airport Board of Directors to have the fee waived. Therefore, he is awaiting confirmation from them before committing the agency. Mr. Morrisette said as soon as that decision is made, the Letter of Intent should be good and he has also provided a copy to DPW for their review. Most of the other terms are in our present property agreement.

Commissioner Stankye said he had another concern and asked if the property we currently sit on is leased and as far as a 20 year lease whether that goes along with what we have at the present time.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that technically it is not a lease rather a memorandum of agreement, although executed through DOT's leasing unit. He said our current lease is 50 years with an option for renewal for an additional 50 years. The shorter duration lease does cause some concern.

Commissioner Nicol added that at the last Education Committee meeting there was a discussion on the New Haven facility. At one point they were considering a larger storage building that would allow us to have an indoor CPAT facility particularly for testing during the winter months. Unfortunately the initial design costs are over budget due to the building requiring deep pilings. That proposal has now been removed from the project. He said the staff has been pursuing the possibility of finding a new location to allow for indoor testing in the future.

Commissioner Brady asked how much land we are talking about.

Mr. Morrisette replied that the footprint that has been identified is approximately 1.6 acres, so the fiscal impact with the noted terms would be just under \$35,000.

Moving to item 4c.) Service Voucher Update – Mr. Morrisette reported that a balance of approximately \$14,000 remained unspent. There were some last minute adjustments following the State Firefighters Convention where some chiefs requested to utilize their

funds. The adjustments have been made and a final report will be sent to the Department of Social Services. There will be a surplus of funds remaining and we've requested to utilize that funding to procure materials for the Rockwell Film Library. This would allow all fire departments to benefit as they will have access to the lending library.

We expect to move forward to administer this years funding of \$100,000. The actual allotment for that appropriation was scheduled for the second quarter but we wanted to wait until the final reporting was complete before administering a new round.

Moving to item 4d.) Fallen Firefighters' Memorial Update – Mr. Morrisette stated that the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service is scheduled for October 16th at 2:00 p.m. and invited Commissioners to attend. Six names have been approved for inclusion at this year's ceremony.

Moving to item 4e.) National Certification Registration Options – Mr. Morrisette said that Fred Piechota is not able to be here today as he is attending a meeting of the Legislative Regulations Review Committee regarding the agency's Certification Regulations. As Commissioners may recall, our Certification Regulations were rejected by the Legislative Regulation Review Committee. He said he hopes they will be approved today. He also stated that at the conclusion of the Commission's last meeting Mr. Piechota had asked members to go back to their organization and discuss the National Certification Registration options and come back with a recommendation of whether to include this or not as part of our normal processing of applications for certification. He said Ed O'Hurley is in attendance to speak on this and other Certification related issues.

Mr. O'Hurley referenced a document which Mr. Piechota had distributed previously and gave an explanation of the options available to the Commission relating to registration of individuals certified by the Commission with the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (PRO Board) for calendar year 2004. Total candidates eligible to be nationally certified by the Pro Board is 1396 and 1352 for IFSAC. The total candidates requesting national certificates through the current method of voluntary registration in the Pro Board is approximately 400 or 29% of the 1396 and IFSAC is 230, approximately 17%. Total cost to the candidate, in addition to the Commission's certification fee, is an additional \$15 to be nationally certified by the Pro Board or IFSAC. Revenue for the calendar year 2004 based upon the current examination fee structure is \$7.50 for written exam and \$5.00 for the practical exam. Mr. O'Hurley said the option that Mr. Piechota recommends is Option A, where the Commission underwrites the total cost of registration of all eligible candidates with IFSAC and Pro Board with a fiscal impact of approximately \$10,000. He said by doing it this way, all the candidates who pass the various levels would be nationally certified and it would be more prestigious for the candidates as well as they could compete with their peers nationwide and that is a good thing. Mr. O'Hurley also said there are a few more options and one is to increase the fees to offset the price for the national certification registration.

Moving to item 4f.) Certification Fee Schedule, Levels – Mr. O’Hurley stated that the agency was reaccredited by IFSAC last summer and as you are all aware we do not separately certify Hazardous Materials Awareness and Hazardous Materials Operational levels. IFSAC was very strong in recommending that we test the levels separately. Presently, we test Haz Mat Awareness and Haz Mat Operations along with the Firefighter I and II. IFSAC suggested we make those levels a separate certification examination so Mr. Piechota came up with 2 options for the Commission to consider. Option 1 is to test Haz Mat Awareness and Haz Mat Operational levels separately and Option 2 is to test Haz Mat Awareness and Haz Mat Operational in a combined examination which we currently do now outside of the practical skills. A survey conducted by the Certification Division showed that of 28 respondents accredited by IFSAC, 16 entities conduct Haz Mat Awareness and Operational separate from Firefighter I and II and 11 entities test as part of the Firefighter I and II examination process. Of 20 respondents that are Pro Board Accredited, 15 entities conduct Haz Mat Awareness and Operational separate from Firefighter I and II, 2 entities test as part of the Firefighter I and II examination process, and 4 tests in both methods.

Commissioner Morris asked when disciplines are crossed like public works folks who are required to have Awareness level if there is standardization of all disciplines getting the same training delivery.

Mr. Lewandowski replied that Awareness is Awareness and from a training perspective if we made a delivery at a public works department they would receive the same training as firefighters. Public works doesn’t necessarily fall under the NFPA Standards for the levels of certification but under the OSHA guidelines it remains 1910.120, so essentially they don’t necessarily need to take the test to get that because it is compliance training where as the NFPA standards now says they want certified training.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that it’s been a long summer and many organizations don’t meet and there is nothing pressing this. He said as far as the IFSAC issue, the Commission is not under any obligation as of right now. We have been told when they revise their policies and procedures they may include that as a requirement. He said we’re not under any time constraints other than we’ve carried this item on the agenda for about 5 or 6 months.

Commissioner Blaschik added that in this day and age where we are thinking globally, the idea that once someone has been certified by the Commission they’re automatically certified by the national organizations. This plays into the whole credentialing issue and benchmarking. He said he’s not sure where the funding will come from but it is a very good idea for the Commission to offer National Certification Registration.

Commissioner Nicol asked what the Budget looks like.

Mr. Morrissette indicated he will cover that later, but it is important to note that we have been requested to submit a Budget Reduction Option of 5%. A press release issued last week by the Governor indicates a projected surplus however that does not take into consideration the escalating fuel costs. He said we're in the same state every year but the bigger picture is the entire fee schedule for testing has not been reviewed comprehensively nor adjusted since it was implemented more than 10 plus years ago. He said another thing to look at is if we're going to make any changes, we should provide enough advance notice for people to build any changes into their budget to minimize any fiscal impact.

A discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza said that there are several unanswered questions that need to be explored and suggested a motion to table this item for the time being.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to table item 4e. Motion carried.

Mr. Morrissette asked Commissioner's to go back to their organizations and seriously discuss the fee and Haz Mat issues. Another question that needs to be addressed is whether non-fire service personnel should be eligible for certification, especially in the Haz-Mat area. He said he looks forward to the Commission's input and hopefully there will be action at the next meeting.

Commissioner Wilkinson added that while the Commission is contemplating this issue over the next month or so, maybe the staff could come up with a concept of a potential increase to the fee schedule that would incorporate our concerns and provide for the National Certification Registration and that way we'll have something to work with.

Moving to item 5a.) Election of Officers – Chairman Carozza asked Commissioner Nicol Chair the Elections Committee. Commissioner Nicol called for a motion to nominate a slate of officers.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Walsh to nominate Peter Carozza as Chairman. Commissioner Nicol called for any additional nominations. A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to close nominations for the position of Chairman. Motion carried. As no other nominations were received, nominations were closed. In light of the early retirement of our Secretary, Commissioner Nicol requested the Commission ratify the election by signifying "I". There was unanimous approval.

Commissioner Nicol sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Morris to nominate Kevin Kowalski as Vice Chairman. Commissioner Nicol called for

any additional nominations. A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to close nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. Motion carried. As no other nominations were received, nominations were closed. In light of the early retirement of our Secretary, Commissioner Nicol requested the Commission ratify the election by signifying "I". There was unanimous approval.

Commissioner Nicol sought nomination for the position of Secretary.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Morris to nominate James Wilkinson as Secretary. Commissioner Nicol called for any additional nominations. A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to close nominations for the position of Secretary. Motion carried. As no other nominations were received, nominations were closed and the Chairman cast one ballot for Secretary Wilkinson.

Chairman Carozza thanked Commissioner Nicol for Chairing the Elections Committee. He also thanked the members of the Commission for their confidence. He said he considers it an honor and privilege to serve as Chairman of the Commission and look forward to the coming year.

Moving to item 5b.) Annual Report – Mr. Morrisette stated that the annual report was included in a previous Commission package. He is interested to see if there are any comments or questions relative to the information contained in the report. He thanked members of the staff for assisting with collecting all of the information for inclusion in the document. It appears we're back on track in terms of properly reporting our training statistics as that was questioned a few years back. He said it did show a modest increase in activity.

Commissioner Wilkinson said he thought it was an excellent report, very comprehensive and it displayed the agency as we operate.

Moving to item 5c.) Audit Report FY Ended June, 2002 and 2003 – Mr. Morrisette stated that the Audit Report was sent to Commissioners electronically. There were six recommendations 3 of which were previously made during prior audits. He said we were told the Auditor will probably be back again this spring as they were a little late getting to us this last time around. It will be interesting to see the impact of the Small Agency Resource Team (SMART) program in conducting an audit. Mr. Morrisette said most of the comments contained within the report are relative to the Bookstore operation which was still in its infancy during the audit period. A number of the issues had either been previously addressed or were in the process of being addressed. He said the Auditors understand that these types of enterprises are extremely unique in state government. The addition of a part-time assistant in the Bookstore will aid us in fully complying with all recommendations.

Mr. Piskura added that the recommendations are typical regarding inventory and inventory control. He said we've taken a modified approach, rather than taking a whole house inventory once a year, we are taking an inventory every quarter which makes it more manageable and less costly to conduct. The other piece that continues to be noted in the Auditors report is that the current Bookstore Manager, Pam Cooney does her own invoicing. With the changes proposed to the Business Office, possibly relocated to Hartford we will have to wait to see how we address that issue.

A brief discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5d.) Mid-Term Budget Adjustment – Mr. Morrisette said this is the period of time in which we are able to request adjustments to our Biennium Budget. There are 2 available actions; technical adjustments and expansion options. Through the guidance we received from OPM, expansions options are extremely limited. He said that at the end of this month we will have a minor salary change to our Level 1 Instructors. Currently those employees make \$17/hour and that will be raised to \$18/hour. This action was necessary to address an issue in our working with the new Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) and the Police Academy in a cooperative training venture. Therefore, we will request an adjustment of approximately \$4,000 which is the projected fiscal impact of the increase. Mr. Morrisette stated we are also required to submit a Reduction Option of 5% or \$111,415. The Reduction option would entail \$100,000 coming from the quasi limited access highway line item and the additional \$11,415.65 from Personal Services. Mr. Morrisette stated he also requested an expansion option item to include the land lease cost, if necessary would amount to \$34,848. The final item relates to employee physicals as the Training Division is reengaging in a comprehensive respiratory protection program with a fiscal impact of \$21,120. The expansion options were submitted in narrative form to the OPM Secretary. He must grant approval before we may submit as part of our total fiscal package.

Commission Nicol asked if the request from the Career Chiefs could be included as part of an expansion option.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that based upon the guidance language he received it cannot. The only additions may be those that are statutorily required or as a result of opening a new facility. He said that's not to preclude the Commission or fire service organizations from bringing this up as a legislative initiative.

Mr. Morrisette replied it would be appropriate to establish a subcommittee to review the issue more closely. While he is not a proponent of Legislative Study Committee's he indicated this may be the best direction considering this is a short session.

Chairman Carozza suggested that both items covered under Agenda Item 6 be referred to the staff to conduct some additional research and report back to the Commission.

Moving to item 5e.) 2006 Legislative Session – Legislative Initiatives – Mr. Morrisette stated that legislative initiatives are due to OPM within 2 or 3 weeks. He asked members that have any items relative to propose legislation to notify him. He said the only thing he has today is the recommendation by Commissioner Nicol from several months ago related to granting “alternate” positions on the Commission. With all of the dynamic schedules it is sometimes difficult to maintain a quorum at our meetings. He said he had discussions with the Governor’s legislative director recently and she did not see an issue with this type of request. He said he believes the alternate would also have to be appointed by the Governor. Another discussion we had was the proposal on the Haz Mat issue specifically certifying non-fire service personnel. We have seen some increased demands recently with a Haz Mat Tech class that was done for the Fairfield County Haz Mat Team where a number of police officers who took part in training could not be certified. Mr. Morrisette said he is on a time schedule and wanted to see if there was concurrence on these two issues.

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Chairman Carozza took the opportunity to thank both Commissioner Cantor and Commissioner Haber for their years of service to the Commission. He said Commissioner Haber served on the Commission for approximately 20 years. He also welcomed Commissioner John Brady from Madison representing the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association to the Commission.

Commissioner Brady added that in regards to the Career Chiefs request he is sympathetic to the issue but he hopes that as the Commission moves forward they consider the needs if Volunteer Chiefs and departments so no one is left out.

Commissioner Wilkinson remarked that coming from a career department he knows the basis of the request of the career chiefs and he’s become intimately involved with many of the volunteer folks through the Education Committee and the Regional Fire Schools. He said he understands the hardship that a lot of the volunteer departments are facing. He said as Mr. Morrisette had mentioned, this may invite reopening the original Training Bill we’ve all dealt with at one point or another in our careers. He said it’s no secret that the police officers and those in the fire marshal specialties basically get free training so why not the fire service. He said now that we’re hopefully rebuilding the infrastructure of the regional fire schools one of the high priorities is to develop means to increase their operating budgets because they’re charging to provide a firefighter I course to the constituents they serve and they are now operating at a loss. He said it’s a big issue but maybe it could be dealt with one more time.

Mr. Morrisette said he’s had discussions with Russ Emons regarding the escalation of fuel prices and the potential for a significant increase in fires as a result of alternative heating devices. He said we’re going to look to see what we can do to get some public information disseminated in the near future. He said the Governor’s office is very interested in this topic and is aware of our concerns.

Mr. Morrisette also reported on Homeland Security priorities. He said a revised listing of the state Homeland Security goals, objectives and prioritization of the next stream of federal funding to come to the state of Connecticut was distributed. There have not been any significant adjustments but some subtle adjustments to recognize issues such as NIMS and all hazards preparedness coincidentally developed prior to the recent hurricane.

Mr. Morrisette reported that we had a recent situation where an agency computer was discovered to have some inappropriate material on it. This computer is not dedicated to a single individual and is accessible to a number of people including contractors. We've alerted the Department of Information Technology (DOIT) and will be sending out appropriate correspondence to our full and part-time staff regarding inappropriate use.

Mr. Morrisette also reported that we received a letter from the New London County Fire Chiefs Association related to their development of an Incident Management Team (IMT), a Type 4 IMT. He said there is a lot of information in the letter for members that may not be familiar with IMTs. Basically as part of the process to become recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) they also need to be recognized by the appropriate authority having jurisdiction in their locale certifying their readiness. They have gone before their regional Council of Governments and have received that approval. The New London County Chiefs would also like DEMHS and the Commission to review and consider endorsement of their team. He said he's aware that the team has already been utilized at a few emergencies in their region and asked Commissioners to review the information as he will include it on next month's agenda for action if the Commission agrees.

Mr. Piechota just returning from Hartford reported that the Legislative Regulation Review Committee voted today to approve our Certification regulations pending technical revisions.

Commissioner Nicol asked about the status of the 2 Q endorsement license.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that it has been approved and is operational.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM.

Dated:

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