



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 RD. WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT 06096

November 26, 2002

Page 1

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 26, 2002 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Gomeau, Kowalski, Maheu, Nicol, and Wilkinson. Commissioner Johnson arrived at 9:45 a.m. Commissioners' Brammer, Haber, McDonald, Milewski, Ouellette, Stankye and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Chairman Carozza called for the meeting to proceed on an informational basis due to the lack of a quorum.

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

Mr. Morrissette introduced a guest to the meeting as George Pohorilak, Director, Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications who is here to give an overview of the 700 MHz Committee and E911 Commission issues.

Mr. Pohorilak stated that on the 911 side he was pleased to announce that a time synchronization package has been purchased for all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) statewide. The equipment will be deployed over the next couple months. This will allow every PSAP in the state to have a GPS time signal received and distributed among all the public safety answering points. Connecticut will probably be the only state in the nation to have a statewide universal time for all PSAP's. Regarding the 700 MHz Planning Committee he stated that he was happy to report that a representative from the fire service was appointed to the New England Committee that he chairs. The Committee has begun to develop a plan for 700 MHz that is projected to be available in 2006 for use in Connecticut and across the country in public safety. John Gustafson is the appointed representative for Connecticut's fire service. Only two New England states, on the fire service side, have appointed someone to 700 MHz Committee that is Massachusetts and Connecticut. The draft plan will be reviewed at a meeting in Springfield, Vermont on December 10.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if the new 911 set up would give PSAP's the ability for reverse 911.

Mr. Pohorilak stated that reverse 911 is a special act that was passed in the General Assembly's last session calling for the two studies, one regarding 311 and one on reverse 911. The 311 study has been

“An Equal Opportunity Employer”
www.state.ct.us/cfpc

completed by the Department of Public Utility Control and the reverse 911 study is being done by the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications. A plan is being drafted for the implementation of a statewide reverse 911 system that has to be delivered to the General Assembly by January 1. The

General Assembly will look at that plan and consider the different options and make a decision as to whether they want to implement and fund it. All public safety answering points were surveyed about reverse 911. The public safety community statewide is sort of lukewarm on the subject of reverse 911. There's only two places in the state that already have it, it's good technology but it's not the exact answer for notifying the public in all cases.

A question and answer period followed.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Pohorilak for the update.

Chairman Carozza called for questions on the minutes of the September 24, 2002 meeting.

Chairman Carozza called for questions on the Staff Reports for September 15 – October 14, 2002 and October 15 – November 14, 2002.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an agency budget update. He stated if a quorum existed, he would have recommended we go into Executive Session to discuss the latest information as it pertains to the state budget and pending layoffs within the agency. Because of the sensitivity of this information it cannot be released to employees as of yet. The agency submitted to OPM a 10% reduction option as required. That would come to a total reduction option of \$297,544. We've heard no action on those particular items with exception the agency received notification last week that we will be required to present layoff notices effective the week of December 2.

Chairman Carozza stated that due to the lack of a quorum we are not able to enter into Executive Session. He inquired if this matter is something that a special meeting may be required.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the agency has to move forward with a plan that he had hoped to present to the Commission today. The agency will be required to move forward unless there's some resolution in Hartford before December 2. Something may come down the line weeks later that would avert this situation. Typically with the layoff notices, depending on the bargaining unit involved, there are required notification lead times. These range from four to six weeks depending on the particular bargaining unit involved.

Chairman Carozza inquired if Commissioners had any suggestions or whether they wished to leave this matter up to the discretion of the State Fire Administrator as to whether to call for a special meeting.

Commissioner Nicol stated that it appears that these layoffs will most likely go forward and will be permanent in nature. As in previous layoffs there will not exist an opportunity for re-employment. He asked that the individuals being considered would also be looked at in terms of the effect on the operation of the agency down the road.

Commissioner Maheu stated that the Commission should have faith in the current administration that those matters have been taken into consideration and that we need to support their plan to go forward.

A discussion period followed.

Mr. Morrissette invited Commissioners to call him for an overview of the plan.

Chairman Carozza stated that if the Administrator feels the need to call a special meeting to do so.

Moving to item 4 b.) Commissioner Wilkinson gave a CSFA Education Committee update. He stated that the group is still actively pursuing the regional school plan. The Committee met last week and voted unanimously to adopt the CFA/Regional Fire School Mission Delineation Agreement that was originally submitted as a draft. That agreement was adopted in its entirety. He stated if the Commission had a quorum today, he would ask the Commission to vote to adopt this agreement. The Committee is still working behind the scenes with different members of the Legislature. They have people in place that will propose the bill when the Legislature goes into session. They are also working to have all the major fire service organizations within the state to place the regional fire school bonding bill as one of their highest priorities in the upcoming Legislative Session.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 c.) Commissioner Johnson gave an update on the Regional Foam Trailer Program. He stated that the Committee recently made a site visit to the awarded contractor for the foam trailers and accepted the prototype with a few minor adjustments. They were all very pleased with the end product. State DEP has agreed to use the spill fund to refill the foam trailers as needed which will realize a saving of \$10,000 to \$12,000 worth of foam in each trailer. They will also serve as the dispatch entity for the trailers.

Mr. Morrissette stated that training is being conducted today for the municipalities that will be operating the foam trailers. All five foam trailers have been delivered. We have representatives here today from Hartford, New London (Norwich), New Haven, Fairfield and Waterbury. After the training session they will be taking the trailers back to their home communities. We are still working out some of the logistics and agreement issues, however we felt it's best to get the trailers in local hands of the people as quickly as possible and we'll work out the details over the next week or so. We expect the trailers to be placed in operation and available for any municipality who call for assistance by January 1. A letter explaining the program will be going out to the fire chiefs between now and the first of the year.

Commissioner Johnson restated that requests for the foam trailers would go through the DEP hotline, who in turn will notify the nearest two trailers to respond to an incident.

Mr. Morrissette stated that following today's meeting, Commissioners are invited to view the trailers and hands-on training going on the training grounds.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette stated that the 2003 Commission Meeting Schedule was being posted for the Commission's review and approval. The agency has to move forward with notification to the Secretary of State's Office. He stated that he would like to propose that the May meeting again be set aside as an evening meeting. He has received an offer from the Fairfield County area to host a meeting.

Commissioner Nicol recommended that the time of the May 27 meeting be changed to reflect a night meeting.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrisette stated that this was a follow-up item to Commissioner Wilkinson's presentation seeking approval of the Mission Delineation Agreement. We will have to hold action on this item until the next meeting.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrisette stated that he wanted to bring to the Commission's attention a firefighter fatality in the State of New York that was a live fire training scenario in an acquired structure. There was a NIOSH investigation of that particular incident. One of the NIOSH recommendations was that each state should look to establish a permitting process for live fire training. We felt, at least for discussion purposes, that we should bring this NIOSH recommendation to the Commission's attention. Currently, the only permitting in Connecticut is through the DEP for burn permits. As an agency we've presented a lot of education over the years on NFPA-1403.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Structural Burn Training Procedure packet distributed before the meeting is currently the guide book given at no charge to anyone doing live fire training in acquired structures. In the back part of that document is a series of forms and permits that quite frankly we know people aren't going through the trouble of filling out. They are internal and not filed with any state agencies. What New York State has done is they suffered through this with the deaths and another 19 year old that was severely burned. They've gone through a state level program that developed their version of that document, a training program and then permitting process. Three states have basically taken it as a state level function, to provide for their fire departments that may or may not be burning in acquired structures. Commissioners may not have a statewide awareness but more of this type of live burn training is going on in the State of Connecticut than you would be aware of. In many areas of the state it's fairly common to burn acquired structures. At this point in time he said that he hoped they follow NFPA-1403. In the testimony of the fire deaths that occurred around the country many times they may not have even heard of NFPA-1403 or if they had they don't have a copy of it. So there is a high degree of ignorance about how to go about burning down an acquired structure.

After a lengthy discussion period the consensus of opinion was that the Commission provide this document as a guidance document to fire departments and not get into the process of issuing permits for burning acquired structures.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrisette stated that historically the December meeting is cancelled and asked what was the pleasure of the Commission.

Chairman Carozza inquired if there was any objection to canceling the December meeting.

Hearing none he returned to item 4 d.), and asked Mr. Emons for an update on the Risk Watch Program.

Mr. Emons distributed an information packet and gave an update on the Risk Watch Program. A letter and Risk Watch pamphlet was mailed last April to all fire chiefs and fire marshals putting them on notice that we were anticipating the Risk Watch incentive program and if they had an interest to contact him. As soon as the grant proposal was received it was mailed out to the parties who had expressed interest. Copies of the 2003 Champion Award Program sent to us which we in turn sent out to everyone who expressed interest. A letter was sent out in August to communities statewide asking for an update and any intentions that the communities had of putting their teams together. In September, through the kindness of Commissioner Maheu we were allowed to present to all fire marshals through their in-service training program an overview of the Public Fire and Life Safety Education program along with a review of Risk Watch.

In October Mary-Kay Appy presented at a fire chiefs' meeting the Risk Watch Program and we were informed of members in attendance that expressed an interest. A copy of the grant proposal and flyer explaining the program was mailed to those individuals who expressed an interest to try to establish contact with them. Unfortunately, he reported he was not able to make contact with all parties who expressed interest in the program. The deadline for the program came and has passed.

He stated that in his opinion part of the problem is what NFPA expects of participants. Fire Marshals and Chiefs are overwhelmed when they commit to this program to get a supporting team together and contribute time and money to it. People are interested in the program and implementing it but not to the full Champion Management Team Program. The number of towns in Connecticut where Risk Watch is being used is increasing but not as participants in the Champion Management Team Program. Statewide we have lost our Health Department Representative (Natalie Smiley). Ms. Smiley got married, moved out of state and her position will not be refilled. He stated that if he were to design a fire prevention program, Risk Watch would be a critical component. In its current form we have not yet been able to get the commitment of five communities needed to pursue for the Champion Award Program.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that his community is on this list as being interested and has been for the past two years. One of the biggest problems they have in his community is having sold the program two years ago and then sold it again last year. People are now a little bit gun shy and question whether it will happen this year. We really can't get to that point until we know that there is five communities that are on board.

Mr. Piechota reported that up until now the Commission had not been accredited nationally by either the Pro-Board or IFSAC for the level of Safety Officer primarily because NFPA 1521 is not a Professional Qualification's series standard. Just recently both accrediting bodies have adopted 1521 as being a level to be accredited. We took advantage of the fact that the Pro Board's Committee on Accreditation met last week to forward an application for the Commission to be accredited nationally by the Pro Board for the Safety Officer Standard in four levels, (Health & Safety Officer, Incident Safety Officer, Incident Safety Officer for Fire Suppression and Incident Safety Officer for Hazardous Materials). The Standard is broken down with two more levels (EMS and Special Operations), however we are not seeking accreditation for these at this time.

It is our anticipation that at the conclusion of the current Connecticut Fire Academy class for Safety Officer, participants will be able to apply for two national certifications (Health and Safety Officer and Incident Safety Officer). He stated that he would also be working with Training Division staff to come up with the requirements and the methods whereby people can obtain Incident Safety Officer for Suppression as well as Hazardous Materials. We are investigating the award of National Certificates of Compliance for those students certified by us prior to becoming accredited.

Mr. Piskura briefly explained a handout distributed at the beginning of the meeting. He stated that at the last meeting Commissioner Ouellette inquired about the student training totals on the Staff Report and how they compared to previous years. He then explained the trend analysis illustrating yearly training statistics for FY 1997 through FY 2002 to date.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he was asked to attend a Steering Committee meeting in reference to bio-terrorism preparedness in the event of a small pox epidemic. Discussion basically was about the development of an inoculation program to which the committee is making great strides on the health side. The Chiefs' Association was also included as part of this meeting. A lot of discussions are taking place and it's important that we as a Commission and representatives for the fire service be part of all these steering committees.

Mr. Morrissette indicated that the updated list of FEMA Fire Act Grant Recipients for the State of Connecticut through the eight round of awards was distributed earlier in the meeting. There are probably another 25 or so awards that Connecticut fire departments should be receiving before the program is finalized. We'll update you as new awards are made.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the State Firefighters Association Legislative meeting would be held in Wethersfield, Tuesday, December 3, at 7:00 p.m. All organizations should have been notified of that meeting.

Mr. Morrissette reported on USAR stating that the team member applications have been approved by the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) legal people. There is an Advisory Board meeting on December 3, at which time they will get the go ahead to post those applications. Fire Chiefs and Chief Elected Officials will be required to approve and sign off on their employee's participation. These applications will be posted on DPS's web site and on the Commission's web site.

Mr. Morrissette stated that Mark Libby, Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services has resigned effective December 6. Mr. Libby called him to express his thanks to our staff and the Commissioners for their support during his tenure. He is taking a position with the Health and Human Services (HHS) agency in Boston. HHS will be folded into the new federal Homeland Security Department.

Mr. Morrissette reported that he along with a couple of fire chiefs are working with the Department of Public Safety on developing specifications for a fireboat. He stated that during a recent trip to Massachusetts to conduct the final inspection of the new foam trailers there was some discussion about the fact New Haven has not had a fireboat in better than a decade. As a follow up to that trip we spoke

with a representative of OPM who had a lot of probing questions. About one week later he received a call from DPS informing him that they had been tasked with developing specifications for a fireboat. He stated that he and Assistant Chief Mike Grant and Chief Wayne Sandford have met with DPS twice. Another meeting is scheduled following today's Commission meeting to review the draft specs. They are also looking at a five-year plan which includes staffing of the boat.

Commissioner Nicol inquired where the funding would come from for the fireboat.

Mr. Morrisette stated that it was his understanding this would be bonded.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Nicol inquired with no Commission meeting planned for December, what happens if the need exists for the Commission to meet to discuss any legislative issues, deficit situation in the state or any other crucial matter.

Chairman Carozza stated that the need to call a meeting is being left up to the discretion of the State Fire Administrator.

Mr. Piskura spoke about a statistical report he received from the National Fire Academy that represents all 50 states. This report takes every component of training that occurs on the NFA campus, divides it up on demographics, rank, and is very detailed. He invited Commissioners to stop by his office to view this report if they have any interest.

Mr. Piskura informed Commissioners that they could get additional pocket calendars if they so wished.

Mr. Piskura also stated that the CD given to the Commissioners represents what the Connecticut Fire Academy laid out for discussion at the National Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE) meeting. Every two years all 50 states and metropolitan fire departments meet at the National Fire Academy. They freely exchange information and curriculum that is the primary purpose of TRADE.

Mr. Piskura reported on a side trip he took immediately following TRADE's general sessions with a few other state training directors to meet with Senator Christopher Dodd's staff to discuss the creation of a dedicated funding stream to support state fire training efforts.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.