



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



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February 25, 2003

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**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2003 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Gomeau, Haber, Kowalski, Maheu, Milewski, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioner Johnson arrived at 10:14 a.m. Commissioners' Brammer, McDonald. 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.

Mr. Morrissette introduced the guests to the meeting as Ralph Scarpino from DEP's Forestry Division and Chuck Beck, Director, Department of the Military, Office of Emergency Management, Domestic Preparedness Division.

Mr. Piskura introduced new employee Laurence Maybin who comes to the Academy as a result of the state's current fiscal crisis. Mr. Maybin has 14 years of state service and most recently he came from the Department of Motor Vehicle's (DMV) office located in Waterbury where he served as a Trainer. While at DMV, Mr. Maybin primarily spent his time doing staff development. He has platform skills and teaching experience.

Mr. Maybin stated that as a child he aspired to be a firefighter and look where his state career has brought him. He stated that he looked forward to working with this agency and he believes he has some skills he can bring to this agency. His background is mainly in education and he has achieved his master's degree and completed his doctorate degree at the University of Massachusetts. He stated that he was looking forward to working with the Commission.

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

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2003 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2003. Motion carried.

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Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for January 15, 2003 to February 14, 2003.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to approve the Staff Report for January 15, 2003 to February 14, 2003. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza stated if no one objects that the meeting proceed to agenda item 4 f) for a Homeland Security update.

Mr. Morrisette stated that at this time he would like to turn the meeting over to Mr. Beck who serves as the Chief of the Domestic Preparedness Planning Division at the Office of Emergency Management to provide an update.

Mr. Beck stated that in October 2001 all states were required to develop their domestic preparedness strategy. This effort was accelerated after 9/11 by Attorney General Ashcroft to be completed by all states by the middle of December. The Governor requested that a strategy plan be completed by December 1. A plan was submitted and approved by the Governor's Domestic Preparedness Senior Steering Council. Applications were processed and submitted to apply for the fiscal year's first responder equipment grants. Grant applications were made for FY 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 we have received the grant awards for a total of about \$7.2 million that's available in the state to buy equipment for first responders. Initially mirrored what Rhode Island did by tapping into the defense supply system that way we would not have to go through the bid process. This effort did not go as well as we expected. The prime vendor made substitutions of the types of material, sizes and colors without informing us. The good news is during that process, the Department of Administrative Services really stepped up to the plate and they solicited bids and we now have on statewide contract many manufacturers or vendor for the equipment that we're looking to buy. The purchasing process had begun for Stamford, New London, DEP, and UConn Medical Center Fire Departments as they were all listed as first priority jurisdictions. We've had to recollect all that material and its now waiting to be shipped back to the vendor. We can't reorder that material until we get credit for the returned material. The towns that we did not start to procure equipment for are Waterbury, New Haven, Bridgeport and the State Police. We have placed those orders through the master statewide contracts and that material is starting to be delivered. Materials consist of PPE level A, B and C suits with the appropriate respirators, meter and monitoring detection devices, in addition to mass decontamination equipment. The mass decontamination trailers have been ordered and some have been delivered here to the Academy. We will inspect the trailers as they arrive before they are delivered to the host fire departments. Delivery of four of these trailers was accelerated because of the recent heightened alert and some other activities that we became aware of. These trailers are located in Greenwich, Fairfield County Haz Mat (housed in Stamford) with two more to be delivered one in New London and the other is to go to Waterbury. This will give the state the best coverage as quickly as possible. Six trailers will be delivered soon and ten more trailers will be ordered bringing the total to 20 trailers possibly 21 which would pretty much cover the state. He described the trailers and their capabilities. The initial idea was to try and put three ITAC, ICALL radios in the hands of each municipality so that the fire chief, police chief and head of EMS could communicate.

Mr. Beck stated that OEM is waiting for the 03 budget to be finalized to continue implementation of the strategy. He explained how populace towns were selected to cover the state. Training is a big issue. To date no money has been provided through the DOJ grants to provide training. There is a program they have for technical assistance, where DOJ will bring contracted trainers into the state and they're looking to start that in the next couple months. The reason the state is buying the equipment

and passing it out is to make sure that the money is spent on what it's supposed to be spent on and to standardize the equipment throughout the state.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired if there is any money for training in the forecast.

Mr. Beck stated that he has not seen much information regarding training on the FY 03 application. We've been told that issue has been raised over and over again by all states.

Commissioner Nicol inquired who would transport the decon trailers.

Mr. Beck stated that any equipment that is purchased by the Homeland Security Division becomes the property of the entity that receives it. These trailers are earmarked for departments that will have the capability to use them.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired under what jurisdiction the trailers would be controlled.

Mr. Beck stated whoever is earmarked to get a trailer it becomes their property.

A lengthy question and answer period followed.

Mr. Beck made reference to Proposed Bill No. 6166 and distributed copies of the text of this proposed bill that its purpose is as follows:

"To require municipalities to enter into mutual aid compacts/agreements for first responders and to conduct joint training exercises."

Commissioner Kowalski inquired about the status of the Army or Air National Guard Response Team that is supposed to be established.

Mr. Beck stated that it appears there is progress on this matter but it will take federal legislation to establish a Civil Support Team (CST) in each of the 50 states. Right now there's only 23 throughout the country. The closest one to our state is in Beverly, Mass. Connecticut has a CST that is called a CST light with just two or three full time soldiers that just do admin type work. The rest are Reserves that have to be called up. Several senators have signed a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Defense supporting that each state receive a CST.

Mr. Piskura inquired who would be in charge of the Citizen Corp.

Mr. Beck stated the Director of the state's Office of Emergency Management is the State Administrative Agent (SAA) for the funds and by agreement the Department of Public Safety's Office of Homeland Security is setting up the Citizen Corp Councils and is doing work for the SAA in conjunction with OEM.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrisette gave an agency budget and staffing update. He stated the state of the state address was delayed from last week until Thursday of this week. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 11:30 a.m. with the Governor's Office to receive a briefing on the budget. Up to this time no information has been released pertaining to the budget. The agency's Appropriation's Committee budget presentation was also delayed and now is scheduled for March 5. At this time he does not

intend to make a presentation and plans to delay any type of presentation until the budget workshop with the Appropriation Committee probably sometime in April or May.

In regard to staffing, he reported that Commissioners have already met our new Trainer, who replaced David Christoff through a bumping provision. In addition to that, we've just received approval to fill five adjunct positions that were vacated. Little by little we're going to try to at least recapture the vacated positions. We intend to hire the two Trainers back because as adjuncts because they came from the part-time ranks.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 b.) Commissioner Wilkinson gave an update on the CSFA Education Committee. He stated that a public hearing on the Regional Fire School funding bill was held a few weeks ago in the Public Safety Committee. Eight committee members were in attendance and four members testified. Based on the feedback that they got from Representative Dargan, Chairman of the Committee, after the meeting was adjourned, was that we should anticipate unanimous approval and forwarding of the Bill to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. One of the members of the Public Safety Committee is Representative Boukus who also happens to be Co-Chair of the Bonding Sub-Committee. Based on a response that Al Hawkins received from her after the hearings, she seemed very interested in helping with the process. We have a tentative meeting scheduled with her Thursday morning to try to facilitate the move through the Bonding Sub-Committee. There's also overtures placed too possibly have a meeting with Lt. Governor Rell. Representative Dargan has also offered to attempt to set up a meeting with Secretary Ryan from OPM. The general consensus of the committee at this point is we're now in the education mode and we're encouraging all individuals and organizations to contact their Representatives and Senators to solicit their co-sponsorship and support.

Moving to item 4c.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Regional Foam Trailer Program. He indicated that he has three signed agreements from Norwich, Hartford and Fairfield for the Foam Trailers. Waterbury and New Haven still haven't executed their agreements. We are having the Attorney General's Office enter into discussions with the Corporation Counsel in New Haven. As far as we're concerned, we've had final meetings with DEP and if there's a request for the trailers today DEP has the ability to dispatch those trailers. We've not advertised this program statewide to fire chiefs because we want to have all host departments on board.

Commissioner Stankye inquired if any additional training was planned for host cities.

Mr. Morrisette stated that training was conducted at the Academy back in November. This training was video taped. We presented copies of that training, a few weeks ago, to those five host departments. As part of the June Fire School, a representative from National Foam will conduct a training program at the Academy and we will reserve spots for at least those host communities. A number of our personnel went through the initial training as well. Anytime there's interest on the part of a community to do some local or regional training we would have the ability to provide it.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that when he and Commissioner Stankye attended the Executive Committee meeting of the State Firefighter's Association Vice President Bill McAllister from Waterbury expressed a concern with the trailers. Apparently some municipalities where foam trailers have been placed have expressed concerns regarding labor issues.

Mr. Morrisette stated that all legal issues will be left up to the AG's Office. He stated that from his understanding, concerns have nothing to do with labor issues, rather it's the language in the Agreements. It is his hope that in the event of an emergency the units respond and if there is a labor issue to grieve it afterwards. The fire service needs to provide some leadership onto itself. If we demonstrate we have too many organizational problems we're going to lose every opportunity.

Chairman Carozza stated that as far as Waterbury is concerned, everything is in place and the foam trailer is ready to go.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on legislation. He stated that an update, as of yesterday, on the current status of proposed bills is provided in the handout distributed today. Mr. Beck made reference to Proposed Bill No. 6166. The Office of Emergency Management and General Cugno are looking for the fire service's perspective on this bill. There is a public hearing scheduled for tomorrow. If anyone has comments on this or other Bills please let him know.

Mr. Morrisette requested to move ahead to New Business, item 5b.) because he has to leave for a meeting at the Capitol regarding the tragic fire in Rhode Island.

Mr. Morrisette directed attention to a letter received from the Town of Vernon seeking to share the radio frequency which the Academy is licensed for. He stated that he was hoping to have more information available today regarding this request. In the interim he indicated that he placed the requester in touch with the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications, specifically with the person who handles frequency coordination. We have some initial concerns with this request, specifically the wattage that the Town of Vernon would be looking to utilize on this frequency. Their transmitter power could impact our use here. Also, he stated that a license was recently granted by the FCC to Haddam for this frequency as well. Hopefully by next meeting we will have a recommendation for the Commission for action on this request.

A question and answer period followed.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that in reference to the legislative initiative to create a Fire and EMS Commission he indicated that he has spoken with representatives of the Public Safety Committee. The charge of our Sub-Committee is to investigate the issues that would come under the purview of this Commission and to bring back information to the full Commission. He stated that on several occasions he has requested information from the Public Health Department but has yet to receive any information.

Commissioner Maheu commented on remarks made at the last meeting saying that Public Safety was not interested in EMS. That wasn't true. What happened was DPH had approached Public Safety with the possibility of taking over EMS. Commissioner Luther outlined the criteria under which he would be willing to take EMS. It's not that the Department of Public Safety wasn't interested, EMS was not interested under the guidelines that were set forth. He stated that his recommendation to the Commission is to continue to ask those questions and look for answers because without it you don't want the headache.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he wants to make clear his concern is that the EMS folks want to divide this Commission in half. Essentially have it half its membership fire and half EMS. Our

comment back to them is that that's not going to happen. The representatives from the Public Safety Committee don't want that to happen either. They know that we have a good system working here. They know that the Commission has done very well with limited resources and they don't want to mess it up. The funding information that we have requested has not been forthcoming. We will continue to monitor this proposed bill and bring back the information to the Commission.

Commissioner Nicol inquired when a public hearing would be scheduled on this bill.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that it would be sometime in mid March.

Moving back to item 4 e.) Mr. Piskura stated that at the last meeting he shared with the Commission the fact that some SCBA bottles had been damaged during a training program. At that time he was directed by the Commission to develop a "Damaged Equipment Draft Policy." You have before you that draft policy for your review and comment.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired whether the policy should indicate the need to conduct an investigation of the incident and how the equipment was damaged.

Chairman Carozza asked that this item be tabled for the next meeting to give Commissioners time to review and make any comments or suggestions regarding this draft policy to Mr. Piskura.

Mr. Piskura stated that he would incorporate Commissioner Kowalski's suggestion in the policy and forward a revised policy with the next Commission package.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if the municipalities have been made aware of this matter.

Mr. Piskura stated that the municipalities are the reason we are developing this policy.

Moving to New Business, item 4a.) Mr. Piechota gave an overview of a recommendation regarding Examination Proctor Qualifications. He stated that over the last 18 – 24 months Russ Emons of the Training Division developed a two to three-hour training program for persons who have the occasion to serve as practical skills examination proctors. We did this because we were finding that in some cases the people that regional schools or fire departments were choosing did not have training on how to be an objective evaluator. We've been going around the state training individuals at no charge. About 120-140 individuals have been trained thus far. The program has received very good reviews both from the individuals who have taken it, from some of their fire departments as well as attendees at an out-of-state Pro-Board Conference. A number of agencies from across the country have asked for information because they want to offer a similar program. What we would like to do, is with fair advance warning is to require those entities that request practical skills examinations for FF-1 & 2 and Haz Mat Technician that they will be required to use people who have been trained to this program. In internal discussion, we feel that if we set, with the Commission's approval, a date of January 1, 2004 that would be an appropriate lead time for individuals to be trained statewide. We feel that none of the entities out there would have any problems finding individuals who have been trained as examination proctors. Our goal is to get the Commission to approve January 1, 2004 as a target date to require Practical Skills Evaluators to have completed the examination proctor training program. This also complies with the requirement that both IFSAC and the Pro-Board have that an examination proctor training program be established.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Gomeau to approve the use of January 4, 2004 as the target date for the requirement of the examination proctor qualifications for the purpose of testing.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that he had the opportunity to take the class and found it to be an extremely good class and it's proved very positive in the skills evaluation.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired how long the training program was.

Mr. Piechota stated that the program was 2-3 hours in duration depending on how long it takes to complete the exercises. We've tried to blanket the state with this program by presenting the program nights, weekends, days and during the June School. We will coordinate with the Regional Fire Schools and with some of the large fire departments who regularly request exams to find out geographical areas we can conduct future classes between now and the end of December.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if a system would be put in place whereby the agency will be able to monitor when a department supplies their own evaluators that they have taken the class.

Mr. Piechota stated that the agency will maintain a listing of everyone who is qualified through this process. We will provide that listing if an entity requests it and perhaps publish a list of names on our website so that a Regional Fire School can know who they can choose from.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Maheu thanked Mr. Morrissette and Mr. Piechota for their assistance recently in putting together a panel to develop a test bank for Emergency Telecommunicators.

Mr. Piechota stated that because of the NFPA job performance format an effort is underway by the Certification Division to incorporate FF-I and II scenario based evaluation as opposed to individual stations. We've done some pilot testing and we find that it's very successful and it's a very good way to do evaluations. It is however a bit more resource intensive. It takes more time and perhaps could take more people to do it. So we don't want to put a burden on anybody who requested an examination of us without them knowing this up front for budgetary purposes. It is our proposal that in the letter that we will send out telling people about the new requirement for evaluators, that we also say that this is a goal that we will be reaching for January 1, 2004 as well. The goal is that all FF-I & II examinations will conduct the scenario based evaluation system and then we'll get feedback and modify it as necessary.

Mr. Piechota showed the Commissioners the new certificate of accreditation from the Pro Board that will be displayed in the Commission Room.

Mr. Piskura updated the Commission on personnel matters. He stated, as you know the Training Division has lost two Program Managers due to layoff and bumping. We also lost a clerical support person, and we also have a long-term medical leave of Ron Keane who is currently in the hospital. He stated that he spoke to Mr. Keane this morning who indicated that he hopes to be released soon but he has already been informed that it will be 9 to 12 days before he'll be allowed to return to work. This is causing a significant amount of stress in the Training Division to get anything accomplished. On top of this, he also has staff out on planned vacations so basically the division is down to two people to do most of the work. So it's an extremely stressful period of time in the Training Division.

Mr. Piskura made reference to the proposed training mentioned earlier by Mr. Beck that will occur at the Fire Academy. Civilians who have been contracted by a Military Base that was contracted by the Department of Justice will deliver this training. The Department of Justice (DOJ) gave money to a Military Base that contracted with a private contractor and will send people all over the country to teach people how to use instrumentation that was purchased. We teach people the same programs regularly. On a recent trip to Washington, DC, he asked why the Academy was not allowed to bid on that training, he was told in a nice fashion because we did not know how to operate that equipment correctly. Some of this training has already occurred throughout the country. The best we would get was a train-the-trainer because they'll come here and do two deliveries for the State of Connecticut only one of which will be held at the Academy. You have to be cognizant of where these vendors are coming from and what they have to offer. What the DOJ thinks they're getting is not what they're getting.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if DOJ provides any funding that we can get so that we can offer programs.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Feds, through this process, provide free training they don't provide funding for training.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if there's anything as an agency we should be doing regarding the Rhode Island incident.

Chairman Carozza stated that he is waiting for Mr. Morrissette to return from a special meeting on this matter, he may have some kind of direction as to how we should move forward on some kind of announcement or public education.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if anything has come out of the Connecticut Fire Marshal's Association.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that there's a lot of discussion going on as far as what the State of Connecticut is doing vs. what Rhode Island is doing. Currently they're reacting quite strongly over this matter for obvious reasons. Understanding that the Legislature is a very reactionary organization, there's various representatives of the State Fire Marshal's Office along with many other individuals all sitting in one room in Hartford trying to decide what the next move is. There are some discussions as of this morning proposing several new pieces of legislation. Legislation varying from expanding the responsibilities of the local fire marshal as well as the authorization to take some enforcement powers to again pursue the elimination of fireworks, hand held sparklers and things of that nature as well as on the subject of sprinklered buildings.

Mr. Piskura stated that Mr. Russ Emons has been entertaining question from the media quite frequently.

A discussion period followed.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Dated: _____

Edward F. Haber, Secretary
Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control

MOTIONS

Commission Meeting - February 25, 2003

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2003. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to approve the Staff Report for January 15, 2003 to February 14, 2003. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Gomeau to approve the use of January 4, 2004 as the target date for the requirement of the examination proctor qualifications for the purpose of testing. Motion carried.

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STAFF FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

Damaged Equipment Draft Policy - Commissioner Kowalski inquired whether the policy should indicate the need to conduct an investigation of the incident and how the equipment was damaged.

Chairman Carozza asked that this item be tabled for the next meeting to give Commissioners time to review and make any comments or suggestions regarding this draft policy to Mr. Piskura.

Mr. Piskura stated that he would incorporate Commissioner Kowalski's suggestion in the policy and forward a revised policy with the next Commission package.