

- Tuesday, January 10, 2006, 10:00 at room 1C in the Legislative Office Building
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Present were Dawn Niles, Representatives Walter Pawelkiewicz, Linda Orange, Roberta Willis; Sarah Packard and Alan Calandro from O.F.A.; Education Committee representatives: Jim Wilkinson, Ted Schroll, Jeff Morrisette, Bill Seward, Chet Haber, Richard Winn, Al Hawkins.

The purpose of the meeting was to develop a two-pronged strategy in order to lobby for the capital improvement project and to lobby for additional operational funding for the regional fire schools.

Those present reviewed the current status of the individual regional fire school facilities.

Walter Pawelkiewicz suggested the following steps:

- Work with Public Safety Committee to develop a bill to fund the lease payments for the Hartford school property.
- Send letter to O.P.M. to request the expeditious release of funding for the design of the New Haven Regional Fire Academy facility.
- Schedule subsequent meeting with Education Committee representatives, O.P.M. Secretary Genuario, D.P.W. Commissioner Fleming to re-establish the urgency of the regional fire school capital improvement project.
- Encourage letters to Governor and representatives of the Public Safety Committee and Finance Revenue and Bonding to request help establishing the capital project as a priority.
- Schedule subsequent meeting with Education Committee representatives, Comptroller, Appropriations Committee, Public Safety Committee to work on a proposal to increase the operational funding for the regional fire schools.

Linda Orange pointed out that there were benefits and drawbacks to moving the location of the regional fire school grant funding within the budget. By making it more conspicuous it could make it more susceptible to cuts. By leaving it where it is the Education Committee would need to work to develop an annual review process.

- Wednesday, January 25, 2006, 10:00 at room 2A in the Legislative Office Building
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Present were Dawn Niles, Representatives Walter Pawelkiewicz, Roberta Willis; Jim Perras (Don Williams staff), Jeff Greenfield (Jim Amann staff), Robert Genuario (Secretary of O.P.M.) Steve Kitowitz (also from O.P.M.), Commissioner of D.P.W. James Fleming ; Education Committee representatives: Ted Schroll, Jeff Morrisette, Chet Haber, Bill Seward, Richard Winn, Al Hawkins.

There was a detailed discussion about the current conditions of each of the regional fire schools. There was also discussion about the lack of progress due to the lack of funding from the bonding commission.

There was a presentation from Walter Pawelkiewicz about the history of the capital project for the regional fire schools. Rep. Pawelkiewicz asserted the support that the project has within the legislature and asked for Secretary Genuario to offer his help in moving the project forward.

Commissioner Fleming also spoke at length about the process. He urged that funding for the various phases of the project be released in a timely manner. Commissioner Fleming also reported that the \$10 million included in the 2004 bond bill would be expended before the end of this calendar year. He asked that Secretary Genuario include additional funding in the bonding budget for the next fiscal year.

Secretary Genuario asked several questions about the project. Two questions that could not be readily answered relate to activity at the various regional fire schools. Secretary Genuario asked the number of fire departments served by each school, and the number of students served by each school. *The education committee needs to compile an updated activity report in a standard format that can show at least the following: total number of departments served, total number of students served and total contact hours delivered.*

During discussion about the operational funding issue Secretary Genuario asked about the revenue generated by tuition at each of the regional fire schools. He wanted to know what percentage of our funding came from tuition versus the grant appropriation. Al Hawkins responded that the tuition was probably between 35 and 40% of our current operational funding. Secretary Genuario asked why towns were not willing to pay tuition rates that could support the entire operational funding needs. Al Hawkins commented that this was both a fiscal issue and a cultural issue from many of the towns. Whenever towns send Police Officers, Fire Marshals or Building Officials to be trained there is no charge-back to the individual towns. These costs are borne by the state. As the cost for training escalates many fire department budgets do not keep pace with these increases. This leaves administrators at local fire departments making choices between training and equipment purchase and maintenance.