

Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

Meeting minutes

Meeting – January 25, 2007 – 19:00

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:08 with the following representatives present:

Connecticut State Firefighters Association – Ted Schroll

Burrville Fire School – Rich Winn

Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Al Hawkins

Hartford Fire School - Chet Haber, Mike Jepeal, Jim Baldis

Middlesex County Fire School – Jay Woron

Wolcott Regional Fire School – Paul Perrotti

Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – Rich Nicol, Jim Wilkinson

Connecticut Fire Academy – Jeff Morrisette

Stamford Fire Department Regional School – Tony Conte

Guests: Walter Pawelkiewicz 49th District

Linda Orange, 48th District

Don Ouillette, D.P.W.

John Brady, C.F.D.I.A.

No one was present from: Fairfield Regional Fire School , New Haven Regional Fire Academy or Valley Fire Chief's Regional Fire School

The minutes of the November 30, 2006 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved – motion by Haber second by Conte.

1. Meet with legislators

The committee had a discussion with legislators regarding various aspects of firefighter training. There was discussion about the benefits of structural fire training in gas-fired, class A and acquired structures. Legislators were informed that the lack of suitable burn buildings was pushing more local fire departments to train in acquired structures.

Representative Pawelkiewicz advised that he had sponsored a PILOT bill that would generate Payment in Lieu of Property Taxes in the case that private property was acquired for construction of a regional fire school. He went on to point out that there are various funding levels for different property use groups under the PILOT program. Prisons generate the highest value pay-out to local towns which is the model that he suggested in his bill.

Al Hawkins pointed out that the New Haven design project indicates that the project will be considerably over budget with a projection of an 18.7% annual escalation. He feels that it is too soon to predict what will happen with possible cost overruns on subsequent projects. Al asked Representatives Pawelkiewicz and Orange if we should try to engage in cost predictions at this time or wait until we have a “track record” to determine if we need to ask for additional funding. Both representatives felt that we could wait until after the bond funds from the upcoming biennial budget were released before we make any further predictions.

There was a lengthy discussion about the training bill that has been introduced by Speaker Amann. Both Representatives Pawelkiewicz and Orange felt that the bill should be changed to reflect a funding source other than bond funding. Both representatives had several suggestions with respect to John Brady's testimony in support of the bill.

Committee members thanked both representatives for remaining accessible and for attending tonight's meeting.

2. Status of properties acquisitions

Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Don announced that the D.P.W. has finalized negotiations with Rogers for the former manufacturing facility in Windham. No written purchase agreement has been prepared at this time. Don thinks that the land purchase will be to the bond commission by early spring.

Middlesex Fire School – Some progress has been made with this negotiation. The land acquisition will be a city brownfield.

Valley Fire School – Cost of the property in Oxford has been set at \$40,000 per acre. The intent is to acquire 10 acres.

3. New Haven Renovation – Design

The design contract is now signed. There is still no M.O.U. for this project with the city of New Haven.

4. Hartford County – Design

The advertisement is ready for soliciting design professionals for the project.

5. Bond funding update

We are waiting for release of the Governor's budget to see if the \$30 million is in there for the next biennial budget. Representative Pawelkiewicz has submitted a bill calling for \$30 million over the next two years in case that bonding is not included in the Governor's budget.

6. 2007 legislative initiatives – Training bill

John Brady is point person on the training bill. The Joint Council on Connecticut Fire Services Organizations has given their full support for the bill. John has provided a position paper and will testify at the Committee on Public Safety and Security's public hearing next Tuesday.

7. Other items from membership

Chet Haber announced that he was coordinating a tour of the Worcester, Massachusetts and the Concord, New Hampshire training facilities for February 3, 2007. Anyone wishing to attend contact Chet.

8. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be February 22, 2006 at 19:00 at Wethersfield Company #3.

The meeting was adjourned at 21:25 (motion by Nicol second by Conte)

Submitted by:
Al Hawkins, chairman