



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION



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Jeffery J. Morrissette
State Fire Administrator

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2011 MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Dagon, Hilbert, Kowalski, Murphy, Nelson, Nicol, Stankye and Walsh.

Staff members, Jeffrey J. Morrissette, State Fire Administrator; Mark Lewandowski, Deputy Director of Training; Yvonne Lewis, Executive Secretary; William Higgins, State Fire Plan Coordinator; Edward O'Hurley, Certification Coordinator and Adam Piskura, Director of Training; were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Carozza called on State Fire Administrator Jeff Morrissette for introduction of guests.

Mr. Morrissette said this morning it gives me great pleasure to introduce two new agency employees who are joining us this morning; Mary Grennan in our Fiscal Administrative Assistant and Ebony Jackson a Secretary in our Training Division. As you know, we've had those positions vacant for a significant length of time and were able to re-fill them both on the same day. Both employees were invited to introduce themselves and provide some background.

Ms. Grennan introduced herself as having been with the State for about three years. Prior to coming to the Commission, she was at the Department of Corrections in their Contract Department. I have a background in retail management and business, and I'm very happy to be here enjoying the Fire Commission.

Ms. Jackson introduced herself as having been with the State for almost three years having worked at the Court for the State's Attorney in the Hartford District. She stated she was looking forward to working here and meeting everyone.

Chairman Carozza said thank you and welcome on behalf of the Commission.

Also, guests joining us this morning, we have Larry Gillen, Chief of Riverton Volunteer Fire Department along with two staff members who will be receiving formal recognition for their years of service to the agency.

Mr. Morrisette stated we have two employees who both celebrated their anniversaries with the State of Connecticut and the Commission last month. Because of the cancellation of our January meeting, we postponed this presentation until today. The first, it gives me great pleasure to recognize Debbie Richardson from our Training Division who on January 19th celebrated 15 years of service.

Chairman Carozza said Debbie, on behalf of the Commission we'd like to present this Certificate of Appreciation for your service to the State and service to the Commission. Congratulations.

Ms. Richardson said thank you.

Mr. Morrisette stated also being recognized is our Bookstore Manager, Pam Cooney who is celebrating ten years of service as of January 26th.

Chairman Carozza said Pam, on behalf of the Commission, I'd like to present this Certificate of Appreciation for your years of service. Thank you very much.

Ms. Cooney said ten years ago when I was hired to come here and open the bookstore, little did I know you gave me my dream job, and I'm very proud of what the store has become; and that has a lot to do with the support that I've received from all of you in this room and this agency. Hopefully, I'll be here in ten more years and receive my twenty years.

Ms. Richardson said I'm speechless -- but I want to say that I enjoy what I'm doing and I enjoy being with the agency, and I appreciate all you guys.

Chairman Carozza said thank you.

Moving to item 2.) Approval of Minutes of the November 30, 2010 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2010 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3.) Staff Report January 15, 2011 – February 14, 2011.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Walsh and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Hilbert to approve the staff report for the period of January 15, 2011 through February 14, 2011. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Hilbert to approve the staff report for the period of December 15, 2010 through January 14, 2011. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Murphy and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Dagon to approve the staff report for the period of November 15, 2010 through December 14, 2010. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza said at this time if there's no objection, we'd like to move to Number 5(b). Any objection? [None.]

Moving to item 5b.) Certification-Related Issues – Mr. Morrissette said under New Business, certification-related issues. Over the past several months, we've received a lot of calls and a number of Commissioners have also interacted with various fire chiefs who've had certification related issues. There's been a lot of complications with the expansion of certification. We are now delivering over forty levels of Fire Service professional competency testing and certification. Not that all of those levels are active, but they have the potential to be, and we are accredited for those. With that, while we've greatly expanded the certification services that we deliver, the staffing has remained stagnant, there's been a core staff of three full-time people: A Processing Technician, a Trainer, and a Fire Service Analyst or Director of Certification. Obviously, we try to be customer-centered as best we can, but certification by its very nature is somewhat bureaucratic. There's policies, procedures, and the like. Of particular note, as most of you are aware, with the expansion of Firefighter I to include hazardous materials; that has presented some complications. With the expansion to various levels of officer training and ultimately certification, it changes the way that we have done our traditional testing. So, again, a lot of these have caused some growing pains and caused some issues on a local level. Particularly, we are seeing an increase in the amount of requests for extensions for people to complete their certification testing requirements, et cetera. I know Chief Gillen is here today to speak to the issue. He has a personal stake in it and he felt it important enough to take time off today to be here with us and share with you some of the concerns from a local level, so I'll invite him to speak at this time.

Mr. Gillen said thank you. As stated, my name is Larry Gillen. I'm Chief of the Riverton Volunteer Fire Company. I am a Fire Service Instructor I, currently enrolled in the Instructor II/III Program at Pleasant Valley. I'm also a Fire Officer II. I come here this morning with a problem with the Firefighter I Program versus Haz-Mat. As Jeff stated, I took time off from work to be here. I actually lost some overtime this morning, so this is really, really important to me to be here this morning. I'm going to start off with an analogy. If the Fire Service, or the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control ran the Department of Motor Vehicles and you went to get your CDL license, passed your test to take your CDL but you missed your Haz-Mat or you missed your tanker endorsement, you can't drive. You wouldn't be able to drive a motor vehicle. And even though you passed that test, you should be able to drive a car or a CDL vehicle without a tanker endorsement or without Haz-Mat. You should be able to do that. We, the Fire Service, have set a precedence of Fire I being the minimum qualification for the standard of firefighter -- and I'm not saying that's a bad thing. That's a good thing. It also makes it nice and neat to have that one little piece of paper to put in the training file. How else would we do that? We'd have to document, well, he did ladders, signed off, put in the file. He did hose streams, he did search and rescue. So we would have a file instead of

that nice, one, neat Fire I certificate and the test results. As was stated, it takes way too long to get back the results. It takes up to four months to get the test results back. A student that's taking the class that did not pass, now his retention level is down, his confidence level has dropped. In talking with the area chiefs, their feeling is that the students that did not pass the Firefighter I test should be sent their results first, other than the students who passed and they're actually just waiting for their certificates. Maybe that would help. I know they're posted online right away, which is good. It is nice to know if you passed or failed, but you can't really do anything about it. You can start studying again to take the exam, but it does help the student get back into that testing mode. Now, I come here this morning with a personal problem. I have four firefighters that are in that category of Firefighter I who failed the test. Two of them have missed the cut-off, the testing period of one year, and one of them is my daughter; so it is actually personal.

She's taken the test four times. She's taken the test, failed, and then re-tested three times. Four times, you say? Nobody does that. Well, either they quit, they give up, or they pass the test. Unfortunately, my daughter did not pass the test, but she's not a quitter. So she's holding in there and trying to get her certification. Even though she could give up and walk away from it, she's not done that. There's another student that's right along with her that has been right there with her taking the test in the same fashion that she has with basically the same results. As it stands, she's passed her Fire I cert but not her Haz-Mat. She's passed her Awareness but not her Operational. Over the course of the program being changed where the ERG, the Emergency Response Guide, has been added as a help, they have -- well, one of my students has exceeded, excelled, and passed his Operational. So now he has -- follow me -- he's got his Fire I, his Fire Operational, but failed his Awareness, so he just has to re-take his Awareness. My daughter has passed her Fire I and her Awareness but has failed her Operational, so she just needs to take her Operational. But those students have gone by the one-year date, so there's really nothing they can do unless they receive an extension. Some suggestions, maybe the Commission can develop a program to help students, challenged students. I'm saying that students that are having trouble with reading, maybe they need a class on something that would put them more in the hands-on, just like a motor skills, of the Operational or Haz-Mat part of it, rather than the cognitive. I realize that the Fire Haz-Mat is here to stay in the Fire I curriculum, but I'm just saying that there's a problem with it.

I'm just going to skip through a bunch of this. They can't drive that car. If they pass the test for Firefighter I and do not pass Haz-Mat, they don't receive certification, how am I going to use them as an interior firefighter? It's just like I said, driving that car. They've got their license to be a firefighter, but since they didn't pass their Haz-Mat, they can't drive that car. Also, if they don't get that Fire I cert, they can't go on to other classes like RIT, the Flashover simulator, or advanced SCBA. So these are issues that I see. I'm sure other chiefs in the area have these problems, see these problems, and mention these problems. I'd like you to think about that and review these questions, ideas, and please let me know. If there's a way that I can help, I'd be more than willing. As you've seen, I've come here before you this morning to get involved with something that would help these challenged students, and there's -- we don't want people dropping out of the Fire

Service. We want them to stay involved, and because they can't pass tests, written tests, doesn't make them bad firefighters.

Chairman Carozza said thank you, Chief. On behalf of the Commission, let me just thank you for being here and bringing this to our attention. I'd just add -- and I don't know if any of the Commissioners have any questions, but you said, you listed, some suggestions?

Mr. Gillen said yes. I'll give you a copy.

Commissioner Nicol said the students that you're referring to, your daughter and others, are they members of the same department?

Mr. Gillen said yes.

Commissioner Nicol said is there a requirement in that department for a minimum for membership?

Mr. Gillen said according to our training matrix and bylaws, to be a firefighter, there's a minimum standard of Firefighter I unless you are grandfathered into the department.

Commissioner Nicol said that's established by your rules and regulations?

Mr. Gillen said that's established by our town policy.

Mr. Morrisette said do they have to achieve certification in a certain amount of time, once they become a member?

Mr. Gillen said it's usually one year after they become a member.

Mr. O'Hurley stated you said your daughter failed four times?

Mr. Gillen said yes, sir.

Mr. O'Hurley said then you talked at the end -- is it psychomotor that she's failing or is it the cognitive side?

Mr. Gillen said it's the cognitive. She's had problems all through school in reading and retention, and they tried different levels of learning with her all through school. And she's -- she's a very sharp cookie. She's one of these people that would take charge and help a Fire Officer at a scene, and she's done this as a junior member. She's actually brought to my attention roles that need to be addressed at a fire scene. She jumps right in there and she does that. She's actually worked with special needs children herself right now. She works doing that every day.

Mr. O'Hurley said with Firefighter I, there is help available.

Mr. Gillen said yes, there is.

Mr. O'Hurley said -- okay? Unfortunately, right now with Haz-Mat Awareness and Ops, they have to rely so much on the ERG. Unfortunately, they have to read.

Mr. Gillen said that's correct.

Mr. O'Hurley said right now, unless there's some changes in the future, that's the way it's going to be unless we can relax some of the requirements. I'm not too sure if we can, though.

Mr. Gillen said the ERG did help, like I stated before, one of the students. It helped him great dearly, and he actually passed his Operational. I really can't explain why she keeps failing, but she keeps getting the same score every time. So I'm not exactly sure. I've tried working with her, and she made an improvement; but not, obviously, a great improvement or enough to pass. But now she is working with Chief John Fields in Torrington on the Haz-Mat, so she's off trying to better herself.

Mr. Morrisette said I don't know if at this time Commissioner Nicol would like to relay his recent discussion with Chief Black in Watertown. There seems to be this issue that continues to be brought to our attention, and I know recently Chief Black spoke with you directly. I did expect possibly that he may be here today but I was told that basically several departments in the northwest corner of the state are considering not doing Firefighter I anymore. They're looking at possibly just an OSHA compliance standard for their personnel because of the trouble their people are having. Since Tom McGowan left, we haven't been able to do a comprehensive statistical analysis in terms of Firefighter I to compare results before making the ERG guidebook available to students and post. We believe there may be a small improvement, but there still are failures occurring; and, again, because of the numerous moving parts and pieces, you could basically pass the Firefighter I practical, the Firefighter I written, but then hit a snag on the Haz-Mat. Unfortunately, the NFPA requires the Haz-Mat components. But, again, because of the many moving parts and pieces once you bump up against that one-year time limit, basically student has to start anew. There's no requirement that they go through training again; however, they have to challenge a practical, not only for the Firefighter objectives but for the Haz-Mat objectives as well. Then they start in the queue all over again for the written components.

Mr. Gillen said I can see -- I'm sorry to interrupt, but I can see the student if they fail Haz-Mat re-taking the whole Haz-Mat class. That's just like a high school if you fail geometry, you've got to take it again. But if you get a passing score in Firefighter I, you should not have to take that again. You should not even have to take an exam in that again. That -- that's --that's absurd.

Commissioner Nelson asked whether our accreditation is based on that one-year standard, and is that why it is done that way?

Mr. Morrisette said it has -- and maybe Ed can correct me - it is a policy. I believe it may be a regulation, as well. Now, over the years we have granted extensions to the one-year time limit when there are credible reasons for doing so. I did think Denice Fortin, our Processing Technician in Certification Division was going to be here this morning because she is very concerned with that. We certainly have rules. We publish our rules and the policies, and from time to time when it presents itself, the Director or others may grant a waiver or an extension. We certainly don't do it if somebody's been missing in action for a year, but if somebody's making a credible attempt at passing something or has a medical issue, we've been relatively lenient for about a three-month period of time to extend it. I think the bottom line is, while we've had a lot of changes in certification, the core rules haven't changed in 15 or 20 years -- the one year has been the one year -- but, as I stated several times this morning, there's a lot more moving parts and pieces to the examinations, especially at the entry level, the Firefighter I. So we've not necessarily kept up to the times. I don't necessarily have a solid opinion one way or another, other than, I think as a staff we do try to be sensitive to the needs of our constituents, but, again, we bump up against, at times, maybe the accreditation requirements, as well as what is reasonable from an educational perspective validating the learning that has taken place through some type of an assessment. So, I can't say for sure that our accreditation is hinged on one year specifically. That's certainly a question that we can ask them. I think basically what they look for is that we have a policy. What that policy says may be relatively flexible.

Mr. O'Hurley said excuse me. And our policy is average throughout the rest of the states. Some are more severe. There's some that will not allow you to even take the test again: If you fail it once, you have to do the whole program. And some are a little more lenient. We're right in the ball park, and as far as extensions go, we've been lenient. We've really looked at the -- what's going on with the individual student, and we -- like, if he's a no-show in exams, if he doesn't show up, or if he does something else, or he just forgets or -- because we ask them. .

Mr. Gillen said so what would you suggest with somebody that keeps up with the testing, is trying extremely hard to pass a class, but just can't? What would you suggest to them?

Mr. O'Hurley said send me a letter, put it in writing. To be perfectly honest with you, sir, my question is: She's failed it four times.

Mr. Gillen said so she should just give up?

Mr. O'Hurley said I didn't say that.

Mr. Gillen said well, what are you saying, then?

Mr. O'Hurley said is she being tutored? Is she getting additional training? What we're -- you know, I don't want to get into a personal private. I can talk to you after the meeting.

Mr. Morrissette said one additional point that I should have made -- and I don't know if the Chief can confirm this -- before Tom McGowan left, he did spend some time with two of the individuals from your department, including your daughter.

Mr. Gillen said that's correct.

Mr. Morrissette said he believed Mr. McGowan went over strategies for taking the test. So we have invested some time into some of the people involved in this situation. I think from my perspective and from a global perspective we need the opinion of the Commission is in terms of looking at the time limits and standards that we have in place.

Mr. Gillen said that is correct. Some time was spent, and I appreciate the time that was spent here by the Fire Academy itself. I wanted to say that I hope that I would be here standing in front of you today if it was just one of my firefighters, and actually it is. I'm not just here for my daughter, I'm here for a group of firefighters. So I want to say -- I want to believe that if it wasn't just my daughter that I would still be here.

Chairman Carozza said all right. Any further questions?

Mr. Gillen said thank you.

Chairman Carozza said Commissioner Murphy?

Commissioner Murphy said I think this is more of a global problem. I don't think that is situated just to the Fire I level. I know we're having the same problem in my town. A couple of our Firefighter for a long, long time had a very difficult time passing Fire Officer II. They had reading comprehension problems, and you can work with these people; and I have spent countless hours personally, along with other members, working with these people. But the problem is that the questions are the same and they have a reading comprehension problem: They're still taking the same test; they're still reading the same questions. And I'd say definitely it's something that we should look at. The other problem, too, is that, luckily, she was able to get in four tests in a year. You know, I'm still waiting on my Fire Officer III results, and I took the test in November. It's taking a long time for these people to even find out that they're eligible to re-take it. How much information are they losing? You know, maybe we need to look at -- once the test results are posted on the Internet, which is now, two weeks or less -- and it's great; you know if you passed or not -- but at least then you can come back and take the test much faster.

Chairman Carozza said Commissioner Nicol?

Commissioner Nicol said Ed, when we grant an extension, typically how much of a -- what, is it a time? Do we give them one more chance to take the test or do we give them a six-month period or a one-year extension?

Mr. O'Hurley said no. The typical maximum is three months.

Commissioner Nicol said a maximum of three months?

Mr. O'Hurley said right. But then we look at each individual, too. Like, I've only given some thirty days. I've only given them one opportunity to take it again, okay. I don't want to sound callous, Commissioner, but, you know, sometimes they warrant it and sometimes they don't. To be perfectly honest with you, I think we're very lenient giving out extensions. Nothing against your daughter, but there's some excuses that I cannot accept. I mean, what happened to responsibility? What happened to accountability? Okay? I don't want to go off on a rampage here, but some of them deserve it and some do not. And if we want to change the policy, if we want to change the direction with extensions and everything like that.

Commissioner Nicol said thank you.

Chairman Carozza said any further questions from the Commissioners?

Commissioner Hilbert said I just want to comment on a bigger picture for the Chief here. First of all, I appreciate your coming here today because it's obviously a big deal, but the global picture, the real problem that I see with this new Firefighter I increased curriculum, goes back to the NFPA. NFPA writes the standards, and we simply apply the training to those standards; but the new NFPA Firefighter I standard has now made it more difficult for volunteer personnel to be able to recruit and retain members because it's getting so much harder for these kids to pass these classes and put in the necessary number of hours to get through these classes. It's hurting career departments because it's more expensive to go to recruit school, because you have to put in more hours on the floor, and NFPA is the one who's caused this issue for us. And I think that on the global picture, I think NFPA has to look at themselves because Firefighter I is so critical to you, Chief, and so critical to this Chief; that they've got to whittle that back down again, and maybe instead of trying to put everything into Firefighter I, have Firefighter I be basic competency/get on the line/be a firefighter. Firefighter II, Firefighter III, I don't care if there's a Firefighter IV, but to have it all in that basic entry-level requirement is just making it very difficult to retain and recruit volunteers and very difficult to pay for career firefighters to meet that minimum standard. So there is definitely a problem with NFPA, trying to bite off too much and making it difficult to keep certain people. And difficult for you, sir [to Chief Gillen].

Mr. O'Hurley said we've tried it different ways. We've tried to test halfway through the class, let's have a practical skill on just hazardous materials, okay, but there's certain aspects of the psycho-motor skills, like decon, corridor, and a few other things, we'll ask them, Okay, which nozzle do you use?

Mr. O'Hurley said so we, you know, we --it's not that we haven't tried. We've tried a multitude of different things to get this thing through --

Mr. Gillen said if there's a way --

Mr. O'Hurley said -- but it's difficult.

Mr. Gillen said -- of doing a psychomotor skills evaluation other than a cognitive written test, that would probably be the key.

Mr. Morrisette said I think one option may be -- and they may employ it in other states that being an interview panel of people basically interviewing the student to verify competency in certain aspects. I'm not sure if that's in addition to a written exam as well as practical, or if it's substituting in some cases. I don't know if -- Adam, you know, I don't know if you're aware of any of those scenarios in other states.

Mr. Piskura said I am not.

Mr. Morrisette said you know, I was aware of at least one other state that did apply -- I think it was Georgia -- that did utilize a panel that the candidate would have to appear before, just another means to verify competency of the various objectives.

Mr. Gillen said well, personally, I don't care how well they score on a test; that means nothing to me. It's how the firefighter responds on the job, how they work. That's what I want to see, performance.

Chairman Carozza said thank you. Any further questions? If not, Chief, thanks again for being here. We appreciate it.

Mr. Gillen said thank you for having me.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update - Mr. Morrisette said as you met this morning, we did bring on board two new full-time employees to fill long-term vacancies, one dating back to a retirement in July, the other a replacement for Ed Bycenski's position. Ron Vietts, who had served us very well on a temporary basis, has completed his service to the agency. I do want to recognize him formally that he provided a couple of months of service at no pay to the State of Connecticut, so while you hear about -- stories about how bad state employees are, that's the level of dedication that this agency has enjoyed from its employees over the years. We will be planning something for him in the very near future, and I would hope that Commissioners and others would come out and say thank you to Ron for his service. While he was here, he obviously couldn't do everything, and he did the best he could with the time that he had; but I'm personally very thankful to Ron for that.

Regarding part-time positions, we finally, just last Thursday, receive our packet of applications from DAS. We did have a posted vacancy for a total of 16 new part-time positions. We received around 118 applications as of last week. DAS has taken, the position posting, off their web site for the time being. Obviously, it's going to take some time to go through those applicants, but basically they're all qualified. As long as the candidates were certified and met the minimum requirements, they were admitted for

review. Some of the individuals identified themselves as interested in only certification positions or training while some identified an interest in both. It has been our long intent to try to segregate the two responsibilities because one pulls from the other. We're dealing with a core group of very dedicated people that we're burning out. The same people are involved in everything -- they're involved in training; in certification -- and we need to try to get some new blood into the system. In the very near future DAS will run the numbers for hours of service provided by our adjuncts to the agency over the past year. That will identify people who have not provided any service, and then we will follow through with the current stated policy: As an example, if you haven't taught a minimum of 80 hours in one year, those people would have to meet with the applicable Director and restate their intentions and commitment. They will then have one year to come into compliance or risk being released without prejudice. It is not unusual for instructors to step away for a while and return at a future date when their work and family schedules would allow them to participate at a greater level.

We still do have a vacancy for Fire Service Analyst, the Director of Certification. It is my understanding there are some rumors within the agency that I am holding that position open for myself as a backfill possibility should the consolidation eliminate my position. I want to emphatically state here that that is untrue. I have documentation from the previous administration denying the refill and recommending the request be submitted to the new administration. Quite frankly, at this time I don't even know if I have employment rights to the position. I want to make sure that everybody here understands my actions are focused upon the agency first and foremost; it's not about the individual. I wanted to make that very, very clear. Luckily, we've had some small wins with some new hires and we hope to keep them employed for a long, long time.

Mr. Morrisette also reported regarding the Governor's proposed budget, I did distribute for you -- it's a little bit confusing right now because of all of the proposed changes that are in the air, but basically this document very succinctly identifies the requested budgets and the recommended budgets for the Commission, POST, as well as for the proposed new agency the Department of Emergency Responder Training. I'd like to review the document with you. It's very difficult when I get asked a question, How does it look? There's really no easy answer to that other than a requested budget is basically what we as an agency had submitted as part of our Biennium budget request to the administration. Obviously, POST did the same thing. While you don't see the Fiscal Year [FY] 11 numbers, what I do have to note is that some of the Regional Fire Schools did ask for some sizable increases whereas others asked for no or modest increases. We obviously asked for a significant amount of funding for replacement equipment. So basically all of those numbers get put in as the requested budget for 12 and 13. Then you'll go to the right columns and see the recommended 12 and recommended 13. These are basically placeholders put into the budget for our agency, and you will notice that the recommended is what Governor Malloy has proposed for our agency; but further on when he proposes the consolidation, basically those numbers go away anyway. So you will see adjustments to the budgets, and it's probably easiest to look at each line item. I'll just show you Personal Services. Basically, what's recommended in FY12 is fairly close to what we had requested for 12, which is a positive thing. You'll also note one

additional position for a Custodian position has been recommended but not funded. This is our second Biennium budget that we requested this. We've been paying out a significant sum of money for contracted custodial work. We believe we can do it cheaper with staff. They kind of like the idea, but they want to leave it to the new consolidated agency's Executive Director to make that decision. So they haven't closed that door, but, again, they haven't provided funding either. But if we did move in that direction, I would see moving money out of the Other Expense account into Personal Services to cover that expense, ultimately resulting in a savings. Actually, we had asked for one and a half positions to provide the coverage over weekends and when there are illness or vacations. Again, the Other Expense account, that's what pays the bills. A fairly modest decrease, nothing significant. It is certainly livable. Equipment: It shows zero and one, and we have requested over a million dollars in FY12 and close to a million dollars in FY13. It appears that those have been supported as of right now, but while it says one and one, they basically just moved that to what they call the "Capital Equipment Purchase Fund". So, again, I think that's very positive because we have to really begin moving forward with equipment replacement. Firefighter I training, you'll see, is zeroed out, unfortunately, and then you will see reductions in both Year 12 and 13 for all of the Regional Fire Schools, some greater than 50 percent in FY13. So that is a significant, significant event for the schools. I'm sure that will be a major topic of discussion at their upcoming meeting. They've also zeroed out the Supplemental Grant Program, and then they've moved to the Commission budget, or the DERT budget, three new accounts those being former Comptroller Miscellaneous accounts, which handle the maintenance of the county and base, statewide fire and radio networks, as well as the funding for the State Firefighters Association's Death and Disability Payment Program. All this does is very similar to what was done a few years ago when they moved the Regional Fire School budget. It's just a pass-through to those accounts, but at least it consolidates them all in one place. Again, I really can't speak to POST's budget other than what is posted here on the form. What you will see, though, is that a significant amount of their funding is going to be based upon new revenue. They will be required to charge or assess a fee for training, which they really haven't done in the past, for their recruit school. They'll begin charging \$2,500 and \$100 for in-service training. So when you marry the two budgets together in the Department of Emergency Responder Training, you will see the combined budgets and what the reductions are. In most cases they are not significant, except for the grant programs to the Regional Fire Schools and elimination of our two grant programs. Some of this is predicated upon revenue, which they've only run estimates, and depending on if the cities and towns balk -- because, again, you're pushing some new fees onto the cities and towns. If you have any questions, I'll try to answer them for you, but I think this probably provides a good general overview of where everything sits today.

Chairman Carozza said just before we get to questions, Commissioner Nicol?

Commissioner Nicol said Jeff, that fee for POST, is that in regulation or statute?

Mr. Morrissette said it's in the language in the proposed budget then detailed in the Governor's consolidation Bill 1016. You'll see new language for establishing an Extension and Auxiliary Accounts which mirror the Commission's long standing

language. About a month or two ago, I had received a call from OPM who asked me to provide an explanation as to how we manage our fee and tuition system. They didn't tell me why they were asking, but now I know why. They modeled it into the new agency.

Commissioner Nicol said I took a quick look, Jeff. I'm just curious. Where is that located, the 2,500? You said it's in the budget?

Mr. Morrisette said right, you'll see a line under Personal Services under POST. You'll see funding down from 20 to 21 and bill account for basic training, which should generate 661,000 Year 1 and 850,000 Year 2.

Commissioner Nicol said so that, that

Mr. Morrisette said so that's new revenue.

Commissioner Nicol said that's likely, though, that'll be cast in stone if it's in the proposed bill.

Mr. Morrisette said right.

Commissioner Nicol said-- you know, increase the amount and the cost of training.

Mr. Morrisette said well, again, I don't know that the \$2,500 is necessarily mentioned other than in the budget, but it would be. And I think you've got to look at the legislation, too. Currently as it relates to our agency, the State Fire Administrator basically develops the system; the Commission approves it. In the new legislation, basically it will be the Executive Director will approve the fee schedules and OPM will approve. So it's taking it one step even further to the Secretary of OPM, probably so they can keep a closer eye on what may be available for them to sweep.

Commissioner Nicol said as I understand it, their training program is like 26 weeks, something like that?

Mr. Morrisette said yeah, I believe that is close.

Commissioner Nicol said it's a six-month program, and I understand that the cost of their training is -- other than salaries of the individuals -- but something in the neighborhood of \$10,000 per student.

Commissioner Nicol said so about 25 percent of it, they will fee, but that 10,000 has got to, you know, as time goes on, I'm sure it will go up.

Mr. Morrisette said my understanding their model of training is sometimes consists of in-kind trainers, where police departments will detail certified training staff to the Academy.

Mr. Piskura said I'm sure what they use is the adjunct volunteer.

Chairman Carozza said any further questions?

Mr. Morrissette said just one other item from our staff meeting. I did solicit, from the staff ideas for savings. I have already begun to receive some ideas, to pass on to the new agency for potential areas where we can save, reprogram, reprioritize, what we do.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Report – Commissioner Nicol said since the last Commission meeting, the Education Committee has met on December 2, 2010, in Wethersfield at Company No. 3. Project Manager Don Ouillette reported that the State was scheduled to release the December 10th, 2010 Bond Agenda the following morning at 10:00 a.m. Don stated that the Beacon Falls and Willimantic properties were now State-owned. Don indicated that an RFP, Request for Proposal, for the design-build for Beacon Falls, Fairfield, and Willimantic sites would be announced in June of 2011. Don reported that the New Haven site was approximately 90 percent completed. Don stated that New Haven would be requested not to burn in burn buildings until April in order to allow the concrete to cure. Don suggested that an SOP for the burn buildings be developed. Don recommended that some type of heat monitor be installed in burn buildings in order to record the temperature. Deputy Chief Jay Hershman of the Cheshire Fire Department mentioned that they were in the process of setting up an information meeting with local residents regarding the proposed Wolcott Fire School site in Cheshire. Jay stated that they have the support of their Town Manager. Chet Haber recommended that a meeting be held again this year with State legislators to discuss the Regional Fire School operating budgets. Chet Haber to make arrangements for meeting. Jeff Morrissette suggested that a short PowerPoint program be prepared for the meeting. Chris Tracy volunteered to prepare the program. Al Hawkins suggested that we ask for an additional 30 million in bond funding in order to complete the Regional Fire School project. Rich Winn reported that on December 13, 2010, at 7:30 p.m., the Burrville Regional Fire School will be hosting a meeting with their area legislators. Al Hawkins indicated that he would gather some information on SOP for a burn building policy and send it to committee members for discussion at our next meeting. Due to the scheduled January 28th Regional Fire School legislative meeting at the LOB, the Legislative Office Building, the January 27th, 2011, Education and Training Meeting was cancelled. The next meeting to be held February 24th, 2011, which is this Thursday.

Chairman Carozza said thank you, Commissioner. Are there any questions? If not, thank you for that report, Commissioner. We'll move to Item (c).

Moving to item 4c.) FY 11 Supplemental Grant Program Update - Mr. Morrissette said regarding the Supplemental Grant Program it appears this may be the final year. I believe Yvonne has prepared a letter for the small handful of departments that still haven't responded. I was able to touch base with one department last week at the State Firefighters Association Executive Board Meeting who has eligibility for five different accounts, so that certainly helped out catching that Fire Chief there. So, again, we're

making good progress, and I think we just have to remind departments they have to get moving now to begin to expend their vouchers.

Chairman Carozza said any questions? If not, Item (d).

Moving to item 4d.) FY 11 Entry Level Training Reimbursement Update -Mr. Morrissette said the agency had not made any reimbursements since the August/September time frame. As of last week, we are now current as payments have been made to all those department's that we've had requests for Entry Level Training reimbursement. We did identify that there may be a few that were processed incorrectly. I had requested help from DAS' Small Agency Resource Team Business Office to assist us with that. I didn't want to burden our new Fiscal employee with doing that while she was trying to catch up and become current with all other responsibilities. So they actually did come through and processed a significant amount of backlogged claims for those eligible. But with that, we did identify at least three payments were made to career departments who had sent personnel to our recruit school who only paid half, so they actually got a bonus check. So we're trying to figure out the best way -- that money should have actually been transferred to our agency to cover the other 50 percent. So DAS did try to help us out and basically did what the applications told them to do, there was an error which we're going to need to resolve, and certainly that's money that we can use here within the agency.

And our Extension and Auxiliary Accounts if you've been looking at the balances -- are probably at an all-time low right now, so it's important that we rectify that situation as quickly as possible. We did have some problems getting the data when the last recruit class graduated, so we'll certainly be on top of the current recruit class which will graduate before the end of the Fiscal Year, which is key, because, one, if the legislation or the budget doesn't change, this will be the final year. So we want to pay out as many claims as we can.

And, again, we will be posting information very soon if a department has not submitted a reimbursement form to us. If they have people in the queue currently, we'll certainly process a claim on their behalf once the firefighter is certified. So at least I'm happy to say that we're up-to-date as of all claims that were pending, but it's probably going to be a very busy next two to three months to try to cover all of the claims because, again, we won't have the luxury of rolling stuff over to the next Fiscal Year. Once the Fiscal Year's over, that money's gone. Because there's so many people testing the last months or two, May and June; and some classes sadly, we'll say, don't test till July now, because of the length of the classes. Those people won't be eligible for their funding. So, unfortunately, that's a situation that we have no control over.

Chairman Carozza said questions from the Commissioners? If not, we'll move to Item (e).

Moving to item 4e.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrissette said you should have the latest legislative update tracking chart as of last week from the State Firefighters Association's

legislative representative. There's a significant amount of bills. Obviously, the ones that people are watching most closely are the consolidation bills for this agency as well as DEMHS joining DPS as well as the budget bills and other legislation to implement the Governor's proposals. This afternoon, I believe most of you are aware, at noon today there is a public hearing for the Governor's Bill 1016, which is An Act Establishing a Department of Emergency Responder Training, consolidation of these two agencies, as well as the bill to consolidate DEMHS and DPS, amongst several other Public Safety proposals. Again, that's in front of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Tomorrow evening at six o'clock is the public hearing for our agency's budget. I guess at this point, I'm kind of not sure what to do with that. Normally during the Appropriations Committee public hearings, the first half-hour is set aside for agencies, which means -- and, historically, some years I do attend and just answer questions, but oftentimes what we're told by Committee leadership to hold comments until the subcommittee meeting. I'm not sure if the Regional Fire Schools are interested to go testify about their proposed reductions, but, again, they have the opportunity again when we have our subcommittee meeting. I'm not quite sure how all this is going to operate if there's a new agency, who's going to go speak for the new agency, but I guess they'll look at POST and the Commission independently until that time. So is there any thoughts in terms of what you would like me to do? If I plan to testify I'm required to submit my testimony 24 hours in advance, so I do have to get that over to the Governor's Office before six o'clock tonight. Or do we just sit tight as they've advised us and wait for the subcommittee meeting with the Regulation Protection Subcommittee? Any suggestions?

Commissioner Stankye said your past experience has been wait for the subcommittee.

Mr. Morrisette said that is correct.

Commissioner Stankye said -- I would think so.

Mr. Morrisette said this year, the information that I've received from the Appropriations Committee's staffer was that, we don't need to testify.

Chairman Carozza said any questions? Okay. We'll move to Item f. Any other questions on any other legislative issues?

Moving to item 4f.) DOD/DOD Contractor Certification- Mr. Morrisette inquired whether Commissioner Nelson wished to speak on this issue.

Commissioner Nelson said that's the certification issue you're dealing with?

Mr. Morrisette said yes.

Commissioner Nelson said just on a quick global perspective, this body was presented by then-Director of Certification McGowan with a proposal to allow more aggressive certification, and then a counter-proposal came from the Training Division. They came and talked to us about, you know, some of their concerns, and at this point with the

upcoming consolidation concern, I think it's an issue that we should just not pursue at this time.

Chairman Carozza said any discussion? If not, we'll move to -- thank you, Commissioner. We'll move to New Business, if any?

Moving to item 5a.) Statewide Fire Plan Adoption (Version 2.1) – Mr. Morrisette introduced Bill Higgins an Adjunct who coordinates the Statewide Fire Disaster Response Plan. Over the past year, we've been working very closely with DEMHS, with their staff attorney Brenda Burgeron, and with Bill Hackett, Director of Emergency Management, to go through the document page-by-page, item-by-item and update the document. So this is the first significant update since the original document back in about 1999-2000. This is a cooperative project with the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. We on their behalf manage the Statewide Fire Plan, and originally it was on the docket for review and approval by the Commission last month in anticipation that it would also go before the DEMHS Homeland Security Coordinating Council. Because of the cancellation of our meeting last month, last week the Coordinating Council met, and did approve the document without the Commission's approval. I think Commissioner Boynton felt it was very important to get the document approved before any consolidations occur. I had distributed this document electronically, I believe to all of you, probably over a month ago. Bill is here to answer any technical questions that you may have. We did identify there was one page missing and a couple of typos which have been corrected. The final signatory page will change to reflect the new president of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, along with Commission Boynton and myself. We have been very well represented in the State EOC over the last month on three or four different activations for winter storms. We've had an opportunity to directly interact with the Governor face-to-face.

Mr. Morrisette said-- but aside from that, I think we truly made a difference. We truly shared some pertinent information that the Governor was able to get out there to the public in a matter of minutes that may have saved some lives specifically with the significant snowfall and the drifting of snow, some of the sidewall-vented furnaces were becoming blocked and fire departments were responding to CO incidents. So that, along with the roofs being overloaded with snow these issues were addressed directly by the Governor to the public at our request.

Mr. Higgins said if I can answer any questions, I'd be happy to.

Mr. Morrisette stated we would look for your approval of Version 2.1 of the Statewide Fire Rescue Disaster Response Plan.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Dagon to formally approve Version 2.1 of the Fire Rescue Disaster Response Plan. Motion carried.

Mr. Morrisette said just one additional item related to this issue. You may have noted in the staff report that we are in the final stages of receiving some additional DEMHS grant funding to help support Bill's work, to cover his expenses as a part-timer as well as some equipment.

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

Moving to item 7.) Matters to be raised by Commissioners and Staff - Chairman Carozza said any matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff?

Commissioner Nicol said yes. I just want to reiterate the comment that the State Fire Administrator mentioned. Several weeks ago I had a conversation with Chief Black, who's, as he indicated, Larry Black, Chief of the Watertown Fire Department. He indicated that there was quite a bit of discussions, nothing formal, but informal discussions in the northwest corner amongst chiefs, department members, about the Firefighter I program, that they've been discussing that quite a few departments in that area have Firefighter I as their minimum standard for membership, and that they were discussing possibly changing that minimum requirement to go to CONN-OSHA standards and not have Firefighter I as the minimum membership requirement. I'm not aware of any department that has actually done that. I've been told that Watertown did, I guess, not too long ago change their bylaws or whatever, control of their organization, to have Firefighter I or CONN-OSHA as the minimum entry for membership requirement. I think it's something that you know, I want to mention it today, that I think it's maybe something we may hear about as time goes on. And, you know, it's certainly going to affect, the training mode.

As I've told Chief Black, they must remember that if they have that type of requirement and if it's going to limit members, particularly in that area, if they want to advance in the Fire Service if, they follow CONN-OSHA training requirements, if they want to advance in the Fire Service it's going to limit them. So that certainly is a negative.

Chairman Carozza said thank you, Commissioner. Anything further?

Commissioner Nicol said the other thing I want to mention, too, is I want to remind everybody that there's a Bond meeting coming up. You know, it's a very important meeting. The burn building for the school here is on the agenda as it appears now. If anybody's available, they probably should try to stop by at that meeting at the LOB.

Mr. Morrisette said that's the State Bond Commission will be meeting on Thursday at 10:30.

Chairman Carozza said Commissioner Brady?

Commissioner Brady said just to tag along on Commissioner Nicol here, I think if we think back, one of the things that Tom McGowan spoke about -- and we had this discussion, too, with the Firefighter I when we talked about the combination of Firefighter I and II certification possibilities and so forth -- a lot of this is out of our

hands, quite honestly. This is an NFPA standard. You know, I'm certainly sympathetic to the Chief's comments here and concerns, but a lot of it truly is out of our hands as far as what the requirements are; and I think that the requirements aren't going to be easier. Tom, I'm sure people remember, alluded to the fact that, you know, there's talk at the NFPA level about having just Firefighter I. It would incorporate everything. So the bus is going down the road here, and there's, you know, there's not a lot that we can do, I think, to -- unless, you know, [we can] certainly make our wishes known through NFPA and so forth, which is the standards-making organization; but certainly these requirements are stuff that, really, a lot of it is beyond our control.

Chairman Carozza said thank you. Anything further? I just want to before we adjourn, I just wanted to reassure, the Commission, and certainly our staff, that we are actively engaged in speaking with the Governor concerning the Consolidation proposal. The Fire Service met with him and he's given us some recommendations on how we should proceed; and we're going to certainly take him up on that. And I just again wanted to reassure our staff that we're doing everything we can to educate the Governor's Office and his staff on certain functions of this Academy and the Commission, and I just want to make sure everyone was aware of that.

Commissioner Hilbert said Mr. Chairman, do you have any indication of a Fire Service presence today at noontime at LOB?

Chairman Carozza said I know the Joint Council met yesterday, and I know there's going to be a number of people testifying, a number of organizations testifying. So, anything further?

Mr. Morrisette said one item. We did distribute today the State Firefighters Association announcement for their Third Annual Hall of Fame, and we do have a couple of nominees here in the room. So if you have an opportunity, Wednesday, April 6th at the Aqua Turf to come out and recognize a number of individuals who've had a significant role in Connecticut's Fire Service. I won't mention names.

Commissioner Nelson said so congratulations, Pete and Charles.

Chairman Carozza said any further business? If not, Motion to Adjourn?

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

Mr. Morrisette said and I do apologize for the early start. Originally the Joint Council was going to be meeting with some representatives from POST and from the Emergency Managers Association after this meeting, but because of the movement of the legislation and the announcement of the public hearing -- again, they always seem to do this. The General Assembly typically announces Public Hearings just before a holiday weekend for the day after you come back to work. I'm not sure why they do it that way, but, so that's the reason we did start early, with good intentions to try to have this other meeting. In

addition, the Governor had scheduled his staff meeting for 11:00 a.m. today, and then that got changed late last week to Thursday afternoon. So originally it was my intention to leave this meeting early to allow attendance at that. Thanks for all being here early.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:25 am.

Dated:

April 26, 2011
C. M. Stankye, Jr.
Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary