

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 27, 1999 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Andresen, Haber, Kowalski, Milewski, Mullen, Munkenbeck, Nicol and Maheu. Commissioners Chatfield, Gomeau, Johnson, McCarthy and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Mr. Morrissette introduced and welcomed Wayne Maheu, Director, Office of Education and Data Management from the Department of Public Safety. Mr. Maheu will be representing the Commissioner of Public Safety on the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. The new Deputy State Fire Marshal John Blaschik, Jr. is expected to arrive shortly.

Mr. O'Neil introduced his daughter Ellen as a guest to the meeting. Ellen is visiting the agency as part of the "Bring Your Daughter To Work Program".

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the March 30, 1999 meeting. Motion Carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Andresen to approve the Staff Report for the period of March 15, 1999 - April 14, 1999. Motion carried.

Moving to Unfinished Business, item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave a budget update. He indicated that the Commission's budget was passed unchanged by the Appropriations' Committee. We still have a concern about the budget items that relate to capital facility and equipment requests. It appears the funding for these requests has been directed to the Department of Public Works' budget. We have had a discussion with the DPW as late as last week regarding this funding. DPW's recommendation is to submit a formal request for the funds just prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

Commissioner Nicol inquired whether DPW had indicated the request for funding would be handled on first come first served or will be prioritized.

Mr. Morrisette stated that it appears right now that requests will be handled on a first come first served basis.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrisette gave a facility update. He stated that area and wet land maps have been received from the Department of Transportation (DOT). These depict the surrounding land that is available for consideration of expansion. To date we have not sat down to review in detail these maps. The staff will consolidate our needs and begin discussions with DOT about securing additional land.

Commissioner Munkenbeck inquired whether DOT in their planning is working on preventing someone from encroaching on the Academy.

Mr. Morrisette stated to his knowledge he is not aware of any plans.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update of the 1-800 FIRE LINE Program. He stated the agency has received approval from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access their Video Production Unit to produce a series of public service announcements (PSA) to aid in marketing the 1-800 FIRE LINE Program and recruitment of volunteer fire service personnel. It appears that we may have to also contract with a private video production vendor to convert the raw footage shot by DPS to an acceptable format for television stations. We've already been in discussions with a vendor who does some work for the Academy at the present time to possibly fill that role.

An open forum session on recruitment and retention has been planned for May 6 at Wallingford Fire Headquarters. Letters will go out to all fire chiefs statewide and to special invited guests. We're hoping to have a similar size group of about 30 to 40 as we did in November. This is a good opportunity for people to share with each other what is working within their communities.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette reported on the public forum sessions planned as part of the Strategic Planning process. Public forum sessions have been scheduled for May 18 at the Duracell Headquarters in Bethel. He indicated he is waiting for confirmation for Windham Mills in Willimantic on May 20 and the Holiday Inn in Cromwell on May 26. Both afternoon (2pm-4pm) and evening (7pm-9pm) sessions will be held on each date. Mr. Morrisette stated that he apologized if these dates conflict with any organizational meetings on a regional or statewide level. The letter announcing these public forums will also solicit written input in the event

an individual cannot make one of the sessions. We will ask for an RSVP, which will enable us to insure we have adequate facilities and refreshments.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrissette gave an overview of agenda items discussed at the Governor's Staff meeting. The first item discussed was the Governor's commitment to improve communication with the Hispanic community. He has asked that all agencies that disseminate information to the public take advantage of all media sources. Secondly, agency heads were asked whenever they have an issue or problem with the Administration that it be communicated verbally through the Chiefs of Staff. A discussion also took place regarding procedures on dealing with the Governor's legislative staff.

Ms. Allison Kauffman, Director of the Governor's Washington Office was introduced. She asked agencies to notify her anytime they had any business or planned visits to Washington. It appears that Ms. Kauffman can be a valuable resource. Mr. Morrissette indicated that he sent her information regarding the FIRE Bill that was introduced to Congress and asked her to assist us in tracking the Bill. An overview of a draft procedure on workplace violence was reviewed and discussed. This was produced as a result of the Lottery shootings. When reviewed and approved by all parties each agency will be given more detailed information. These procedures were prepared in very close cooperation with all of the Bargaining Units. Essentially what will be coming out is a zero tolerance policy very similar to what many schools are currently enforcing. Lastly, the status of bonding was discussed and an updated ledger was shared with attendees.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if security of the facility might be an issue the Safety Committee should look into.

Mr. Morrissette stated the Safety Committee has discussed this issue at meetings in the past.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrissette gave a legislative update. He stated that a meeting is scheduled for this afternoon with the Governor's Co-Chief of Staff Sid Holbrook to further discuss House Bill #6565. This meeting was initiated through Chief Sandford of East Haven who wrote to Mr. Holbrook to revive interest in this Bill.

Moving to item 4 g.) Mr. Morrissette asked if Commissioners were ready to take action on the proposed Certification Testing Scoring Policy tabled at the March meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Nicol and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to adopt the Certification Testing Scoring Policy. Motion carried.

Moving to New Business, Chairman Carozza asked Commissioner Nicol to serve as the Chairman of the Nomination Committee.

Commissioner Nicol stated that resulting from the vacancy for Vice Chairman of the Commission he asked for nominations.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Haber and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to place Kevin Kowalski's name in nomination for the position of Vice Chairman.

A MOTION was made by Chairman Carozza and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to close nomination for the position of Vice Chairman. The motion was unanimously VOTED and APPROVED.

Commissioner Kowalski thanked the Commission for their vote of confidence.

Moving to item 5 b.) Commissioner Haber read a letter from Northeastern States Fire Consortium asking the Commission for assistance. They are asking the Commission to publish information about their organization on our internet home page. This will provide a forum on the Internet for this organization and will aid in developing a grassroots movement within the Fire Service for support in passing the FIRE Bill.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck authorizing assistance to the Northeastern States Fire Consortium. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrissette reported on plans for the Joint Council in cooperation with the Commission to host a fire service day at the Capitol. This event will be held along with the May 25 Commission meeting which has been relocated to the Legislative Office Building. The Joint Council plans to meet later this week to firm up plans. The Council is looking to staff from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. a number of static and active displays on the north side of the Capitol building. An invitation has gone to the Governor inviting him to attend the Commission meeting. Mark Lewandowski is working on obtaining a helmet to present to Governor Rowland.

Chairman Carozza stated that he feels it is a good idea to publicize this event to the entire fire service and that this is an opportunity to promote the fire service.

Mr. Morrisette asked Commissioners to contact private sector vendors they deal with to ask them to provide fire service related giveaways. The Commission meeting will take place May 25 rain or shine. If it rains, the fire service day displays will be held on May 27.

Chairman Carozza inquired if a notice for this event would be posted in the Legislative Bulletin.

Moving to item 6) Mr. Wayne Maheu introduced John Blaschik, Jr., as the new Deputy State Fire Marshal. He referred to the press release being handed out announcing his appointment and the reorganization within the Division of Fire, Emergency & Building Services. Mr. Maheu gave a brief overview of the reorganization.

Mr. Blaschik stated that he was available to assist at any time and is looking forward to working with the Commission.

Chairman Carozza congratulated and welcomed Mr. Blaschik on behalf of the Commission.

Mr. Blaschik stated that if a candidate passes a physical next week, East Haddam will be swearing in its first recruit referral from the FIRE LINE Program.

Commissioner Nicol congratulated the staff for another successful Fire Officer Weekend at the National Fire Academy in Maryland.

Commissioner Nicol related a concern from some fire chiefs regarding recruiting individuals and the impact of entry level training on these individuals. The issue raised was whether the Commission could develop a shorter recruit training program for volunteers that meets the OSHA requirements but not be NFPA 1001 compliant for certification. Mr. Nicol asked if the Commission could give consideration to this issue and determine if this can be done.

Commissioner Munkenbeck expressed caution that the Commission would be seen as taking a step backward for the volunteer service.

Commissioner Nicol stated that he was not sold on this idea but this issue will not go away. A letter is being prepared to formally ask the Commission to look at this issue.

Chairman Carozza stated perhaps the State Fire Administrator and staff could look at this issue and report back to the Commission.

Commissioner Haber stated at the CT Fire Chiefs' Association Board of Directors meeting last Wednesday the very same issue was brought up by a County Vice President from that area. Evidently a letter is being drafted to be sent to the Commission.

Mr. Piskura stated that he faced this same issue in his previous position and a secondary set of courses was developed. There were 12 and now 8 subjects required in NFPA 1403 which is the Structural Burn Standard. Those are the courses that must be completed before you can place a student into a live burn. It is a Training Standard. We took at that time 12 subjects (now 8 subjects) in the current edition and made the course you are talking about. That would be the minimum that a firefighter could have before they could be

placed into a hostile environment. It became known as the 1403 course. Again the caveat is that it is a training standard. It doesn't mean that you can take the student that has completed it and have them as responders.

A discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza suggested the Commission wait to discuss this issue as part of the Strategic Planning meetings.

Mr. Piskura stated that for the first time during Fire Officer Weekend in Maryland a ceremony was held at the national fallen firefighter memorial to recognize Connecticut firefighters who died in the line of duty.

Mr. Piskura stated that the weather chart distributed earlier would also be mailed to all fire stations in Connecticut.

Mr. Piskura stated that last week the Academy was the host for a propane video that is being filmed by the propane industry. This video will be distributed to every fire department in the country.

Mr. Piskura stated that he changed the working titles of the full time Trainers to Program Managers and the former Chief Instructor title is now referred to as Program Coordinators. This will more closely align our titles with higher education and will accurately describe what they do.

Mr. Piskura gave an overview of a project he is currently involved on with Commissioner Munkenbeck in higher education working with targeted groups such as minorities and females in the Norwalk area. This is a FF-I program being given through Norwalk Technical College but with the CT

Fire Academy staff. Basically we are teaching civilians and we're providing the PPE. In many cases they've been able to get donations, but he stated that he wanted to acknowledge that many of the donations and cost savings are coming at the sacrifice of personal favors of some of the Academy staff members.

Commissioner Munkenbeck thanked Mr. Piskura and the Academy staff for their efforts.

Mr. Morrissette stated that invitations would go out to Commissioners for the next Recruit Graduation.

Mr. Morrissette referred to a flyer announcing a Firefighters' Family Day at Lake Compounce on July 3. This is an undertaking by the State Firefighters' Association they are trying to encourage every fire department in the state to participate. A portion of the proceeds will go toward the firefighters' memorial here at the Academy.

Mr. Morrissette stated that some of the staff is working with the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for a family day, which will be taking place on the airport proper on May 8.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the final of three SERC Conferences would be held tomorrow at the Norwich Ramada Inn. If any Commissioners are interested to attend they are welcome.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.