

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 30, 1999 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Haber, Johnson, Kowalski, Maheu, Milewski, Mullen, Munkenbeck, Nicol and Stankye. Commissioners Chatfield, Gomeau, Vendetta and Wilkinson. were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Ouellette, Piechota and O'Neil were present.

Mr. Morrissette introduced and welcomed Red McKeon, from The Connecticut State Firefighters' Association, as a guest at today's meeting and Charles M. Stankye, Jr. newly appointed Commissioner representing the Connecticut State Firefighters' Association.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the minutes of the October 26, 1999 meeting. Motion carried.

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

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the entry level training document. He stated that this was the final version that will be transmitted to Conn-OSHA for review along with the information presented at the last meeting. After Conn-OSHA has reviewed the document, the agency plans to transmit it along with explanatory information to fire departments statewide.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the timeframe for the OSHA review and subsequent distribution of the document.

Mr. Morrissette indicated that he expected the process to be completed by the end of December.

A question and answer period followed pertaining to the new Entry-Level Training Guide.

Commissioner Munkenbeck stated that as a state agency we should explicitly define the use of the word "recommended."

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Piechota updated the Commission on the current status of the Commission's IFSAC Accreditation application. To date we have only been accredited for Public Fire Educator I and Fire Service Instructor I. We are awaiting action by the IFSAC Board of Governors on the remaining levels of certification for which we made application. Mr. Piechota asked the Commission to determine whether an offer of IFSAC certification will be extended to all individuals currently certified in our system or to only a portion.

A lengthy a discussion on the issue followed.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski to extend IFSAC certification to all persons certified in the state to those levels on a phased in basis. In addition, a \$5 processing fee per certification level will be imposed.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Munkenbeck SECONDED the motion on the table. Motion carried.

Mr. Piechota reported that the State of Rhode Island now has a full time Training Director. One of the first initiatives they would like to move forward on is to begin offering certification. Due to their limited staffing, we have extended an offer to administer certification testing on their behalf for a fee to be negotiated. Rhode Island is most interested in our National accreditation status and the possibility of working under it. With the Commission's approval, the agency would be ready to enter into an agreement with the State of Rhode Island to administer certification testing.

A question and answer period followed.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette stated that he had nothing new to report on the EMS Examination Proposal. In a recent conversation with Debra Tommisone, Public Health Services Manager she indicated that they are closer to a resolution but no final decision has yet been made.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette gave a Facility Management update. As discussed last month, five bids were received eventually which were narrowed down to two. The Agency selected a preferred vendor and the Department of Public Works (DPW) also selected a preferred vendor. We met with DPW's preferred vendor to discuss their proposed services. Following that meeting, an internal decision was made to continue to go with our preferred vendor. This has been communicated to DPW. We are waiting for a final contract with Servus Management Corporation. The anticipated time line for service is January 1.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrisette stated that he communicated to the Director of Public Education that the Commission approved a re-organization consolidating that Division into the Training Division. One week following that meeting, the Public Education Director tendered her resignation and has since left state service. We now need to reassess our options in filling that position. With the current state hiring freeze, we do not know whether or not we can move forward quickly with refilling the position. Our initial plan is to carry on the duties with some part-time support.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrisette reported on the status of the Firefighters' Memorial. He stated that according to Mr. Ernie Herrick there has been no significant change in terms of the level of donations received. The Committee's next goal is to do another direct mail solicitation to Fire Departments throughout the state. We have forwarded to Mr. Herrick mailing labels for Fire Chiefs and Fire Companies.

Chairman Carozza stated that in past practice if there are no urgent agenda items for the December meeting the meeting is cancelled.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette presented the proposed schedule of Commission meetings for the year 2000 and asked for approval.

Commissioner Nicol expressed concern regarding the December 26 meeting scheduled for the day after Christmas and inquired about holding a night meeting sometime during the year.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the schedule could be amended at any time by sending notification to the Secretary Of The State's Office. He asked Commissioners to inquire whether any of their organizations or departments wished to host a meeting.

Commissioner Haber inquired why the May meeting was scheduled for May 30, the day after Memorial Day and the last Tuesday of the month.

Mr. Morrissette replied that the Commission meetings are regularly scheduled for the last Tuesday of the month.

Chairman Carozza inquired about holding the January 25 meeting at the Legislative Office Building to honor past Commissioners and extend an invitation to Governor Rowland.

All Commissioners were in agreement with the plans for the January 25 meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the Year 2000 Commission Meeting Schedule with an amendment to make the December 26 meeting an optional meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrissette spoke about the discussion with Chief Verda from the Norwalk Fire Department's request from last month's Commission meeting relating to the Commission's regulatory requirement that it certify only members of a fire department. At that time the Chairman asked the staff to do some additional research into the issue and report back to the Commission.

Mr. Piechota reported that the main point he researched was the requirement in the current regulation that stipulated any person must be a member of a fire department for all levels except for Public Educator in order to be certified. The best that we can determine is that this has always been in our regulations. The 1997 Edition of NFPA 1001 Standard identifies the minimum requirements for career and volunteer firefighters. In 1992, the Standard identifies the performance requirements necessary to perform the duties of a firefighter with no reference to a department. The 1987 Standard states that "this Standard identifies the professional levels of competence required for fire department members" and it further states that the person is appointed to a fire department. So it appears that at least back to 1987, it was required that an individual be a member of a fire department to become certified in accordance with this NFPA Standard. The Commission had adopted that requirement.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he spoke to the Attorney General's Office (AG) to bring this issue to their attention. The AG's Office indicated the Commission has some latitude in making amendments to its Regulations if they so wish. Should we propose an amendment, we were told to keep in mind that the AG's Office would be looking very closely at our enabling legislation to determine whether we have the authority to provide services to the general public. Another concern should we amend the regulations and open up services to the general public is the impact on the staff and our ability to serve our core customers.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Johnson recommended that the findings resulting from the research done by Mr. Piechota be transmitted to Chief Verda.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski not to change Commission Certification Regulation and to communicate the findings to Chief Verda. Motion carried.

Commissioner Haber read a letter from Terence Sullivan, Personnel Director for the Town of Wallingford. Mr. Sullivan thanked Mr. Piechota for his assistance in both developing and scoring as examination for the position of Lieutenant. He indicated this service greatly reduced the time they experience to fill these important positions.

Commissioner Johnson gave an update on the condition of the firefighters from his department who were injured in an accident on October 5. He also reported on the upcoming fundraisers to be held in early December.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the small number of volunteer firefighters taking certification examinations and the high failure rate for some levels reported on the October Monthly Summary.

Mr. Piechota replied that generally the numbers are low and that nothing has changed in the Agency's process. The high failure rate is generally for those levels in which very few people have taken a particular examination level.

Mr. Morrisette spoke about the companion bill to the Fire Act introduced by Senator Dodd on November 17 (S.1941). A copy was distributed to Commissioners.

Discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza extended Happy Holiday wishes to Commissioners and Agency Staff.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

Dated: _____

Edward F. Haber, Secretary
Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control

MOTIONS

Commission Meeting – November 30, 1999

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Commissioner Munkenbeck SECONDED the motion on the table. Motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the Year 2000 Commission Meeting Schedule with an amendment to make the December 26 meeting an optional meeting. Motion carried.

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

STAFF FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

Chief Verda, Norwalk Fire Department's request relating to the Commission's regulatory requirement that it certify only members of a fire department - Commissioner Johnson recommended that the findings resulting from the research done by Mr. Piechota be transmitted to Chief Verda.