



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



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MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2002 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Brammer, Haber, Kowalski, Milewski, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioners' Gomeau, Johnson, Maheu, McDonald, and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Emons, Lewandowski, O'Neil, Ouellette and Piechota were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Judith Walter, Principal Planning Analyst, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, Chief Earl Provencher from the North Thompsonville Fire Department in Enfield and Peter Mullen, former Commissioner.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to move item 5 b.) under New Business to number 3 under Committee Reports.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to move item 5 b.) of the agenda to item number 3 under Committee Reports. Motion carried.

Mr. Morrissette welcomed Andy Ouellette as a newly appointed Commissioner to replace outgoing Commissioner Peter Mullen who is also in attendance. Commissioner Ouellette represents the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association. Also Commission re-appointments have been approved for Commissioners' Brammer, Milewski and Vendetta.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2001 meeting. Motion carried.

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

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brammer to approve the Staff Report for the period of December 15, 2001 - January 14, 2002. Motion carried.

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Mr. Morrisette stated that during the past couple of Legislative Session there's been discussion and a proposal submitted for a low interest mortgage program geared towards the volunteer fire service. While these proposals have not gained broad support nor passed, we wanted to begin working with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to at least bring forth information about the programs they currently offer. The current programs they offer do not deviate much from what was proposed. We began meeting with them in the past month and thought it would be a good opportunity to provide a briefing for Commissioners. If you think it is appropriate, presentations can be made at your organizational meetings. Their program could benefit both career and volunteer firefighters. He thinks this is a great opportunity to bring forth some beneficial information as it relates to volunteer/recruitment and retention, but also as it relates to the career side for firefighters looking to own property in the community they work in. He invited Judith Walter to make a presentation to the Commissioners.

Ms. Walter thanked the Commission for inviting her to present an overview of CHFA and the type of programs available by providing home ownership opportunities for low and moderate-income families in the community. She went on to described programs available through CHFA for paid and volunteer firefighters along with some of the services they would be available to provide (i.e. payroll stuffers and financial and home-buyer education courses).

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the down payment for low interest loans.

Ms. Walter stated that the state also has a down payment assistance program with the home mortgage program. So for people who are just starting out and don't have that \$10,000 saved, the state is able to give them assistance which is about \$5,000. Not only is the down payment covered but also the closing costs are covered. The down payment loan is like a second loan and it's usually from 0 to 3% that's charged on that money.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if these programs were only for first-time homebuyers.

Ms. Walter stated that it is not strictly for first-time homebuyers. The home mortgage program is for first-time homebuyers but the definition of first-time homebuyer is someone that hasn't had a mortgage on a house the last three years. Many of CHFA's other programs are not first-time homebuyer programs, they are open to anyone who wants to purchase a house and live in the community in which they work.

Mr. Morrisette inquired if there was an income limit for anyone to qualify for these programs.

Ms. Walter stated that some of the programs have income limits that are very broad. The average income limit that you can earn up to for a family of three is \$72,000 and still qualify for this program. There are people on CHFA programs that have purchased mortgages with incomes of \$25,000. There are purchase price limits set up by the federal government that will not allow the purchase of a house for \$300,000 if you only have a \$25,000 income.

Chairman Carozza thanked Ms. Walter for her presentation.

Mr. Morrisette stated that one of the common themes that both he and Commissioner Ouellette hear as they travel around the state facilitating volunteer recruitment/retention meetings is about home ownership and concerns about the abilities to retain volunteers within a community.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Fallen Firefighters Memorial project. He referred to a draft policy prepared by the Subcommittee that deals with the Line-of-Duty Death (LODD) criteria. Essentially it states "Firefighters who die in the line of duty shall be honored at the Connecticut Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Windsor Locks, CT. It's proposed that line-of-duty deaths to be recognized for display on the memorial shall be determined by employing the following criteria:"

"A death which is the result of any duties or emergency response action that an active firefighter is authorized or obligated to perform."

It will be up to this subcommittee to review and make final approval of all names submitted for recognition by the firefighters' memorial. The subcommittee wants to get this policy out as a final draft to the fire service as a whole. They also anticipate in the very near future sending a letter to all the fire departments statewide asking them to submit a list of names. A partial list has been compiled over the last several years. The subcommittee will attach a copy of any information previously submitted by a department with the draft criteria and ask them to document exactly how the death was sustained. As we move forward the actual groundbreaking and construction should begin in the next month or so, we want to be sure that we have an accurate listing of names. He asked Commissioners to provide him with any comments they have about the LODD criteria.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrisette asked Commissioner Wilkinson to provide an update for the Commission on the Regional Fire School Education Committee.

Commissioner Wilkinson reported on activities of the CSFA Education Committee.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette asked Mr. Russ Emons to provide an update on the NFPA Risk Watch Champion Program.

Mr. Emons stated that the Agency was unable to locate the five towns necessary to apply for the grant this year. We are currently in the process of seeking towns who may have an interest in pursuing next year's program if one is forthcoming. We have some clarification to make regarding state adoption of a curriculum. We still need to get a state department of education and law enforcement contact clearly identified for this program. Local municipalities can still participate freely and fully in this program. We will keep trying to get five communities to get school system support in writing. He stated that he was asked by Commissioner Maheu to present this program statewide to the Connecticut Fire Marshal's Association in September of this year.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he thinks this is an important program to put forward to the fire service because it's getting more and more difficult to get into the school system. Everyone has their hands in it, police, fire and what better way to facilitate the end result of overall safety through the Risk Watch Program. He encouraged Mr. Emons to press on and put it out on the List Serve to see if anyone is interested in getting involved with this program.

Mr. Emons stated that the nomination forms for Public Fire Educator of the year have been distributed. He invited the Commissioners to attend the Connecticut Fire and Life Safety Educator Conference on April 26 when awards will be presented.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Domestic Preparedness Senior Steering Task Force. He stated that he wanted to alert members of the Commission that there is a Symposium scheduled for tomorrow, January 30 at the Oakdale Theater hosted by the Council of Small Towns, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Connecticut Hospital Association. The Senior Steering Task Force, Major General Cugno and other members of the Steering Council will give an overview of progress to date on the WMD initiative. A letter of invitation was sent to chief elected officials. They were asked to invite representatives of their local fire department, EMS, Police, etc. If Commissioners are interested in attending he could provide them with additional information.

Mr. Morrissette stated that it's come to his attention that the FY'99, Department of Justice funds have been awarded and he expects purchase orders to be going out for the personal protective equipment for those communities that have been selected. The FY'00 and '01 funds should be made available soon and an opportunity to purchase additional equipment that has been identified should be moving forward in the very near future. We have some preliminary information that the FY'02 funding will be bumped up for the State of Connecticut in the vicinity of about \$3.2 million dollars. That is more than the first three years combined. It dovetails very nicely with the plan that the Senior Steering Task Force has put together to identify and provide those communities that have resources in place.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrissette stated that a Statewide Disaster Response Draft Plan was distributed earlier. Questions, comments, concerns were to be submitted by December 31. The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities has also distributed the plan to chief elected officials and asked for their input that has been received. All input is being reviewed and there are changes and modifications being made to the plan. At next week's Connecticut Fire Department Instructors' Association meeting Chief Tom Weber of Manchester will present the latest version of the plan to those in attendance. Mr. Morrissette stated that he would like to hear Commissioners' concerns and questions as this agency will be playing a significant role in the management of that Disaster Response and Statewide Mobilization Plan for Connecticut's Fire Service.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the jurisdiction division of the plan.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the draft plan the Commissioners received was broken into five regions. This has been modified to three regions.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrissette referenced an outline of the draft proposal for the creation of an Office of Emergency Medical Services Commission. He stated that the OEMS Advisory Board's Legislative Committee has voted to move forward with bringing this proposal forward in the coming session. Also, Commissioner Garcia of Public Health indicated that he does not feel that there's a need at this time to move forward with the proposal. Commissioner Vendetta and Mr. Morrissette met with the Public Safety Committee leadership within the Legislature last Thursday to update them on various proposal they felt the fire service would be moving forward on. We as an agency have no formal proposals for the Legislature to entertain. However, we did want to bring forth discussions that took

place at the Connecticut State Firefighters' Association legislative meeting. This proposal was identified as one of the issues we were aware of that possibly was going to be put forth during the upcoming session.

Commissioner Nicol inquired what was Commissioner Garcia's concern.

Mr. Morrissette stated he did not know the details, all he had was the minutes from the OEMS Advisory Board's last meeting. However, it does not state any specifics within the minutes of that meeting. He thinks that Commissioner Garcia may feel it's not the right time and possibly there's not presently a need.

Commissioner Milewski inquired if he had an idea as to how many paid and volunteer fire departments are first responders in Connecticut. He said he was estimating that maybe 80% of the departments are first responders.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he believes that's accurate, he does not have an exact number available. Representatives of OEMS have made that general representation in the past.

Commissioner Milewski stated that it would make sense that the fire service should have major representation on that committee or Commission otherwise you'll run into a problem.

Mr. Morrissette stated that on the current advisory board, a 41-member board, the fire service does have a number of representatives. At a previous Joint Council meeting the Commission proposal was discussed at length and it was felt amongst those attending that meeting that the fire service should be ready with a plan if the proposal fails, or the Legislature, or the Governor's Office comes back and asks for a solution. A number of the representatives from the fire service who serve on the advisory board have met and have drafted a plan should they be asked to present something. Again, we are not as an agency actively soliciting that role nor are we working as an agency to develop a plan. However, as a whole he said he thinks it's important to note that the representatives from the Joint Council, organizations that the Commissioners represent do feel that they need to keep on top of this issue.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 g.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Thermal Imaging Camera initiative. He stated that currently we have orders for 312 cameras. We're still reviewing about a half dozen communities eligibility issues. He stated that he expects an order to be placed in the coming days. Hopefully the vendors will be willing to work with us if there are some additional orders.

Moving to item 4 h.) Mr. Morrissette made reference to a presentation made at a previous Commission meeting by representatives from NBC-30 on a program called "The Bravest". They had solicited ideas on who they could turn to for sponsorship of the program. He inquired if any of the Commissioners had an opportunity to see the program. NBC-30 has currently obtained sponsorship from Whelen Engineering and Anthem Blue Cross. NBC-30 contacted him offering a discounted sponsorship if this Commission was interested. The sponsorship that they are looking at, for a quarter would be \$3000 to \$4000. We would join with the other major sponsors and have the same rights and opportunities as was outlined at our previous meeting. He told NBC-30 that he would like to bring this matter back to this

body to identify willingness and interest to do that. We could use the air time to promote volunteer recruitment and retention or to raise the awareness of what Connecticut's fire service is all about, or even for fire and life safety education messages.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that his concern was that obviously we're under some budget constraints as a Commission. Granted it's a good idea to use some of the funding to press forward with the recruitment and retention effort. However; \$3000 - \$4000 is basically about \$1000 a month to sponsor this program. What we have to look at is if that's real good use of our funds. In a previous discussion we talked about certain companies that might co-support a program like this and provide the funding, but allow us to use their airtime. We also talked about going back to our respective organizations and see if that was a positive outlook for prospective customers. He stated that in the CFMA there hasn't been any interest at this point in time. We are still looking at the Sprinkler Coalition folks to see if that's an outlet.

Mr. Morrissette stated that a number of Commissioners did get back to him with potential leads that he passed on to NBC-30 and they followed-up on a number of those. They have a number of companies that are on the fence right now. They have also brought up the issue, with some of these groups, possibly joining with us and allowing us to utilize their purchased time.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if funds could be identified within the agency's budget that could be used towards this effort.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he has not pursued it with the Business Office. We do have a line item in our budget for advertising. We could have some funding available if that was the desire of the Commission.

Commissioner Nicol stated that when we first talked about it the general feeling was that as a state agency we should not pursue this. When you think about this matter there are several state agencies that do advertisement through that medium (i.e. DOT, Public Safety, etc.) If we have a message that we want to get out, obviously that's a way to go. If we have concerns about supporting the recruitment and retention issue then maybe this is something we should consider. Try for one quarter and measure the success to see if it's a worthwhile medium.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he inquired whether NBC-30 had any ratings information for the program as yet. This may not be beneficial to us as most of the airtime is actually away from the airing of the show. It appears that they've already moved the program to a better timeslot from something less desirable.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if funds could be identified to determine if the agency could support this effort and discuss at the next meeting.

Moving to item 5 – New Business, Mr. Morrissette invited outgoing Commissioner Peter Mullen to come forward for a presentation. Mr. Morrissette stated that Mr. Mullen served as a Commissioner since 1990 representing the CFDA. He also served as an instructor for the Connecticut State Fire School and prior to that with the Connecticut State Technical College vehicle rescue training program

dating back to 1975. He stated on behalf of the Commission, we're happy to recognize Peter for his contributions and he certainly is one of the icons of Connecticut's fire service.

Chairman Carozza expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude for all those years of service to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Mr. Mullen stated that it has been an honor and a sincerely a pleasure to work with each and everyone of you over these past years.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette stated that over the last few months he presented in his staff report information regarding funding received for the purchase of regional foam trailers. This is dovetailing with some of the terrorism related concerns. It was decided that some funding would be made available for the purchase of foam trailers. He approached the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs and the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association asking for their assistance with this project. He stated that it was his feeling it would be best to go to the eventual users of this equipment to not only develop specifications but also identify potential locations where we can place these trailers throughout the state. The funding would come to this agency and the equipment would remain on our inventory but would be granted to a host town on a permanent loan basis through a memorandum of understanding. We are currently looking at possibly six to eight trailers with a foam capacity of anywhere from 500 to 1,000 gallons.

Wayne Sandford, Chief of East Haven is serving as the Chairperson for this committee. Also, representing this Commission on that committee is Chief Bill Johnson. We have information from several vendors who construct this type of equipment and market them throughout the country. We also had an opportunity, a couple of weeks ago, to travel to Salem, MA to look at a trailer in operation. There are a number of these trailers in the Boston metro area. It appears that many states are doing the same thing nationwide. This will be progressing fairly rapidly and he stated that he would hope that specifications would be available sometime in the coming month allowing it to be placed out to bid shortly thereafter. If Commissioners wish to have input he stated that he could provide them with more information on generally what is being looked at. The committee met with one of the manufacturers, United Plastics Fabricating in Massachusetts and have information coming from two other vendors.

Commissioner Nicol inquired whether the trailers would be furnished with foam.

Mr. Morrisette replied affirmatively. Based upon the funding we're looking at a turnkey approach.

Commissioner Nicol stated that his concern was what happens down the road because foam has a shelf life.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the synthetic foams that are available today shelf life isn't as much of a concern as it was years ago. Because the Office of Policy and Management is funding this initiative, we will be working with them to identify some of those issues and concerns. Also he is hoping this will serve as the impetus to get the Department of Environmental Protection to finally develop and publish a guideline for the use of foam in training because we will need to train with this equipment as well.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrissette reported on the results of the 9-11 fundraising campaign. He stated that he did not have a financial report from the committee, but he did want to bring to the attention of the Commission the final disbursements from the account have been made to the New York City Fire Department. A letter of thanks from the Uniformed Fire Officers Association of New York was just received. A few weeks ago a delegation from Connecticut traveled to New York City to bring a final check of over \$300,000. In return for the donation and in their thanks and appreciation they presented the Connecticut delegation with the two pictures seen on display today. One is a picture of the flag raising as well as an enlarged copy of an article that appeared in the New York Times with a picture of each of the firefighters who died in the line of duty at the World Trade Center disaster. They asked us that the picture of the firefighters be displayed in an appropriate area where everybody who has contributed to the fundraising efforts can see first hand those who sacrificed their lives.

Commissioner Nicol asked to have appropriate plaques made to go along with the pictures for display.

Chairman Carozza called for comments from the public.

Chief Earl Provencher from the North Thompsonville Fire Department in Enfield addressed the Commission. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity and stated that he was an avid supporter of the Commission, the State Fire Administrator, the staff of the Academy and very happy with the work that goes on here. He stated that one of the things that he made a personal goal about was because of the importance of the Commission and his support of them, was to try to keep abreast of the information that goes on here and occasionally he attends the meeting. One of the things he has a problem with and he discussed this with Mr. Morrissette to some extent was the fact that normally the minutes that are posted on the web site are several months old. Up to last week the minutes posted on the web site were for February 2001. As of last week minutes were brought up to date for September or October meetings. He stated that one of the concerns expressed by the State Fire Administrator was that minutes are really not official until approved by the Commission generally at the next scheduled meeting. He asked if it would be possible to post the minutes in a more timely fashion.

Another concern he expressed would be to be able to see the agenda prior to the meetings (i.e. publish the agenda on the list serve).

Chief Provencher stated that the Commission Conference noticeably lacks the presence of the U.S. and State of Connecticut flags. In addition, he recommended that the Commission meetings should start with the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Carozza called for matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff.

Mr. Piechota stated that he received a letter from Alan Joos representing the Technical Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications for the NFPA. He further explained that this is a single committee whose purpose is to coordinate and correlate all of the professional qualification standards that we certify to be sure that they dovetail together and that their common elements show up throughout them all. During the Fall Board meeting in Dallas, the question of firefighter re-certification was discussed. There are members from different technical committees that would like the NFPA to mandate re-certification. Others do not want re-certification to be mandated and think

that the certifying entity should control the issue. Mr. Joos volunteered to survey the certifying programs to see how this issue is currently being managed. A second question was also discussed regarding reciprocity between states and this information is also being gathered as well. They are asking that we take a few minutes to complete the survey. The results of this survey will be presented at the next Technical Correlating Committee meeting in Minneapolis, in May. Results of this survey will be sent to us once this project has been completed. Two questions before the Commission today is the following:

1. What does the Commission think about requiring or mandating re-certification for firefighters?
2. Should re-certification be controlled at the national or state level?

Currently the Commission does not have a re-certification policy for firefighters. The state regulations that address certification did not address the issue.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that certification should be controlled at the state level.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Nicol stated that he agrees with what Commissioner Kowalski that Connecticut should decide its own destiny.

Mr. Piechota inquired if it would be fair to say that State of Connecticut, Commission on Fire Prevention and Control does not support the establishment of mandatory re-certification system through the use of the Fire Service Professional Qualification System Standards at this time.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that is the route the Commission should take right now.

Commissioner Haber read two thank you notes from staff members' Jim Birmingham and John Tsokalas.

Mr. Lewandowski gave an overview of upcoming Fire Act workshops being offered by the Academy. The "Assistance to Firefighters Grant Writing Workshop" program is to be offered at three separate locations. The Academy along with a representative from FEMA will discuss the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. The discussion will be conducted in a workshop format and is intended for fire departments interested in applying to the 2002 fire grant. The Academy has schedule three offerings of this workshop (i.e. 1/28 – Deep River Fire Department, 2/11 – Mohegan Tribal Fire Department and 2/23 – Woodbury Fire Department).

Mr. Morrissette stated that in December the agency began distributing a Terrorism Library from Delmar Publishing to each fire department statewide. To save on postage we have tried to hand them out, to each fire department at various meetings throughout the state. The staff was able to handle a lot of that and today are at a point where we will have to begin mailing the final copies to those departments that did not obtain a copy. These libraries were made available to us at a significantly reduced rate. The list price for the hard cover version was in the vicinity of \$180 but we were able to

purchase them for \$25 a piece. We felt this would be an excellent service of this agency to provide each department with a complete copy of those books.

Commissioner Stankye inquired on the status of the Haz Mat Operational Program.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that the Haz Mat Operational Program is currently being pilot tested by some of the adjunct instructors. A few corrections have to be made and we hope that in the next six weeks to have it printed on CD-ROM and distributed to the trainers by the end of February.

Commissioner Nicol stated that at the last meeting of the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association (CFDIA) there was some discussion regarding whom should represent the statewide fire service. A motion was made and passed that the State Fire Administrator Jeff Morrissette should be the spokesperson for the fire service on the statewide disaster plan.

Commissioner Nicol stated that the CFDIA postponed the annual rodeo last year after the events of September 11. When this event is rescheduled he will again ask the Commission for support.

Chairman Carozza stated that the Commission has gone on record for quite some time encouraging that the State Fire Administrator be the lead contact for this organization and Connecticut's fire service because he has done an outstanding job.

Chairman Carozza announced that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on Tuesday, February 26, 2002 at 9:30 a.m. at the Connecticut Fire Academy and thanked the viewing audience made possible through CT-Network.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:04 a.m.