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MINUTES OF THE MAY 25, 1999 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Andresen, Chatfield, Haber, Kowalski, Milewski, Mullen, Munkenbeck, Nicol and Vendetta. Commissioners Gomeau and Johnson arrived at 9:46. Commissioners Maheu and McCarthy were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota, Birmingham and Piskura were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Ernest Herrick, CT State Firefighters Association, Chief Wayne Sandford, East Haven Fire Department, Chief Robert Massicotte, Waterbury Fire Department, Donald Charette, CT State Firefighters Association, Chief John Brady, North Madison Fire Department and Legislative Representative Ted Schroll.

Chairman Carozza welcomed the guests to the meeting and asked that they introduce themselves.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the minutes of the April 27, 1999 meeting. Motion Carried.

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

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the change of date for the 2000 Fire Officer's Weekend at the National Fire Academy from May to March.

Mr. Piskura explained that there is no favoritism given by the National Fire Academy (NFA) to states in the selection of date. The selection process is basically a foot race to the mailbox. Once state entities are notified they make their selection and send their application in where the NFA date and time stamps it upon receipt. This year the Commission had two things working

against the timely turnaround of the notice. The Commission's mail was delayed because of the postal address change and late mail delivery to the building on Monday. The notice from the NFA was received several days later, which gave other states the opportunity to turn their applications around much sooner and the Commission lost its priority status.

Motion on the table to approve the Staff Report was carried.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update of the 800-FIRE LINE Program. The Commission hosted a second Retention and Recruitment meeting on May 6 in Wallingford. This meeting was very successful with about 40 participants in attendance from all areas of the state including two representatives from the State of New Jersey's Retention and Recruitment Committee. Agreement was reached to host a third forum probably sometime in September or October. One option is to hold a meeting down by the shoreline with a second option of Southbury where we received an invitation from one of the participants. As long as there is good participation and the meetings are productive we'll continue to meet. In addition to general roundtable discussions, we also had presentations by the New Jersey group, Commissioner Munkenbeck and Chief Jamie Di Pace from Avon gave an overview of the activities their committee is working on. Also, the Recruitment and Retention Committee from the State Firefighters Association through their Chairperson Bill McAllister provided an update of their activities. Commissioner Munkenbeck in cooperation with the Commission is looking into development of a Recruitment & Retention Newsletter which we will begin distribution of this summer. The agency has made contact with the Department of Public Safety who has indicated their willingness to assist us with the production of some public service announcements (PSA). We have to do some background research for them through the Connecticut Broadcasters' Association. Our time frame now is to produce a PSA to be aired in the fall. If any Commissioners know of any high profile people in their respective areas of the state who can assist us with PSAs we would like to hear from you.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette stated that the Strategic Plan Facilitator Richard Pearson was scheduled to be in attendance this morning but has not arrived yet. We have mailed to fire departments statewide letters of invitation under the Chairman's signature. Some target mailings have been done to all of the statewide and regional organizations in addition to some select state agencies. He called on Commissioners to assist in promoting the public forums, which are scheduled for June 17, 22 and 29. This is a great opportunity for local input. Lastly he asked that Commissioners make every opportunity to attend at least one of the sessions.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette asked Legislative Representation Ted Schroll to give a general overview of the activities of the current legislative session.

Mr. Schroll gave a brief overview of fire/emergency services related legislative proposals. He stated that it appears that numerous bills will not go too far but some of them have at least received House action. One Bill has to do with health benefits for survivors of public safety employees which has passed the House and is in the Senate at this point. A Bill to increase the membership on the E 911 Commission encountered some controversy regarding the addition of two people. The Bill was amended so that one PSAP person and one commercial provider sit on the Commission. A Bill about funding the Police and Firefighter Survivor Benefit Fund has passed both the House and the Senate and is waiting for the Governor's signature.

Mr. Schroll gave an update of Bills that are still alive and pertain to the following; Requiring the identification of buildings with truss construction; Funding for Firefighter Training Programs; Funding for the Firefighters Museum in Manchester; Flashing lights for Fire Marshal vehicles; Building Permit Fee Funds allocated for Building Code Training and Education; Taking the reduce pressure backflow preventer out of the sprinkler system statutes to reduce the expense to building owners; Residential sprinklers; Cancer and Contagious Disease for Firefighters; Warrantees on new emergency vehicles;
Fire Works Displays and Forest Fire Management.

Chairman Carozza recognized Commissioners Gomeau and Johnson and also Chief Robert Massicotte from Waterbury and Chief Wayne Sandford from West Haven who arrived at the meeting.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette asked Mr. Ernie Herrick, Chairman of the Firefighter Memorial Committee to provide an update to the Commissioners.

Mr. Herrick stated that a company in Simsbury would provide the stone. The company Mr. Herrick works for has conducted the surveying and the engineering work for the footing and layout of the stone. A mailing was done to private sector companies to solicit donations but only about \$1700 was received. Another mailing was done to fire departments statewide but response has been very low. To date the committee has collected about \$60,000 and a little over \$200,000 is needed to build this memorial. A letter was sent to both Indian tribes and a response was received from the Mohegan Tribe stating they do not donate to building funds. Mr. Herrick stated that last night he received from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe a request asking him to prepare a W-9 form, when returned they will cut a check. The memorial

could be built for approximately \$150,000 with the additional money put in a money market account to be used for perpetual care.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if any attempt had been made to obtain another grant from the State.

Mr. Herrick stated that he and Ted Schroll met with Representative Andrea Stillman to discuss the memorial. Rep. Stillman indicated a figure of \$100,000 for the monument. Apparently there was a misunderstanding between Rep. Stillman and the committee members because she thought Messrs. Herrick and Schroll would be going to Senator Crisco on this matter. Mr. Schroll has made some contacts but it does not appear that they will receive any additional funds from the Legislature.

Mr. Morrisette inquired if the selling of engraved bricks would still be employed in the design and if so, could Mr. Herrick provide additional flyers to the Commission.

Mr. Herrick stated that the Commission has been very helpful in providing mailing lists and assistance with mailings.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette placed on the table for discussion the proposed "Policy Development Process". He stated this draft policy is essentially a standard format for the development of future agency policies.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to place on the table for discussion or approval the proposed Policy Development Process.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Gomeau and SECONDED by Commissioner Andresen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol recommended that policies being proposed to the Commission should have the signature and date of both the director proposing the policy and the State Fire Administrator along with a sign-off area for the Chairman of the Commission to indicate adoption of a policy.

Commissioner Chatfield amended the previous motion to approve the proposed Policy Development Process after the staff has handled administratively the recommendations made by Commissioner Nicol. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette asked Mr. Piskura to give an overview of the Severe Weather Training Policy being proposed.

Mr. Piskura stated the proposed Severe Weather Training Policy was developed to provide guidelines for Connecticut Fire Academy instructors on how to act or react to climatic experience when training.

Commissioner Nicol inquired who would handle cancellations due to severe weather conditions.

Mr. Piskura replied that the policy implies that the individual instructor has that authority.

Commissioner Nicol suggested that the policy should provide the instructor a guideline for dealing with extreme weather conditions in winter or summer.

Mr. Piskura made reference to the laminated weather chart distributed at the last Commission meeting, which can be used to assess weather conditions. Several factors have to be taken into consideration before an instructor makes a decision to suspend training due to extreme weather conditions. The CT Fire Academy did not want to come out with a mandate, which states that from our point of view, that at 98 degrees training should cease. We can see people picking up on that. That's why we were very careful to have this companion draft policy.

Commissioner Johnson inquired if the Academy already had a severe weather policy in effect.

Mr. Morrissette replied negative.

Commissioner Johnson commented that for example this draft policy states that vital signs should be monitored. He inquired whether we have the capability of doing that out in the field and can we adhere to what is stated in the policy?

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if these policies would be subject to the control of Bradley International Airport and Hartford County?

Mr. Piskura stated that these policies were strictly for the Connecticut Fire Academy.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if severe weather condition reports could be coordinated through Bradley International Airport Tower.

Mr. Piskura stated that Bradley Tower does not view the Academy as a priority entity.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated that in paragraph 4.7.2 the word lighting should be corrected to lightning. He also noted an inconsistency throughout

the text in the use of the words instructor, instructor(s), lead instructor and chief evaluator.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to adopt the Severe Weather Policy as presented with the changes noted. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrisette asked the Commission to table the PTS Annual Report that was expected last week and has not arrived due to illness of the principal of the company.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Gomeau and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to table the PTS Annual Report for the June meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrisette stated that Representative Andrew Roraback from Goshen in Litchfield County was with us briefly, but had to leave because he had a committee meeting scheduled for 10:00 a.m. He wanted to address the Commission briefly regarding request from Litchfield County asking the Commission to look at developing an OSHA compliant entry-level training program for volunteers. The problem that has been communicated to us is that the current recommended contact hours for the FF-I program marketed by the Academy (IFSTA Essentials Program) is too lengthy and is having a negative impact upon efforts to recruit and retain volunteers. This has become somewhat of a high profile issue. A number of letters have been received by our staff from different individuals in Litchfield County in addition to a copy of a letter which was sent to the CT Fire Department Instructors Association opposing any change to the current process by which entry level training is provided.

This issue is put on the table for discussion purposes at this time. Also for the Commission's information, it's our understanding that there are a number of individuals from Litchfield County who would like to come and speak to the Commission. They were apprised of our meeting here today. They have indicated that they would like to attend the Commission's June meeting. Mr. Morrisette indicated that he and the Director of Training had an opportunity to meet with Representatives Roraback and Flaherty from the Litchfield County area along with Chief Larry Black from Watertown to discuss this issue in more detail.

Commissioner Johnson asked the Director of Training if this was doable, and whether if this training is shortened for Litchfield County will we have to do the same for the entire state.

Mr. Piskura stated that anything could be done, whether it's appropriate or not is the purpose for this discussion.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to take a brief recess to greet a guest to the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza welcomed Lieutenant Governor of the State of Connecticut M. Jodi Rell on behalf of the Commission

Lieutenant Governor Rell thanked the Commission for the invitation. She stated that she stopped by to say hello, extend a welcome and hoped the Commission has a most enjoyable meeting this morning. She stated that she hoped that everyone would have the opportunity today to stop by the House and the Senate to see their government in action.

Chairman Carozza thanked Lieutenant Governor Rell for taking the time out of her schedule to be at the meeting and invited her to visit the Connecticut Fire Academy when she has time. He then presented her with a Connecticut Fire Academy Instructor's badge designating her an honorary instructor of the Academy

Lieutenant Governor Rell thanked the Commission.

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

Commissioner Johnson stated that this issue needs to be looked at from both a training and certification point of view.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated this training issue is not the cause of the retention problem. One of the problems is it is the departments, the authority having jurisdiction, it's their job to train and certify firefighters to the level that they wish to. Shifting it to a lower level is dangerous when every other state including New York is shifting to the Firefighter I Standard. As a volunteer firefighter who has gone through the training and has someone in his family now going through the training, it isn't easy but it makes for a safer firefighter. At this point he stated he could not see the Commission comfortable with developing less. It is the responsibility of the chief to develop what they need for their firefighters. In going through all the retention data coming from firefighters and fire chiefs, it is not training that's the problem.

Commissioner Kowalski commented that he agreed with the concept of not diluting the existing training program. He inquired if there is a different tactic perhaps we could take such as establishing a recurring training program on an annual basis for standards that have to be met for interior firefighting.

Maybe a minimum standard training program could be adopted to meet those annual requirements for the volunteer firefighters. There are issues that have to be addressed periodically and that would be an option. This would be perhaps a 20-30 hour course on interior firefighting. Perhaps this is a service we can provide on an annual basis for interior qualifications.

Mr. Piskura stated just as clarification, you're saying as the system is now they're already firefighter I and then this would be the annual OSHA requirements for reoccurring training?

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he did not know the answer to that question at this time.

Chairman Carozza suggested to the Commission that this is an issue that is certainly not going to be resolved this morning. With public hearings scheduled for June we should table this issue to seek further input and discuss at a future date.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Gomeau to table the issue of entry level training.

Chairman Carozza asked if any guests had input to add to the discussion on the table.

Chief John Brady from North Madison Fire Department and President of the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors' Association stated that this issue was debated significantly at their last meeting. Speaking as a volunteer chief he stated at this point he could not say that he would support this proposal. He indicated that he did not think that the training requirements are as significant as it might be made out to be as a recruitment and retention issue. Certainly it is an issue, but his experience has shown when volunteers come in they are full of enthusiasm. They are really looking to become part of the organization and to get out there and to learn how to become a firefighter. The best way to do that is to get them into a firefighter training program that encourages them to the full skill level of interior firefighting. The letter from Litchfield County alluded to a fire ground type person but there was no reference to interior firefighting. There was reference in the letter to operational skills for hazardous materials and certainly, that requires people to be certified and that is just an adjunct to the firefighter I program. Our department fully supports the training program the state has put forward and it's one of our requirements when a new member comes in to take and pass the firefighter I training program provided by the State of Connecticut.

Commissioner Nicol stated that a motion was made at the recent meeting of the New Haven County of Fire Chiefs Organization and passed that they are supporting the request of Litchfield County. One of the things we have to

consider if we are to make an intelligent decision is to speak to OSHA to get their input. If there is going to be considerable amount of pressure on this issue then maybe there is something we can look at in the form of an entry level program without certification and then have a bridge course similar to the EMT program. There are a lot of issues that have to be considered before a decision can be made. We may want to obtain legal counsel from the Attorney General's office to find out what our responsibilities are.

Mr. Piskura offered an observation from a meeting he and the State Fire Administrator attended. He stated the Commission has to have the ability to act quickly when a formal presentation is made to this group. This issue is not as confusing as it may appear. What will make it more difficult is as they go around they will elicit more support. All that the initiator Chief Larry Black was looking for, was the ability to deliver components of Firefighter I. They have that latitude now and they are just looking for a blessing from the Commission. If all they are looking for is an okay; however, I can see that as time passes this escalating to encompass other items of discussion that may impact us in the future. What they have to keep in mind it's their local requirement they attain Firefighter I in a year. It's not OSHA or the State of Connecticut it's their requirement and that's the key thing they have to keep in mind that these are local decisions that are made.

Commissioner Chatfield suggested that all heads of organizations be notified that Entry Level Training will be discussed at the Commission's June meeting.

Motion to table the issue of entry level training for the June meeting was SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck. Motion carried.

Chief Wayne Sandford from West Haven stated that while he worked for the Commission many of the regulations that are currently in place were established. One of the things that was very important when we did regulation development, was to make sure that the Commission never mandated anything on a local fire department. Certification is voluntary as it is today. Concurring with what Mr. Piskura said a local fire department today is the authority having jurisdiction for their community. If he decides in East Haven that Firefighter I is required in one year then so be it. If a Board of Fire Commissioners and a Chief decide on a local level that Firefighter I is required in one year then so be it. If a Board of Fire Commissioners decide on a local level that we are just going to meet "the OSHA topics", then they can do that today as well. Then there's no requirement for them to go to the Fire Commission and say let me have your Firefighter I lesson plan and take out what we don't use. The training programs offered by the Commission are all voluntary. The request coming from Litchfield County is to do what they can already do. The regulations were established so that they can go back to their community and change their local bylaws. When OSHA comes in to

evaluate, if everyone has a Firefighter I certification and annual qualifications thereafter they say okay we know that you exceed the minimum. This is an attempt to take that authority having jurisdiction and dump it on the Fire Commission. This is an attempt to come to the Commission and say we know that we can do it locally but we want the State to develop the course and take on that responsibility for our department. They have the authority to do this today, they have the authority to create and they are the authority having jurisdiction within their own community. He stated that he would encourage the Commission not to take on that responsibility.

Commissioner Nicol stated that he noted that eight Commissioners are coming up for reappointment and asked when the respective organizations will be notified.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the standard letter notifying the organizations that the terms are approaching expiration would be mailed on June 15. He encouraged the Commissioners whose terms expire to speak with the leadership of their organization.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if it would be possible to reschedule the June meeting to a night meeting and down state to meet with heads of organizations to get their input.

A discussion period followed.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Nicol and SECONDED by Commissioner Gomeau to change the location and time of the June meeting.

A discussion period followed on whether to change the location and time of the June meeting but no action was taken.

Mr. Morrissette extended an invitation to Commissioners to attend the annual June Fire School held both at the Academy and in New Haven June 5 through 10. Also following this meeting Commissioners were invited to observe the displays for Fire Service Day at the Capitol.

Mr. Morrissette reported about a program the Academy is working on cooperatively with the Community Technical Colleges in the Norwalk area to assist non-fire service personnel to be trained to the Firefighter I level. A recent news article in the Fairfield County area indicated that following the training program the attendees would be certified as Firefighter I. Our current regulations do not permit that. This may become an issue sometime in the future whether or not the Commission should be training and or certifying non-fire service personnel.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated that all classes would be notified. What was in the original document specifically stated that this does not guarantee employment nor does it guarantee certification.

Mr. Morrissette stated that a request from the American Red Cross to utilize the Connecticut Fire Academy facility for their Southern New England Hurricane Watch Headquarters would be added to the agenda for next month. The possibility also exists to use the Academy as a staging area for their emergency response vehicles, primarily for hurricane preparedness and response.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Gomeau and SECONDED by Commissioner Andresen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.