

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 30, 1997 COMMISSION 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, Kowalski, Milewski, Mullen, Nicol, Peabody and Vendetta. Commissioner Gomeau arrived at 9:50 a.m. Commissioners Andresen, Chatfield, Johnson, McCarthy and Munkenbeck were excused. Staff members Morrissette, A. Ouellette, A.T. Ouellete and Piechota were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Mark Lewandowski, Lead Training Coordinator, James P. Brown and Carlo Piacentini, CFA Instructors.

Chairman Carozza asked for a moment of silence in memory of Chief John Yost, Norwalk Fire Department and Deputy Chief (Retired) Tony Cippolla, East Hartford Fire Department.

Mr. Morrissette introduced the guests to the meeting.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to move to item 5 h.) under New Business and present certificates of appreciation to Messrs. Lewandowski, Brown and Piacentini. Motion Carried.*

Chairman Carozza presented certificates of appreciation to Mark Lewandowski and James P. Brown and thanked them on behalf of the Commission for all their efforts in hosting the Upstate Extrication Competition in August.

Mr. Lewandowski thanked the Commission for their support of this successful event. He then gave an overview of the event and showed a series of slides.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if this could be an annual event.

Mr. Lewandowski indicated that it possibly could be hosted in Connecticut every other year.

Chairman Carozza presented a certificate of appreciation to Carlo Piacentini on behalf of the Commission and thanked him for all his efforts in coordinating the first Cadet Summer Camp at the Academy.

Mr. Piacentini thanked the Commission for their support and recognition. He gave a brief overview of the events of the week highlighting the overwhelming response and enthusiasm for this program.

Mr. Morrisette reported that the Academy received a \$4,000 grant from the National Volunteer Fire Council through the CT State Firefighters' Association to help defray expenses of this program.

Chairman Carozza on behalf of the Commission thanked Messrs. Lewandowski, Brown and Piacentini for a job well done on these two successful programs.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody to return to the regular order of business. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 2 on the agenda, approval of minutes of June 24, 1997 meeting.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to approve the minutes of the June 24, 1997 meeting. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 3, Chairman Carozza asked for a motion to approve the committee reports.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to approve the Staff Reports for the period of June 15 to July 14, 1997, July 15 to August 14, 1997 and August 15 to September 14, 1997. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrisette gave a staffing update. He reported as a result of the early retirement incentive package, Andy Ouellette officially retired August 1. He is currently working a 60 day durational refill for the position he vacated. We anticipate this arrangement will end sometime in November. This past week the agency received authorization from OPM to refill the vacant position of Director of Fire Training and Education. A copy of the job specification, which is about 10 years old, was included in the packages distributed for today's meeting for your review. We met with our liaison at the Department of Human Resources to review the job specification and propose modifications to bring it up to date to reflect the demands of the CT Fire Academy facility on the position. The revised job specification will not be finalized until it has been reviewed and approved by the Commission.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber authorizing the State Fire Administrator to initiate the process to update the specification for the Director of Training position.*

Mr. Morrisette stated that he was also seeking the Commission's approval to refill the Director of Training position. He recommended that the position be posted as an open competitive examination which would allow both full and part time employees as well as persons outside the agency to compete.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the hiring process.

Mr. Morrisette stated that back in 1992 when this position was refilled, the Commissioners were invited to participate on an oral review panel at which time three or four candidates were interviewed for the position. He indicated that he envisions a similar process will be followed. The written examination would most likely be an Experience and Training exam.

For the interview part of the hiring process he inquired whether the Commission would like to entertain conducting this as a whole group or whether they would like to appoint a sub-committee to conduct the interviews. In addition, Mr. Morrisette stated that he would also like to require the candidates to submit a short paper sample outlining their vision for the future of the CT Fire Academy. This would enable the candidates to demonstrate their written communication skills.

Commissioner Nicol expressed concern over the exam scoring process screening out some of the qualified internal candidates.

Mr. Morrisette stated this process forces candidates to take personal responsibility in following directions.

A discussion period followed on the recruitment process.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Vendetta authorizing the State Fire Administrator to move forward with the replacement process for the Director of Training position. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the DOT Burn Prop project. Back in June the sub-committee representing the Commission met with DOT and were told that DOT would make a presentation at the September meeting. The latest scenario is that they have been in negotiations with the engineering consultant for the past six months. As of this morning the consultant has still not been officially signed and retained. DOT does not want to make a presentation until the consultant is on board. What was relayed to DOT was that the Commission does not want to hear the consultant describe the prop, they want to know about the partnership DOT is interested in pursuing with the Commission.

Commissioner Peabody commented that DOT was going about this matter totally wrong, not only should they be here talking to the Commission about a partnership we should be involved in selecting a consultant.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he agreed with Commissioner Peabody and added that the consultant DOT is in negotiations with is the one with the most experience in the country. They have been involved with the majority of the large scale burn props nationwide.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette gave a budget update. The FAA has approved the agreement for the sewer system reimbursement and payment is expected by the middle of October.

The agency submitted to OPM a request for allotment to access approximately \$150,000 in Capitol Equipment Bond monies for various pieces of equipment. In the coming months the agency plans to acquire additional new equipment as well as refurbish some of our existing equipment.

Relating to both facility and budget there was some discussion at a Commission meeting back in the spring to look at the feasibility of expanding the CT Fire Academy facility. Mr. Morrissette indicated that he met with the Department of Public Works to review the process with them. First order of business is to request funds to initiate a master plan. What was recommended was rather than approach OPM with an expansion request, we request a facility master plan be initiated. He indicated that he had a lengthy discussion with the agency's Budget Analyst at OPM regarding this matter. She recommends that the request be combined with the CT State Firefighters' Association requesting a comprehensive review of all fire training schools statewide. He informed the Budget Analyst that the regional fire schools are not under the control of the Commission and that the schools may feel the Commission is making a move to take them over. Her feeling was that some of the first questions we're going to be asked by the legislature when we seek money for construction would be what do the other training facilities have for resources. The Department of Public Works indicated that these studies cost anywhere between \$5,000 and \$25,000. In the current fiscal year OPM does not foresee making any funds available to initiate a master plan. The Budget Analyst felt that she had built enough leverage into our 002 account (other expenses account) where we could be in a position to expend agency money for a master plan. If we were to consider this, we probably would not want to make a decision until the end of the third quarter when our expenses for the fiscal year are more certain.

Commissioner Kowalski commented that the Commission should not include the regional schools in the feasibility study if at all possible. No matter how it is communicated it will be misconstrued that the Commission will be using funds that should be going to the regional schools. There should be one strategic plan for the Academy only and then maybe have some sub goals for the regional schools.

Commissioner Peabody stated that there certainly is a lot of benefit to the State of Connecticut to see one plan for fire training schools and a lot of benefit for the schools. He added that he agreed with Commissioner Kowalski no matter what the Commission does and no matter what the outcome the Commission will end up being the bad guy if we try to combine any effort with the regional schools. The Commission should avoid this route at all cost.

Commissioner Nicol indicated that he agreed, we should not include the regional schools in this study. He stated that the Commission should have a brainstorming session and decide long range what is needed at the CT Fire Academy, then look to perhaps taking money out of the budget to have a feasibility study done.

Commissioner Peabody inquired if the Commission was in a position to do a feasibility study or a long range plan on the facility without DPW.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he believed there are Statutes which require the Commission to work with DPW to facilitate the process of hiring a consultant.

Commissioner Peabody inquired about the status of an audit of the equipment account.

Mr. Morrisette indicated that a meeting is scheduled for October 10 with the Department of Public Works to review this item.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Minor Firefighter Training Standard Proposal. This issue is still ongoing, according to the Department of Labor staff liaison, a new Deputy Commissioner has been put into place to oversee the Wage and Workplace Enforcement Division. They are presently educating the new Commissioner before they ask for approval of the final document. During the Summer Camp the agency secured permission through the Labor Department to train minors on skills which were contrary to current restrictions. They put us on notice that they would come to the Academy to audit some of those activities and they followed through.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if the proposal had been distributed to the Fire Chiefs for their review to determine what impact it would have on their fire departments. What if changes have to be made to the proposal, will we have to go back and enter into negotiations with the Labor Department again?

Mr. Morrisette reported that last month the agency hosted a dinner meeting with the Boy Scouts of America and invited chiefs from around the state to attend and to learn about Fire Exploring. The initial response was good with about 35 individuals signed up to attend, but only seven actually showed up. Of those present most were pleasantly surprised with the program and were very much encouraged. Thus, there is an alternative for fire departments who elect not to go with the Minor Firefighter Training Standard when adopted.

Moving to New Business for the Election of Officers, Chairman Carozza yielded the Chair to Commissioner Nicol to entertain nominations for positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary to the Commission.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to place Peter Carozza in nomination for the position of Chairman. The motion was unanimously VOTED and APPROVED.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody to place John Vendetta in nomination for the position of Vice Chairman. The motion was unanimously VOTED and APPROVED.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to place Edward Haber in nomination for the position of Secretary. The motion was unanimously VOTED and APPROVED.*

Chairman Carozza thanked the members of the Commission for their support and extended special thanks to the State Fire Administrator and to his entire staff for their support throughout the year.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette asked Commissioners to bring forth any questions or concerns regarding the FY 1996/97 Annual Report.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Vendetta to approve the FY 1996/97 Annual Report. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrisette spoke about the presentation by Bob Fenner, Interim Manager of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) at the June meeting regarding their accreditation system. At that time no action was taken by the Commission. At this time Mr. Morrisette recommended the Commission seek accreditation by IFSAC as a second accreditation for our certification program. Applicants would have the option to have their national registration handled the same way as the Pro Board. This is a totally voluntary process for our students. In a year this program would need to be re-evaluated because if the minimum required level of activity is not achieved then we would be required to pay a fee.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Kowalski to implement the IFSAC Accreditation Process. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrisette reported that Agency Legislative Proposals for the 1998 Session have to be submitted by the end of October. At this time he proposed the following two items for discussion:

1. To resubmit a proposal from the last session enabling the Commission to promulgate regulations. We currently do not have the authority to do so. This proposal was not acted upon during the last session. This proposal was originally recommended by the Legislative Regulation Review Committee.
2. To submit a proposal relating to training business and industry. Currently the Commission does not have the authority to deliver training to business and industry. This initiative is very important for the Commission's future success in order to maintain programs from a pro-active stance. There may be some problems with submitting such a proposal because there are private consultants who offer similar training. The only thing we have to our advantage is that we are probably the only organization with a facility who can deliver the level of hands on training that representatives from business and industry need. The interaction between fire and emergency services groups and private industry is a second benefit.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he strongly agrees we should change legislation to include the training of business and industry. There's no question, that while traveling to other state academies it is clear that they are deriving a lot of revenue from business and industry. That's what is going to keep the municipal departments from having to pay higher fees and tuitions.

Chairman Carozza expressed a concern for how this would impact privately run fire departments and whether we charge them the municipal or industrial rate for fire training.

Chairman Carozza requested that the Commission table item 2 in order to obtain more information on this matter and discuss at the next meeting.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he would solicit from other states their applicable legislation to serve as models for our review.

A question and answer period followed.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Peabody and SECONDED by Commissioner Nicol to move forward with the first legislative proposal to enable the Commission to promulgate regulations. Motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to table the second legislative proposal to obtain additional information. Motion carried.*

Commissioner Peabody stated that there may be a fairly simple solution such as stating “the Commission shall” then list the duties and then add a statement that “it is not limited to”. This may serve to cover our problem.

Moving to item 5 e.) Mr. Piechota reported on a request from an individual asking for personal reasons to have his State Fire Instructor certification rescinded. Very simply our regulations have no mechanism to allow the Commission to de-certify an individual at any level.

After a discussion period among the Commissioners, a recommendation was made to have Mr. Piechota make a formal request of the National Pro Board as to whether they have a mechanism in place to de-certify an individual.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Milewski and SECONDED by Commissioner Nicol to table the decertification request until the agency has obtained more information from the National Pro Board. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 f.) Mr. Morrisette reported that the agency’s current policy states that Limited Access Highway Claim forms must be submitted within 60 days of the incident. Recently a fire company submitted approximately \$1,300 worth of claims which they indicated were originally submitted in error to our old Meriden address. He stated that this matter was being brought to the attention of the Commission for discussion and as a question of policy on late claims.

A brief discussion followed.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Peabody to accept the late Limited Access Highway claims and allow them to proceed through the process. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 g.) Mr. Morrisette reported that over the past several years the staff has been working with the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop a system whereby individuals who are certified by their office could also become nationally certified as an inspector to NFPA 1031. That process has moved forward to a point where the staff would like to seek the Commission’s approval to delegate authority to the Department of Public

Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to certify personnel who they deem to meet minimum program requirements to become nationally certified by the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) under the Commission's Accreditation.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Vendetta and SECONDED by Commissioner Gomeau to delegate authority to the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to certify their personnel to become certified by the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications under the Commission's Accreditation. Motion carried.*

Commissioner Nicol asked for an update on the Memorial Monument Committee.

Commissioner Haber stated that at the last CT Fire Chiefs' Association meeting the Committee reported that efforts were ongoing but that they were having problems raising money. They indicated that they would be sending out letters to Insurance Companies and to various large organizations and if that doesn't materialize letters will be sent out to each fire department in the state.

After a short discussion period Chairman Carozza stated that the Chairman of the Memorial Committee should be invited to come before the Commission to give an update of their activities.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about having the Memorial Committee go before the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations.

Chairman Carozza stated that he saw no problem bringing the Memorial Committee before the Joint Council of Fire Service Organizations but the Commission needs to hear from the Chairman.

Commissioner Peabody reported that the Academy's Safety Committee continues to meet and to look very closely at all operations to make sure they are as safe as possible. This committee does a very thorough job and are very concerned with safety at the Academy.

Mr. Ouellette thanked the Commission for allowing him to serve the Commission and for all their support during his five years as Director of Training

Mr. Morrissette brought the following matters to the attention of the Commission:

- The new tow vehicle for the escape trailer which was funded by a donation from the Hartford has been delivered and can be seen in front of the Academy as the Commissioners leave today. The agency is working with the Governor's Office to plan a ceremony sometime in the next month or two at the Capitol.
- The final report from the Emergency Response Task Force has been distributed to the Commissioners for review and comment. A number of the recommendations in this report will be implemented beginning October 15. Some of the recommendations will have more of a statewide impact within the next year.

- The agency has received approval from DOT to erect a sign for the CT Fire Academy at the end of Perimeter Road positioned just under the Air Museum sign.
- The Director and the Deputy Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services both resigned effective September 22. OEMS is going through a review by the Legislature's Program Review and Investigation Committee. There was a committee hearing about three weeks ago and a public hearing last week. Another public hearing is scheduled for October 7 in the evening. He reported that at the public hearing he attended many people spoke about OEMS and about the manner in which training and certification is delivered. Several recommended the organizational model the Fire Commission is based upon as an excellent model to look at possibly implementing.

Mr. Ouellette reported that he received a telephone call from the Lieutenant in charge of the truck squad at the Department of Motor Vehicle regarding transferring their responsibility for inspecting fire apparatus over to the Academy. He informed the DMV that the Academy did not have qualified personnel to take over this responsibility. DMV requested our Fire Chiefs' mailing list to survey the needs of departments statewide. DMV also indicated that they do not intend to drop the fire service, but they just no longer can offer inspections on request.

A question and answer period followed.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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Secretary, Commission on Fire  
Prevention and Control