



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



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July 30, 2002

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MINUTES OF THE JULY 30, 2002 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Brammer, Haber, Kowalski, Maheu, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioner Johnson arrived at 10:08 a.m. Commissioners' Gomeau, McDonald, Milewski, and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

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

Chairman Carozza called on State Fire Administrator Morrissette for introductions.

Mr. Morrissette welcomed and thanked CT-Network for taping the meeting for future airing on a variety of cable outlets throughout the State of Connecticut.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2002 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Kowalski to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2002 meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Reports for May 15, 2002 – June 15, 2002 and June 15, 2002 – July 14, 2002.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to approve the Staff Reports for the period of May 15, 2002 - June 14, 2002 and June 15, 2002 – July 14, 2002. Motion carried.

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Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an agency budget update. He stated as covered in our agency staff report we identified some of the reductions that were placed in effect as part of the adoption of the current fiscal year budget. At this time we're not sure whether or not there will be any additional reductions. The only other additional item related to that is the Limited Access Highway account that was reduced by approximately \$4,000. This past fiscal year we had to go through FAC action to transfer some funding to ensure that we could pay all of the backlogged claims. This could most definitely be a potential problem area.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Fallen Firefighters' Memorial project. He stated that construction is nearing completion. Commissioners' should have all received an invitation for the ceremony scheduled for August 18 at 2:00 p.m. If there are any guests that Commissioners would like to have invited please let Alberta know and we will send them an invitation. The Connecticut Fire Department Instructors' Association has donated two decorative light poles which have been ordered. They are expected to arrive the week just prior to the dedication ceremony. A few of the granite benches were damaged when the crates were opened and were sent back to Vermont for repair.

Commissioner Haber stated that the dedication program is pretty much finalized at this point. We're still waiting to see who of the special invitees will attend. We do know right now that Governor Rowland will not be able to attend. Lt. Governor Rell will be the keynote speaker. Two bagpipe bands will play and individuals have been lined up for the invocation, benediction and the color guard. Within a week the program should be finalized and will go to print.

Mr. Morrissette stated that RSVP's have been received for about 260 plus those on the VIP list. We were notified yesterday that signage for the memorial was approved for I-91.

Commissioner Stankye inquired about VIP seating and whether there would be a designated seating area for Commissioners.

Mr. Morrissette stated that question has come up a number of times. Seating will be provided for members of the Commission and their families. Make sure that you RSVP either directly to Alberta or through the toll free reservation hotline or the Web Page.

Mr. Morrissette distributed a summary of the projected cost for the regional fire school master plan. A copy of the complete facility master plan study will reside here at the Academy should any Commissioner wish to review it in more detail. The report gives a detailed breakdown for each of the eight facilities. Probably of most interest to the members of the Commission are the building evaluations and projected cost for the projects. Copies have been distributed to each of the regional fire school representatives, Department of Public Works and copies were sent to members of the legislature who are playing key roles in this effort. The next Education Committee meeting is scheduled for August 8 in Wethersfield. At the time we will gain a better sense in terms of how support will be garnered for the plan. The Committee intends this to be a multi-year plan, not all done at once. Based upon the \$60 million price tag, grassroots support will be needed.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrissette stated that he and Chairman Carozza attended a meeting of the Senior Steering Council with Senator Lieberman earlier in the month. At that time the Senator had an

opportunity to be briefed on plans and efforts on the part of the council as it relates to domestic preparedness. Also, this afternoon there is a Field Congressional hearing being held in Norwalk by Congressman Shays. The intent of the hearing is to review whether or not the needs of the first responders are being met. One of the continued concerns that he has relates to the general support of the fire service. As the planning efforts have gone the fire service has done quite well as it relates to getting a large percentage of the Department of Justice equipment grant funds rather than direct funding. However, there's been no additional money as it relates to training and education of the fire service. He asked Mr. Piskura to provide a brief update of his recent trip to Pennsylvania where he sat on a Terrorism Training Planning Committee with a contractor for the National Fire Academy and the National Emergency Training Center.

Mr. Piskura stated the National Fire Academy has taken on an initiative with the unification of the National Emergency Training Center and National Fire Academy coming under the joint purview of United States Fire Administrator R. David Paulsen to project the next five years of terrorism training and to develop a curriculum to meet that. Obviously, during that meeting aspects of funding did come out and currently the Department of Justice has the majority of the funding and delivers terrorism training through the consortiums that is very successful and sought training however the numbers are very small. With the reconstitution of the homeland security act we will see some changes and FEMA will gain more responsibility and will need funding. Unfortunately, at no time was there any discussion of any additional funds going towards State Fire Training Agencies. It's predominantly at the federal level at this time.

Commissioner Brammer inquired about funds available out of any of these grants for upgrading communication systems.

Mr. Piskura stated that there are various pots of money. Probably up to \$3.5 billion fund of which \$5 million will go to each state as a base amount and then the residual amount will be distributed based on population. That money has been tied and statements have been made with that allocation that a state could take that money and use it to develop communications. It goes to the governor's office and he then designates a state agency to receive the funding and at that point then it depends on the plans.

Mr. Morrissette stated there are some sub-committees as part of the council and other groups that have been doing a tremendous amount of research in the area of interoperability and use of the ITAC and ICOL channels. Some radios are either on order or will be ordered to provide a small number (3-5) to every municipality that will have the capability of communicating on those specific channels. As a short-term solution that's the direction they're going to go in. Long range it's much more complicated as they're looking at different radio spectrums being made available. That will have to play out in the long term.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if the funding could be made available to local communities to upgrade their communication system.

Mr. Piskura stated it can be, it's a matter of now is the time to be constructing plans. Indications in the State of Connecticut are that money will probably go to the Military Department OEM but there is nothing definitive at this point.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrissette reported that the purchase order for the foam trailers has been issued to the successful vendor. We're waiting on an ETA in so far as a first unit will be made available for inspection. Four of the five units have been identified in terms of placement. The fifth unit, the committee is currently looking at whether it will be placed in the Danbury or Waterbury area. Some of the operational protocols are still in the drafting phase. Once a final draft is available we will have that reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General and then we will float those out to the municipalities that will be participating in the program.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrissette stated that the agency had the opportunity to present four "Code of Ethics" sessions to staff members both full and part-time. Approximately 100 employees have participated in the sessions so far. A fifth session has been scheduled for the afternoon of August 15. He stated that a couple of Commissioners participated in the sessions and he thanked them. Basically two Ethics Commission staff attorneys provided a briefing as it relates to the Code of Ethics within the State of Connecticut. The attorneys communicated that the code applies whether you're full or part-time and the ramifications of violating any provisions within the code. Probably the most beneficial point was if an individual has any questions, it's best to direct those directly either to the agency or to the Ethics Commission for answers. Participants did learn that there are a lot of gray areas because of the particular scenarios that our employees find themselves.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that he had the opportunity to attend one of the sessions and complimented the Commission staff and the representatives from the Ethics Commission for an excellent job.

Commissioner Nicol stated that the session he attended was well presented and also thought that the staff attorney from the Ethics Commission did an excellent job of explaining the code of ethics and how it applies to different circumstances.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired about the date of the next session.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the next session would be held on August 15 at 2:15 p.m. here at the Academy.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired about the number of staff members who have not attended a session.

Mr. Piskura stated that approximately 20 staff members have not yet attended.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Piskura gave an overview of the NFPA 472 Hazardous Material Technician Training Program. He stated that Joe Mercieri is the Program Coordinator for Hazardous Material. Since 9/11 the Academy has been inundated with requests by fire departments for Hazardous Material Technician training. Our current course was 96 hours long and it was not available at that point. We were able to satisfy the requests for training with a 40-hour Federal EPA Program that satisfies Conn-OSHA for response. However, there's still a need out in the fire service community for certification training that is indexed in NFPA 472 to develop a technician program for that. The federal government initially funded the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) several million dollars

to develop a Haz-Mat Technician Program that seemed to be the most comprehensive. We have adopted the IAFF Technician Program. The down side to that is it consists of 160-hours of instruction and that is very difficult for anybody to commit to.

Joe Mercieri has developed a program that he calls the Pathway to NFPA 472 Certification Program. Essentially what it does is recognize prior work. A significant amount of work that people do as they progress through their career and their life contributes to or covers some of the work that's required by the IAFF 160-hour program. What Mr. Mercieri is suggesting is that people come to the Academy to have their previous course work reviewed to determine what may count for the completion of the modules and give them credit for those modules and they do not have to take that module. They are still responsible for that content information when they submit to a certification exam.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if Module 5, Practical Chemistry was the same as Chemistry of Hazardous Material 40-Hour Program.

Mr. Piskura stated that it could be.

Mr. Piskura distributed and referenced a matrix draft that explains what previous work can be credited and applied towards each module of the Technician Program.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if an individual would be re-tested in Module 5, Practical Chemistry or would the 40-hour Chemistry of Hazardous Material that they have been tested on previously be accepted.

Mr. Piechota stated that it's hard to say because NFA courses don't have formal testing components that he is aware. We have to take a look obviously to see whether or not a formal testing process has been put in place and what that test was designed to measure.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that at least in the past there had to be some credential that was sent back for each student to the National Fire Academy that the student had been tested for that program. Maybe it's something that we could look into to avoid duplication.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired about IFSAC accreditation for this program.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Pro Board and IFSAC logos could both be displayed on the program flyer.

Mr. Morrisette stated that this is a training path although it uses the name certification in the title. The testing component is testing as it's always been. To answer Commissioner Ouellette's question, no matter what path they choose to follow they're still subject to a final evaluation both practical and cognitive, and they're responsible for all of the material.

A question and answer period followed.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that he feels this is a great way to go. The pathway is certainly a step in the right direction. If somebody wants to be certified at the technician level, it's a lot of time but at least it's available.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if this was tied in to the technician program that was being worked on through Fairfield County Regional Haz-Mat Team.

Mr. Piskura stated that this was totally separate.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette stated that over the past several months, the agency has been undergoing an audit for the fiscal years ending 2000 and 2001. A preliminary report of audit finding was obtained back in June to which the agency responded. That response was distributed to Commissioners earlier today. There were a total of six recommendations, four of which relate to the Bookstore operation. One point we wanted to stress was the Bookstore opened one month prior to the close of fiscal year subject to audit. Technically an auditor probably wouldn't have looked at that operation in much detail. We had specifically requested that the auditor look at the operation to assist us in its administration. He was very pleased with what he saw and felt that there was a lot potential in that area. As indicated in the response, we intend to implement all of the recommendations as noted. Some recommendations are a bit more complicated than others and some rely on software and hardware related to inventory control. We're probably going to also seek the assistance of a consultant as there are really very few store models in state government in terms of what we are doing and hopefully we'll be able to develop an operations manual. The popularity of the service is so great it really leaves the incumbent little time to address issues as it relates to the development of an operations manual.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Piechota presented an overview of the new look of our agency web page. He stated that this change was in compliance with an initiative by the Governor to remake the State's Home Page through the Department of Information and Technology (DOIT). This change also includes a process by which we will be able to post our updates to the web page in a more timely fashion. The Commission along with the Department of Motor Vehicle was chosen as the pilot test agencies to upgrade their web presence. Our agency's new web site went on line July 1. DOIT provided technical support to convert the web site and provided training to staff members (F. Piechota, D. Fortin, E. Mancino and A. Ouellette) on managing the content of the web site on a daily basis.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the list serve would be phased out.

Mr. Piechota stated that by being able to post information on our web site in a more timely fashion that in time the list serve could be phased out. The agency will work to make sure that it's a seamless transition.

Mr. Morrisette stated Mr. Piechota and the rest of the staff have put a tremendous amount of time and he really appreciates that.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrisette stated that the agency's annual report is in the final stages of development. He requested permission to forward the annual report upon completion to the Department of Administrative Services. This would be prior to the Commission's approval of the report.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson authorizing the State Fire Administrator to forward the annual report to the Department of Administrative Services upon its completion. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 e.) Mr. Piechota reported on a request from an individual asking that he be allowed to rescind his level of certification to the level of Fire Service Instructor I. He stated that this was only the second request that the division has received in the nine years that he has been here. He stated that he did a survey of our sister agencies across the country and no one else has such a policy. He checked with the Pro Board and IFSAC and those two accrediting organizations do not have a method by which an individual can rescind a level of certification. The reason the gentleman wants to rescind his level of certification is because based upon that level of certification he has been given an assignment in his department that he does not want to partake in or doesn't feel comfortable doing so. In the other case three years ago the individual had been given a change of duties based on his level of certification that he did not want to partake in. Those are usually the reasons for the requests. If the Commission were to direct us to honor this request, some procedural things would be how would a notification system be handled. If the person has already been granted national accreditation certification what would be the impact if the individual rescinded his certification and in two years wanted it back? How would that be taken care of? These are some of the procedural items that would need to be dealt with if we create a rescission process.

Commissioner Maheu stated that is a valid concern the rescinding of certification and generally speaking it does have to do with something that's been assigned within the local department. We've had several people because of not wanting to accept an assignment wanting to rescind their certification as fire inspectors and deputy fire marshals, etc. However, the bottom line we were not able to rescind their certification because the statute has a mechanism for allowing lapses of certification and the main reason is certification is directly dependent on an appointment from a municipality. So therefore the municipality could rescind it on more solid ground than we could. So they had to actually let their certifications expire by not complying with the continuing education plan.

Mr. Piechota stated if we were to consider certification as a licensure, an individual could let their license lapse. Unfortunately we have no re-certification requirement so there's no period of time they could wait. There is no process in place so right now once you are certified it's for life according to our current system.

A lengthy discussion period followed.

Commissioner Nicol stated that it appears that we will not be able to accommodate this individual.

Mr. Piechota stated that the regulation does not have anything that allows it but then again it doesn't have anything that prohibits it.

Commissioner Johnson stated first of all we are in the business to certify not to decertify. If the Commission takes up this rescinding problem on an individual basis this could cause internal problems within the fire service. If we rescinded it for this individual how we didn't rescinded for another

person. The Commission is here to certify not to decertify. He stated that he was not comfortable with this matter and would recommend that this item be tabled for further discussion.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he was in total agreement and he does not think that the Commission should be getting involved with labor issues. He feels that this is a labor issue between the department and the individual and because he doesn't want to do this specific position he wants to have that level rescinded. At this point in time we should go forward with the regulation changes and process those changes in the rescinding of certification based on fraud and criminal acts only.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brammer to go forward with the regulation changes and process those changes in the rescinding of certification based on fraud and criminal acts only.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the action taken on the first request to rescind a certification.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the first request was presented for information purposes only and it's possible that the transfer did not occur.

Mr. Piechota stated that the individual made an informal request, then action took place in the department and the situation was resolved there.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about language being proposed in the regulation to allow the Commission to revoke a certification.

Mr. Piechota stated that in a previous revision of the regulation for whatever reason the language that would allow the Commission to revoke a certification based on certain criteria was somehow left out of that edition of the regulations.

Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 f.) Mr. Morrissette stated that no meeting has been scheduled for the month of August and brings the matter up for discussion.

Chairman Carozza stated we had a lengthy agenda this morning and that is the reason a special meeting was scheduled this morning. If it's agreeable with the Commission to leave it up to the call of the chair to decide for the August meeting

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Ouellette and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Kowalski to leave it to the discretion of the Chairman whether to hold a meeting in August. Motion carried.

Commissioner Ouellette asked Mr. Piskura to elaborate on operational and awareness training as it relates to NFPA 472.

Mr. Piskura stated that train-the-trainer programs would be offered separately in all of the regional fire schools during the month of October. Each person will receive a CD with four programs on it along with copies of the instructor guide and student manual for each program. Once that's done CDs will

be distributed to each school and when completed will be distributed to anyone who wants them at no charge.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if the local department wishes to have the Fire Academy come in and deliver one of those programs, will we still offer that.

Mr. Piskura stated the Academy could do it.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that just to clarify an earlier suggestion to Mr. Piechota, he realized that on the technician and the reason that he brought the chemistry of hazardous material it's because he knows that it is tested through the National Fire Academy. He stated that he does not know if it is tested through the standard and he said that he certainly agrees that if somebody took a program 15 years ago they have to be re-tested. He recommended that the agency look into this situation. That if somebody has taken a program in the last reasonable amount of time, and would leave that up to the Administrator and the Director of Certification that if it is two or three years whatever they feel comfortable with if the regulations do allow to waive the testing on that. It certainly is not his intention to go back fifteen years and overlook being tested.

Commissioner Kowalski complimented the State Fire Administrator and staff for all their efforts in the upgrading of the Commission's web site. It's an excellent job.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired about the amount of staff time is being taken up to post local fire department events on the list serve.

Mr. Morrisette stated that it does take some time but at the moment we feel we can do it. If people can supply the information electronically to us it saves a lot of time. Unfortunately a lot of it is not. It is burdensome but we think it's helpful to the departments but in the long run we'll have procedures in place to address a lot of that. We may be able to find a volunteer from the fire service who will want to come in and spend a couple hours a week to input this kind of information.

Commissioner Ouellette stated the list serve is certainly a good service.

Commissioner Johnson indicated that he received an inquiry from the West Borough, MA Rotary Club regarding a project to collect old fire equipment to send to the Dominican Republic. He stated that this is a very worthwhile project and inquired where he could get assistance in getting the word out to local fire chiefs on this worthwhile effort.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the agency recently provided meeting space to Ken Hanks, Deputy Chief of the Naugatuck Fire Department who works with the "Helping Our Own" program based in Missouri that collects used lifesaving equipment for fire departments in need. This event was posted on the list serve for anyone interested in finding out more about this worthwhile program.

Mr. O'Neil stated as a follow-up to the audit report he would like to commend staff members R. Vietts, E. Bycenski and F. Morton for all their efforts.

Mr. Piskura stated that one of the communities that participated in CPAT is undergoing a Human Rights and Opportunities Commission challenge that we are obviously involved in supplying information and data.

Mr. Piskura referenced the new procedures for the NFPA Risk Watch Champion Award 2003 included in the Commission package. He stated that there is a significant change and one of the difficulties the Mr. Russ Emons had was getting someone at the state level in the Department of Education to participate and that requirement has been eliminated by NFPA. Mr. Emons has begun soliciting local communities and he is getting responses in preparation for the 2003 Risk Watch application process.

Mr. Morrisette stated that Mr. Emons is also delivering the in-service program for the Office of Education and Data Management, Department of Public Safety in the month of September. Thus, he will have an opportunity to brief all fire marshals on public and fire life safety education issues including the NFPA Champion Award program.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Academy would be hosting two events in October at two different locations and presenting dynamic motivational speaker Gordon Graham. The first event will be held on Friday, October 18 at the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium in Milford and the second offering will be on Saturday, October 19 at the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden.

Commissioner Nicol asked for an update on the Urban Search and Rescue Team Committee.

Mr. Morrisette stated that an advisory committee meeting was scheduled for a few days before the July 4th holiday, but the meeting was canceled due to last minute security preparations. No other meeting has been scheduled at the present time. The working groups are continuing to meet and work as necessary. The selection committee is pretty much set with all of the position descriptions and application. The Committee Chair, Chief Weber is very anxious to post all of that information. At this moment the major hold back is funding and the committee is soliciting different grants to help support this endeavor.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the state budget just approved had anything specifically identified for the endeavor.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he was not aware of anything.

Chairman Carozza thanked Connecticut Television Network and the viewing audience around the State of Connecticut for being with us this morning. Please have a safe and enjoyable remaining summer.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.