



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL*  
*OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION*



TEL: (860) 627-6363

Jeffrey J. Morrissette  
State Fire Administrator

34 PERIMETER ROAD, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT 06096-1069

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24, 2007 MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Peter Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blaschik, Mitchell, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewis, Morrissette, McGowan and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Joe Townsley, Director of Magnet Schools Capital Region Education Council (CREC), Al Hawkins and Richard Winn, Education Committee of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association (CSFA), Fred Piechota, Accreditation Manager of the ProBoard and former Commission employee, Robert Guthrie, President of the CSFA, Lou Clarke, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the CSFA, Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative, CSFA and Gary Keating, Legislative Representative for the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of CT (UPFFA).

State Fire Administrator Morrissette stated it was his pleasure to introduce Tom McGowan who was hired as Director of Certification. He said in the short time he's been in service as the Director he's done an outstanding job; he and the staff have interacted exceptionally well and has completed an exceptional amount of planning already. Mr. Morrissette asked Mr. McGowan to share a little of his background for Commissioners.

Mr. McGowan said he owes a lot to the staff in the office. He said in the time that Mr. Piechota vacated the position and the time he got on board the two folks that were there as well as the support staff has done a tremendous job. He said he's been a call firefighter for 17 years in East Longmeadow, MA and for part of that time was also a career firefighter in Longmeadow for 16 years. His original education was as a teacher and he has a Masters Degree and is currently working on his second Masters Degree in Education. Through the ranks of the fire service he's been a firefighter and has also worked for the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy for 13 years working his way through the ranks from Instructor for various programs, to Assistant Coordinator for HAZ MAT and Counter-Terrorism, to Coordinator of program developments and special projects. He said he became the NIMS coordinator for the Connecticut Fire Academy and subsequently became director of Certification. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve as Director of Certification.

Chairman Carozza welcomed Mr. McGowan on behalf of the Commission.

Chairman Carozza asked former Certification Director Fred Piechota if he wanted to say a few words.

Mr. Piechota remarked that he wanted to formally thank the Commission for the support given to him over the 13 years he had been with the Commission. He said unfortunately since he retired, his schedule hasn't allowed him to appear before the Commission and he just wanted to say thank you for the support and cooperation and it has been a wonderful experience and he'll miss it. He said he's confident Mr. McGowan will do a fine job as Director of Certification and although he is moving on doing similar things in the national arena, he will still be available if anyone needs anything.

Chairman Carozza expressed on behalf of the Commission thanks to Mr. Piechota for all his years of service.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the February 27, 2007 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the Minutes of the February 27, 2007 meeting. Motion carried.

Commissioner Kowalski arrived at 9:45 am.

Moving to item 3) Staff Reports January 15, 2007 –February 14, 2007.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the Staff Reports for the period of January 15, 2007 – February 14, 2007. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to approve the Staff Reports for the period of February 15, 2007 – March 14, 2007. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update –Mr. Morrissette gave a brief report regarding the budget. He said as most Commissioners are aware the Legislature is still in session working on a budget so he has nothing new to report other than what Mr. Schroll will report later as part of his legislative update. Mr. Morrissette also reported regarding staffing. He said we still maintain a Trainer vacancy and are awaiting a promulgated list of qualified candidates from the Department of Administrative Services. Once received, we will initiate interviews and make a selection.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson reported that the Education Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis. They last met on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and at that point the progress report for the various projects were that

the design work for the New Haven facility was approximately 50% done and that was considered to be excellent progress. At that time the hope would be that we would be going to the Bond Commission in approximately eight months for construction money assuming that additional funding is allocated by the Legislature. An architectural engineering firm has been selected for the Hartford County expansion at the Connecticut Fire Academy site and Department of Public Works(DPW) hopes to have the proposal available for the May Bond Commission meeting to provide funding for that and they anticipate it will be a six to seven month design process. Purchase agreements are tentatively in place for the sites for the Eastern CT Fire School and the Valley School in Oxford and the Committee hopes that the funding for those property purchases will also be included on the May Bond Commission Agenda. The next meeting is scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup> in Wethersfield.

Moving to item 4c.) Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette reported regarding the Limited Access Highway (LAH) Supplemental Grant Award program. He said we are making significant progress touching base with the fire companies that had not responded to our request to identify how they would like their funding administered. To date, about three companies haven't responded to us as of yet. He asked Commissioners as they are speaking to departments to remind them that the funding must be expended by the end of this fiscal year or it will be lost. He said unlike previous years where we carried over funding, this year we're not allowed to do that.

Moving to item 4d.) New London County Incident Management Team (IMT) Recognition – Mr. Morrisette stated that we're still attempting for the purposes of discussion to obtain minutes from the original set of IMT Committee meetings from DEMHS. They were not available electronically or otherwise so we're struggling through this. He said he knows we've tabled this item for a significant period of time however there is background information that some of the Commission members wanted before formal recognition is made.

Moving to item 4e.) PA 06-22 Guidelines Update – Mr. Morrisette stated that we had sent out the final version of the Model Guidelines for Volunteer Emergency Personnel. He said he hopes Commissioners had an opportunity to review the final document. He said this is our final version based upon all the input, feedback and recommendations that were received through the Public Forums that we held as well as discussions within the Commission itself. We have transmitted a copy of the Guidelines to Representative Nafis who had proposed the original Legislation. He said at this point he is seeking the direction of the Commission as to whether we would move to a point of distributing the document and promote it on the Commission's website. He also said in the Legislative report, Commissioners will hear that legislation is moving forward which addresses some of the issues related to the bigger picture, but he thinks we've completed our role and responsibilities. He said the Guidelines are voluntary and we would work with departments if they sought our assistance in negotiations between municipalities seeking to enter into an inter-local agreement.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol that we distribute the Model Guidelines for Volunteer Emergency Personnel and publish it on the Commission's website. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4f.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrissette asked Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative for the CSFA to provide an update to the Commission.

Mr. Schroll referenced a Legislative Bill Tracking chart that was distributed today. He said many of the Bills that are marked dead are either Appropriations or Finance Committee Bills and both of those Committees just ended last week and as a result some of the information may be in the budget or the Bonding Bill but he doesn't know yet. He said the three pieces of Legislation that the CSFA initiated and endorses are the Training Bill 6338, the original request was for \$2.5 million but the Appropriations Committee included \$1.5 million for training within the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control's budget. They also included language in the Bill that limits that training to Firefighter I training only. He said as Commissioners are aware, the original proposal included Firefighter I and II, Fire Officer and Fire Instructor as well as components if the Recruit Program. Senate Bill 1119 is the state Bonding package and included in the Bill is \$10 million allocated for each of the two years for a total of \$20 million for furthering the capital improvement program for the Regional fire schools. Senate Bill 703 fire safe cigarette Bill which the CT Fire Marshals' Association has been actively supporting is currently being rewritten in the Legislative Commissioners Office (LCO) to include New York state language. He said it is his understanding that many states are looking to pass fire safe cigarette Legislation and make the New York state language standard throughout the country so the cigarette manufacturers doesn't have to make a different cigarette for every state. He also stated that he believes Bill 7077 that addresses the state budget appropriations in the Commission's budget reflects that the Supplemental Grant Award program went from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and asked Mr. Morrissette for clarification.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that the budget does propose overall Grant funding of \$200,000. There is a proposed Bill to increase the amount to \$500,000. We will have to await the final budget before identifying the actual grant awards to be made to the eligible fire companies.

Mr. Schroll said he believes that Bill is dead because the discussion he had was that they couldn't allow the increase of \$500,000 so it will be \$200,000. He also said in the budget Bill itself all the things we're looking for are still there and active. He said in the Commission's budget it appears the operating funds for the Regional Schools will get an increase this year of \$180,000. The other Bills we are supporting are Bill 6927 which is the initiative that would prohibit municipalities from restricting career firefighters from being volunteer firefighters in their community. He said that Bill was voted out of Public Safety and Appropriations Committee and is currently sitting on the House Floor waiting for action. Bill 6956 which is the Bill that would provide a rebuttable presumption for firefighters for certain infectious disease heart and hypertension and certain cancers that firefighters are more susceptible to also went through the Labor and Public Safety Committees and last Thursday they passed the Bill out and send it to be written up. He

said there were several amendments to that Bill in order to get it out of Committee and one was that they had to change some of the cancer language that said you had to definitely show an exposure to cancer in order to get the presumption. He said he believes he's covered most of the Bills the Commission is interested in and asked if anyone had questions.

Commissioner Nicol asked Mr. Schroll to give an update on the Regulation of fire apparatus.

Mr. Schroll said he can explain what he knows and for those who aren't aware the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is writing agency Regulations on Fire Apparatus Safety Inspections. He said back in the year 2000 the Legislature passed a Bill that would create a program for fire apparatus safety inspections. He said it was to be done but there was no funding available so essentially one would call the DMV and be placed on a list and DMV would conduct the inspection as they had time and staffing permitted. Within the Bill, there was a requirement to set up a safety program and seven years later someone picks up the Bill and decided that they had the power to set up Regulations so now they are going to do it. The published set of Regulations that were basically for commercial vehicle inspection says they could stop a vehicle on the road and conduct safety inspection or come to your place and do the inspection. He said they had a public hearing in Waterbury and all the fire service organizations got together and attended the hearing on the Regulations and offer input as to what we would like them to do. At this point, that is where it stands. The DMV is supposed to review what they have and take into consideration the testimony offered and come up with a set of Regulations. He said they told us they would give serious thoughts to what we had requested and get back to us. He said he really doesn't know what will happen as the Inspector who set the program in place had only three more days before he retires so nothing would be done until a new person is put in that place and they start reviewing everything. Also the Legislature has not put in any appropriations so we'll see what happens. He said it was left with the Mechanics Association to work the DMV on reaching a logical solution.

Moving to item 5a.) Letter of Support – Greater Hartford Public Safety Academy Magnet School – Mr. Piskura introduced Joe Townsley, representing the Capital Region Education Council (CREC) who is here today to seek a letter of support from the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control on the concept of the Public Safety Academy Magnet School.

Mr. Townsley stated he was the Superintendent of Schools in Simsbury for 20 years and retired. A few years prior to that he got involved with Magnet Schools and when he retired he was asked to take the eight Magnet Schools and make them into a school district. He distributed some materials and stated that this information would provide a lot of background on the concept of the Greater Hartford Public Safety Academy Magnet School. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to share what the concept is all about and how it will impact Connecticut. He said he was approached by a representative of the Capital Workforce Partners saying that there is a problem in greater Hartford and the state where they can't find enough individuals to fill the ranks of police, fire and

public safety careers. To that end, he said they responded that they would develop a magnet school. The project began about 14 months ago and has moved along at record speed compared to other magnet schools projects. CREC is a regional service center servicing 25 towns and is a non-profit organization. By developing the magnet schools' concept and getting it passed through the General Assembly; the General Assembly then funds 95% of construction cost of the school and CREC manages the school. He said what is unique about this school is that to the best of their knowledge there is no other public safety magnet school in the United States with the exception of one in San Bernardino, CA which is a city run magnet school. This particular magnet school is a 6-14 magnet school proposal where students enter in middle school and then move into a high school academy and simultaneously take college courses in their sophomore, junior and senior year. Hopefully, they will then move to the rank of a community college. Those students could continue their education in a community college or in some cases transfer to four year colleges. He said they have a Governing board of approximately 22 individuals representing police, fire, EMS, community colleges, various agencies, towns and the state. They are very confident the General Assembly will fund the project in the next Legislative Session. The other part of the proposal is to make the facility available to other agencies to conduct training when it is not being used by students during the day. He said that is the concept of the proposal. They don't have a site at this time for the school but the plan is to open up as early as this summer a 7 and 8 grade introductory program using some federal grant money they hope to receive. CREC anticipates opening the school in the 2008-09 school year. They won't have a building constructed but they are currently looking for what they call incubator space to accommodate grades 6, 7, 9 and 10. Mr. Townsley asked Commission members to review the packet he distributed to get more detailed information and see some of the other agencies that have already submitted letters of support. He formally requested a letter of support from the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Townsley for his presentation and asked if members of the Commission had any questions.

A brief discussion period followed with some questions and answers.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Blaschik and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady that the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control send a letter of support to CREC for the Greater Hartford Public Safety Academy Magnet School. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5b.) Host Seat Policy - . Mr. Morrissette asked Mr. Piskura to provide information regarding the host seat policy.

Mr. Piskura stated that as Commissioners are aware the State Fire Administrator had reported that the state Auditors have been at our facility. He said not everything they investigate is produced into a formal report. One of the items that they verbally addressed is that the Commission at some point in time agreed to award four complimentary seats to any fire department that hosts a calendar class. Despite a search of our Commission meeting Minutes and conversation with our previous State Fire

Administrator and Training Director we cannot determine or discover any written documentation or policy stating this procedure. He said the Auditor was asking who approved this procedure as this essentially gives tuition free passage to four students which is state asset. We were advised that to appropriately cover ourselves it would be in our best interest to have an established policy ratified by the Commission. Therefore, he asked for the Commission's approval to ratify a procedure that any individual fire department that offers a venue for training for open enrollment classes offered in our training calendar be offered four free seats in return for using that department's facility, fire apparatus, etc. He said in some cases the department provides coffee and lunches and sometimes they don't take advantage of the four free seats. He also said this circumstance only pertains to the CFA Training Calendar courses.

Commissioner Ouellette said the impression he gets from this is that the Auditors were concerned that we are giving away state services and asked if they were informed of the return service we're getting for this.

Mr. Piskura said the Auditors don't request this background information. They are more concerned that our policy board ratifies a policy which may already have occurred but we cannot document it.

Commissioner Ouellette asked if the Auditor's report has been released yet.

Mr. Morrissette replied that the draft report was provided to him about a week before he went on vacation and he's already provided the agency's response to the recommendations. He also said this is not a formal recommendation from the Auditors but as Mr. Piskura had said this was a verbal recommendation more from a good practice standpoint. He said the recommendations in the audit report are more substantial deficiencies they've noted and this is less substantial but is still something they want us to react to.

Commissioner Ouellette stated the reason he asked is that he's a little concerned with the Commission taking action on a verbal recommendation and he sees this issue as more of an administrative practice and not something the Commission needs to react to.

Mr. Morrissette said all we're requesting today is that it be established as a policy because we're having difficulty identifying its origination and institutionalization approximately 20 years ago.

Commissioner Ouellette said he's reluctant to vote on something that is a verbal request.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to approve the CFA Host Seat Policy developed by the staff. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5c.) May Commission Meeting Location – Mr. Morrissette said for the Commission's discussion we tend to hold the May meeting in the evening at a location off site and asked whether there is an interest to do so and what would be the

recommendation. He said a possible location could be either the northeast or southeast part of the state as we have not visited those areas as of yet.

Chairman Carozza asked members to let the State Fire Administrator know within a week whether there is a location off site that would like to host the meeting and if not we would hold the meeting at the Academy at the usual time.

Moving to item 6- Comments from the public – There were none.

Chairman Carozza asked Gary Keating legislative representative for the UPFFA to give the Commission an update on the history of Bill 6956.

Mr. Keating said the Bill as it stands today has been amended and there is substitute language that provides three rebuttable presumptions. The first one is for infectious disease hepatitis, meningococcal meningitis, and tuberculosis. The second is municipal firefighters hired after July 1, 1996 would be covered for heart and hypertension while they are on duty. On duty now is defined as going to, at or returning from a call or mutual aid; training, drills, inspections or investigations so it's not all the time on duty. He said that pretty much mirrors the volunteer statutes. The final part addresses four different types of cancers and that has substitute language now where we have to show some type of exposure to something that is scientifically proven to have caused that type of cancer. He said the Bill is out of the Appropriations Committee and is now in the LCO.

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Commissioner Nicol reported regarding the CSFI dinner in Washington. He said that several Commissioners attended the dinner and the Statewide Honor Guard participated in the opening ceremonies. They did a very nice job and we should be proud of them. He said we had the opportunity to meet with our Congressional delegates with the exception of Senator Dodd who was out of town but we met with Senator Lieberman and the other five Representatives to discuss fire service Bills of national interest. He said he has attended the dinner several times over the years and was very impressed with the interest that the Legislators displayed. He said there were about ten people in the group and he thanked Vice Chairman Kowalski for organizing the meetings with Legislators.

Commissioner Brady added that he would also like to thank Commissioner Kowalski for an excellent job in organizing the appointments with Legislators and overall was very worthwhile.

Vice Chairman Kowalski remarked that it is a very worthwhile and inexpensive trip to get folks to the dinner and he encourages anyone that can attend next year to do so. He also said he hopes we'll get to the point where we will have a large turnout from Connecticut so we can have a small reception and invite all the Legislators to attend which logistically is a little bit easier.



Commissioner Ouellette remarked that he had an opportunity to review the Model Guidelines for Volunteer Emergency Personnel and he would like to commend State Fire Administrator Morrissette and the staff for the outstanding job on developing the Guidelines. He said he knows this was a very complicated project.

Commissioner Blaschik thanked Mr. Morrissette, Mr. Piskura and Program Manager Mark Salafia for coordinating the Connecticut Fire Officers weekend.

Mr. Morrissette reported that last meeting he had provided an update on the EMT Paramedic Testing Initiative that we're planning. He said the original Pilot test was scrubbed for April 21<sup>st</sup> due to a lack of students and ineffective advertising on our part however we've already begun advertising for a date in July. He said we're also going to be testing to the level of EMT-I for the national registry level. We already have six or more people from the Pittsburgh area registered for the July date so as we begin communicating more with the programs in-state and out-of-state about the availability, there is a need for testing sites and being approved by the National Registry to do this was no small task. He thanked the Certification Division staff and Brenda Murphy-Tenney who is leading the effort on the Commission's behalf.

Mr. Morrissette also reported that he received the draft Audit Report two weeks ago. He said basically a formal draft is provided and we have an opportunity to provide an agency response and there is a little bit of negotiations back and forth at which time a final Audit Report will be issued, probably within the next 30 days. As soon as that document is received we will forward a copy to members of the Commission. There were nine recommendations in the draft report which is twice as many as we normally receive. The agency's response to a number of the recommendations is the transition to the Small Agency Resource Team centralization and the lack of an in-house Business Office has created some difficulty in meeting all requirements.

Mr. Piskura stated that he wanted to make the Commission aware that DEMHS currently owes the agency in excess of \$120,000 which is beginning to affect our ability to do our primary mission which is to train firefighters. He said the need for cash to pay our labor forces is very significant. We continue to provide NIMS training in a good faith effort and we've attempted numerous times to ask DEMHS what they need from us to pay the invoices. He said we're at the point where it is affecting our ability to get work done with the Office of Legal Publications in Enfield. They are refusing to do work for the Bookstore because DEMHS owes them money. He said he wanted the Commission to be aware of this as it is now affecting our Instructors, NIMS Coordinators and Deputy Director. They are now concerned with restricting or limiting services because we're now in the hole this amount of money.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if we've met with the Commissioner of DEMHS to discuss the issue.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that he has been in touch with DEMHS' Commissioner Thomas as late as yesterday because it's now been bumped up to his level. He said he

still doesn't know what the problem is other than there are some outstanding reports we need to submit and we can't get those clarified. He said hopefully by today we'll have that clarified and Commissioner Thomas has asked for their Business office personnel to meet with our Business office on Friday. He also said one of the disconnect is we no longer have a management position leading our fiscal office so we're not dealing at the same level. We've been told they are making every effort to resolve the situation. He said at this point he doesn't think the staff needs to be concerned about cash flow because that is ultimately his responsibility. It really isn't an issue of DEMHS not having the funding it's a matter of getting all the facts straight of what it is that they require from us to be reimbursed.

Mr. Piskura mentioned that the next Seminar Series is scheduled to be held this Friday at the Fire Academy. Chief Ronald Kanterman, Chief Merck Emergency Services representative who is also Chair of the Alumni Association for the National Fire Academy will speak on Leadership Excellence.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:50 am.

Dated:

---

---

James P. Wilkinson, Secretary  
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control