

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 1998 COMMISSION MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Andresen, Haber, Kowalski, McCarthy, Milewski, Mullen, Munkenbeck, Nicol and Peabody. Commissioner Johnson arrived at 10:10 a.m. Commissioners Chatfield, Gomeau and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Lewandowski, Ouellette, and Colton-Reichler were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Retired Chief George P. Dunn of Middletown and Karen Wosczyzna-Birch, Connecticut State-Technical Colleges.

Mr. Morrissette introduced and welcomed to the meeting Retired Chief George P. Dunn for the City of Middletown and currently Fire Commissioner, South Fire District, Middletown who will make a presentation on the 1-800-Fire-Line Program.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner McCarthy and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to approve the minutes of the January 27, 1998 meeting. Motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner McCarthy to approve the Staff Report for the period of January 15, 1998 - February 14, 1998. Motion carried.

Commissioner Peabody inquired about the 56% pass rate for individuals participating in written exams for FF-II during the last reporting period.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he would forward the inquiry to the Director of Certification and ask for him to follow up.

Chairman Carozza asked to move item 4 a.) Staffing Update for discussion later in the meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner McCarthy and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody to place item 4 a.) Staffing Update on the agenda for Executive Session. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the budget cycle. He stated that on Friday of last week he met with the Appropriations' Committee, Sub-Committee for Regulation and Protection. The Committee is comprised of about 11 members of the Legislature. There was not much discussion on the budget adjustments that have been recommended by the Governor. One Representative asked whether we could defer the budget adjustment (\$14,000) for the ACE/PONCI program until the next budget cycle.

A considerable amount of time was spent discussing a proposal by Rep. Knopp of Norwalk to provide funding to the Commission to develop and deliver a training program on thermal imaging cameras. Rep. Knopp met with Messrs. Morrissette and Lewandowski to discuss this initiative. The Representative feels there needs to be more training available to fire departments who purchase these devices. As such he was proposing to submit a couple of Bills. The first would permit municipalities to join together in joint purchase arrangements while the second provides funding for training. We gave him an overview of what our development and delivery processes are and he came away from that meeting very positive. He asked us to put together a proposal that he could take and work into a Bill.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrissette reported that a new food service contract was awarded to Food For Thought from East Hartford. Food service was in place almost instantly as they hired Mary Ellen Welch from CCI to serve as their Chef/Manager.

Commissioner Haber inquired whether the agency was accountable for the exact amount of dinners.

Mr. Morrissette stated that at the moment we don't have a firm operating contract with Food For Thought. We are working to develop an operational contract. The agency is accountable for meals ordered, however there are permissible adjustment at certain time periods prior to an event.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrissette stated that after the Commission approved the 1-800-Fire-Line Program he contacted George Dunn and asked him to take a look at the information presented to determine what was needed to implement the program in Connecticut. Mr. Dunn has had an opportunity to review the material and has asked to come before the Commission to make a presentation regarding implementation of this program.

Mr. Dunn stated he had some concerns after having reviewed all of the material for the 1-800-Fire-Line Program. He stated that he found the video, even though produced professionally, to be somewhat offensive. If the Commission and the volunteer services in this state are going to promote such a program this is not the way to go. It may be very nice in New Jersey or New York, but he thinks there should be more of a marketing or recruitment touch and it should not only be for volunteers. This program just promoting the volunteers can alienate others.

A discussion period followed on the scope of the recruitment program vs. the recommendations made by Mr. Dunn. Commissioners all agreed that the Commission should move ahead with the 1-800-Fire-Line program as presented and look to make improvements into the future.

Moving to item 4 e.) Ms. Colton-Reichler stated that she hoped by now the Commissioners all had a chance to review the report from the Juvenile Firesetter Steering Committee. The recommendations in this report cannot be achieved without an increase in full time staff within the Public Education Division. At this time Ms. Colton-Reichler asked Commissioners for their input regarding this issue.

After a lengthy discussion period, recommendation was made to establish a sub-committee to develop a mission statement for the role of Public Education in the Commission and to draft a job description for a position to support this function.

Chairman Carozza asked for volunteers for a Public Education Sub-Committee.

Commissioners Johnson, Munkenbeck and Peabody volunteered to form a sub-committee to develop a Public Education mission statement.

Moving to items 4 f & g) Mr. Morrisette gave a brief overview of the two Certification Division proposals presented at last month's meeting for adoption by the Commission.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the Certification Prerequisite Waiver Policy and the Certification Examination Time Limit Extension Policy. Motion carried.

Moving to New Business, item 5 a.) Commissioner Munkenbeck reported that the Connecticut Safety Institute working group has moved forward on a number of issues. He spoke of success in the area of management issues and in getting the state to pull together in the academic area. Working on a project in the area of Volunteer EMS and Firefighter Retention and Recruitment as well as moving forward on the Tech Prep Program. A research project is underway to gather data on retention and recruitment programs in Connecticut. He then asked Karen Wosczyzna-Birch to give a brief overview of efforts underway on the retention and recruitment project.

Ms. Wosczyzna-Birch reported on the two areas that have been identified where data needs to be collected. Two questionnaires have been developed and will be distributed at the beginning of next week. One questionnaire will go to the municipalities to get a sense of where they are in terms of identifying issues regarding the fire service. The other questionnaire will be distributed to the fire departments. A questionnaire will also be placed on the internet for interactive response. The questionnaires presented today are in draft form and input and/or comments are welcome.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if the information gathered from these questionnaires would be shared with the 1-800-Fire-Line project coordinator.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated that he saw no problem with sharing the information.

A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Morrisette asked Mark Lewandowski to give the Commissioners a brief overview of agenda items 5 b, c, and d).

Mr. Lewandowski stated that the first item relates to Firefighter I and II curriculum development and the impact of the NFPA Standards cycling every five years. Each time a curriculum is complete and ready for distribution to the end user it is almost time again to rewrite because of standard changes. The Training Division has already adopted the IFSTA Essentials' training package for the Recruit Program but still use our own in-house FF-II curriculum. Looking at the time and effort required from instructors to develop new curriculum it may be beneficial for the Academy to look at using the Essentials Curriculum as the mainstay of the I and II program. Some of the advantages include that it is professionally produced and widely available. The success rate for students participating in the Essentials training is extremely high as in the case of the recruits with 100% passing rate. About three regional schools have used the package in the past and they also feel very comfortable with it. The down side is the cost of the program which is about \$1,000 per set vs. our in-house package which is about \$45. There is an instructor's guide that can be purchased from IFSTA for approximately \$150.

Mr. Lewandowski reported about a trip to the New Hampshire Fire Academy the first week in January by six staff members to see a demonstration of their Flashover Simulator Prop.

A quick overview of the program was presented along with the staff's participation in eight simulated flashovers. The staff felt that the prop would be extremely beneficial to the fire service in Connecticut and that it would augment some programs at the Academy. After some minor concerns are addressed, they feel this would be an excellent tool to add to the Academy. It would add some realism that sometimes cannot be simulated inside the burn building.

A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Lewandowski illustrated a sample (i.e. South Carolina Fire Academy) and gave an overview of the format changes being considered for the 1998/99 Training Calendar.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to enter into Executive Session. Motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody to close the Executive Session. Motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Munkenbeck and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to return the meeting to the normal order of business. Motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Nicol and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski authorizing the State Fire Administrator to move forward with a job offer to the selected candidate for the position of Director of Fire Training. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the status of a potential bill for a firefighter memorial.

Chairman Carozza stated that the Joint Council was asked not to submit this bill during this session because it entails money.

Commissioner Peabody reported that the Academy Safety Committee continues to meet on a regular basis with concerns for safety in training.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he along with Chairman Carozza, Commissioner Nicol and Mr. Morrissette were going to Washington, D.C. tomorrow on a fact finding mission to meet with Congresswoman Nancy Johnson and staff regarding funding sources for the aircraft mockup.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner McCarthy and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to send a letter of appreciation to Cynthia Colton-Reichler and her staff for the work they did in preparing the Juvenile Firesetter Steering Committee Report. Motion carried.

Commissioner McCarthy stated that the effort towards the preparation of the Juvenile Firesetter Report was labor intensive and lasted for about a year. Ms. Colton-Reichler is to be commended for her representation of the Commission. He then asked that the recognition for Ms. Colton-Reichler be put in writing and made part of her personnel file along with any staff members she interacted with.

Mr. Morrissette gave a brief overview of the proposed Bills for the 1998 Legislative Session.

Commissioner McCarthy inquired if the State Fire Administrator needs direction from the Commission to do a needs analysis for upcoming budget preparation for staff positions.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he hoped at least one of the issues will be taken care of. Internally each Division Director is responsible to bring forth any personnel issues, areas of other expenses and for capitol expenditures that need to be addressed. If the need is for personnel expansion, we're going to need the backing of the Commission to move forward.

Chairman Carozza extended an invitation to the Commission to attend the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations Legislative Reception on March 11 between 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Officers' Club of the State Armory in Hartford.

Chairman Carozza thanked the Commissioners for participating in the interview process last week for the Director of Fire Training position.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to adjourn the meeting at 12:32 p.m. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 12:32 p.m.

Dated: _____

Secretary, Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control

MOTIONS

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STAFF FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

Commission Meeting - February 24, 1998

Certification Exam Monthly Summary - Commissioner Peabody inquired about the 56% pass rate for individuals participating in written exams for FF-II during the last reporting period.

Public Education - After a lengthy discussion period, recommendation was made to establish a sub-committee to develop a mission statement for the role of Public Education in the Commission and to draft a job description for a position to support this function.

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