

Meeting:

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May 11, 2005, 11:00 at the state capital, Hartford

In attendance were:

State Representatives Linda Orange, Walter Pawelkiewicz, Legislative staff – Dawn Niles  
Rich Winn, Rich Nicol, Lloyd Niles, Jeff Morrisette, Charles Stankye, Jr., Ted Schroll, Chet Haber,  
Bill McAllister, Al Hawkins

Doug Moore – D.P.W. representing commissioner Fleming

Commissioner Skip Thomas, Deputy Commissioner Wayne Sanford – Homeland Security

The meeting was called by Representatives Orange and Pawelkiewicz as a result of earlier discussions about operational funding issues of the regional fire schools and the desire expressed to work toward establishing a long-term working relationship with the Department of Homeland Security.

Doug Moore distributed proposed amended legislative text to help to facilitate the ongoing renovations to the regional fire schools. See below:

**To clarify power to buy land:** *this language change was submitted to the legislature May 10, 2005*

Sec. . Subdivision (3) of subsection (d) of section 2 of special act 04-2 of the May special session, is amended to read as follows (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 4b-1 of the general statutes, capital construction, improvements, repairs and renovations at Fire Training Schools and acquisition of real property for such schools, not exceeding \$10,000,000.

**To clarify DPW power to construct facilities:**

Sec. . (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) The Commissioner of Public Works, in accordance with the powers and duties provided under title 4b of the general statutes, may provide for the construction, improvement, repair or renovation of any fire training school that receives state funds and may acquire real property for the state to operate any such school.

**To clarify policy regarding Fire Training School officials on DPW selection panels:**

Sec. . Subsection (i) of section 4b-55 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*)

(i) “User agency” means the state department or agency requesting the project or the agency for which the project is being undertaken pursuant to law:

Representatives Orange and Pawelkiewicz suggested that the operational funding for the regional fire schools be moved from the current location (Governor’s “B” budget, Page 568 under non-functional) to the operations section forming nine additional line items beneath the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. By making this change the regional fire school operational funding would be more likely to be assessed during each budget making session. Generally, operating budgets are considered for cost of living escalation and are subject to bi-annual review.

Representative Orange also suggested that if the Education Committee wished to facilitate this change that she would want to change existing legislation to provide for representation for the Education Committee on the C.F.P.C.

Representative Pawelkiewicz suggested that additional benefits of this change could include the opportunity to consolidate functions such as facility maintenance, insurance, payroll, etc. Both representatives pointed out that the state budget was literally being built as we spoke and that they would need to know if they should proceed with the suggested changes for inclusion in this budget session.

Commissioner Thomas and Deputy Commissioner Sanford discussed their plans for future homeland security training initiatives. They reported that the contract with the University of Connecticut to coordinate Homeland Security training was allowed to lapse on April 30, 2005. They are both interested in forming alliances with P.O.S.T. the Connecticut Fire Academy and the regional fire schools. They want to use the regional fire schools as a venue for their training program deliveries to local agencies and possibly contract for delivery of some programs where local training expertise is available by P.O.S.T., the C.F.A., or the regional fire schools. Commissioner Thomas indicated that his department would be willing to fund these initiatives and that the availability of the existing training infrastructure would be advantageous to everyone, especially the end user. All discussion was exceedingly positive about the proposed inclusion of the regional fire schools and the C.F.A. for Homeland Security training initiatives.

At this point in the meeting Representatives Orange and Pawelkiewicz left and a discussion took place on the merits of the proposed budget changes. It was agreed that Al Hawkins would contact the principal contact person for each of the regional fire schools that were not represented at this meeting and see if anyone did not want to pursue this change in the budget structure. The consensus of those committee members present was that the only concern was that the regional fire schools should remain under local control.

*Following the meeting Al Hawkins contacted the principal contact person for each of the regional schools to discuss the proposed budget change. Although no one expressed the opinion that we should not seek the recommended change, several expressed concern that the regional fire schools should remain under local control. Legislative staff was advised on May 12<sup>th</sup> that the committee supports the proposed budget change.*