



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



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**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2008 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blaschik, Dagon, Kowalski, Mitchell, Murphy, Nicol, Schenck, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

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

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

Chairman Carozza called on State Fire Administrator Morrisette for an introduction of guests.

Mr. Morrisette introduced and welcomed the following guests to the meeting: Fred Piechota, Manager of the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, Inc., (Pro Board); Cathleen Connor Goetz, Adjunct Instructor for the Commission and has worked hand in hand with Tom McGowan, Director of Certification and Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association (CSFA).

Chairman Carozza extended a welcome to the guests.

Mr. Morrisette said we have a presentation to the Commission which Mr. Piechota had asked to make on behalf of the Pro Board.

Mr. Piechota remarked that it's really a pleasure to be back here to present the Reaccreditation back to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. He said for those who may not know him he was the previous Director of Certification and it was a great experience. He said now he's moved on to the Pro Board and to be able to come back to present the Certificate of Reaccreditation back to the Commission is very special to him because of his involvement here. He said when the site team conducted the Reaccreditation visit last year the site visit report spoke highly of the certification process that was in place at the Commission. They spoke very glowingly at the level of detail and the manner in which extra effort and attention is paid to the needs of the fire service personnel in Connecticut. He said what they saw is that the Commission will do anything necessary to some degree of reason to satisfy the certification needs of the Connecticut fire service and they were very impressed with that as was the Committee on Accreditation when they voted to Reaccredit the Commission. Mr. Piechota presented to the Commission on behalf of the Pro Board a five year Reaccreditation plaque and congratulated the Commission for their efforts.

Mr. McGowan remarked that credit must also be given to Mr. Piechota for all of his efforts over the years that led up to this. He also thanked Mrs. Goetz and all the other members of the team.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the November 30, 2007 meeting.

Commissioner Stankye stated that Commissioners Nicol and Wilkinson were in attendance at the last meeting however the minutes didn't reflect that. He asked that the Minutes be corrected to show that both Commissioner Nicol and Wilkinson attended the November 27, 2007 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to approve the Minutes of the November 27, 2007 meeting as amended. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report December 15, 2007 - January 14, 2008 and Staff Report November 15, 2007 – December 14, 2007. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the Staff Reports for the period of December 15, 2007 - January 14, 2008. Motion carried.

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

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrisette gave an update regarding staffing and the two vacant positions. He said we are scheduled to begin interviewing six individuals for the Assistant Bookstore Supervisor position on Thursday and Friday of this week. In regards to the Storekeeper position we've narrowed a huge list down to ten individuals and those interviews are being scheduled for mid February. He said it's our goal to go through those interviews and make selections as quickly as possible. Mr. Morrisette also reported that nothing new has occurred regarding the budget. He said we did receive information from Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) yesterday regarding our grant funded positions. He said Commissioners may recall it was discussed at the last meeting and in the staff report we had referenced that there was an extension to the grant for the two durational positions through the end of March. One is for Bill Higgins coordinating the Statewide Fire Rescue Disaster Plan and the other for Jackie Kilby-Richards coordinating the NIMS. He said what we've discovered over the past couple of months in trying to review some of the invoices is that we have not invoiced DEMHS for a period of approximately one year for all of the part-time employee charges for NIMS related training. We regularly bill DEMHS for other related issues but for some reason that had not occurred of which we had to inform DEMHS that they had a pending invoice with us for about \$122,000. He said they informed us yesterday that they would like Jackie Kilby-Richards' durational position to cease as of mid February which is about a month and a half prior to when the extension was granted to. He said because they are durational and they don't work a fixed schedule, it's hard to say if the actual funding would have covered both individuals

through the end of March. He said DEMHS is possibly looking to utilize some of that funding that would have gone to her coordination efforts to cover the payment for the direct delivery of training. He said this will not necessarily impact any training that has already been scheduled. He said he believes she has scheduled out into March or April already with obligations on a local level and those will continue. From this point forward in terms of scheduling it appears that with DEMHS' hiring of five Trainers, one of those Trainers has the responsibility for NIMS coordination so it appears they will take on that role of coordination. He said the big question will be is we are the largest direct deliverer of that training so those are the unanswered questions in terms of are they going to be coordinating or supervising our personnel. He said those questions will need to be answered. He said as soon as they are ready to review everything we will be meeting with them to discuss how we move forward.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson reported that the Committee has met twice since our last Commission meeting. They met on December 19 in Wethersfield and they met this past Saturday January 26th in Enfield. He said Department of Public Works (DPW) reported that they have revised the design build process which was an issue as a result of some shakeups several years ago. He said the Committee has a strong desire to get a project into construction as soon as possible because as we've gone through the process and tried to obtain funding we are always confronted with questions from Legislators like why should we give you more money if you haven't done anything with what we've given you already. He said one of the criteria for DPW is that they must have an absolutely clear title and access to a piece of property on which they are going to build understanding that the New Haven project is considered to be a renovation and it's currently in the design process. The Hartford County/Fire Academy project is similar in nature. He said we're now looking at all the other facilities. The only other facility that fits the criteria of having access to the property was Fairfield and their MOU has already been executed and everything was covered legally. He said at their December meeting the Committee voted unanimously to allow the Fairfield School and DPW to enter into the process to facilitate a design build at that facility with the hopes of getting the shovel into the earth and a tangible example of what they want. He said the design and engineering is progressing for the renovations of the New Haven School. The revised schematics are due this week. If they are acceptable the firm will then move on to contract drawings. The city still has not acted on the final MOU approval. He said he spoke to Chief Grant yesterday trying to move that process along. If the final approved MOU is received by DPW their timeline currently is hoping to go out to bid this summer with hopes of being on the state Bond Commission agenda in September for actual construction. He said a very positive note as far as the Hartford project was concerned is last Friday the Bond Commission approved \$422,000 for the design and engineering for the renovations here. The Committee is deeply grateful to DPW Commissioner Curtis and Governor Rell and all those who worked on the request. He said DPW has already started property site assessments to determine the best locations for the buildings on a property that is available here at the Academy. He said they were very pleased and gratified that this was the first appropriation for our project that was eligible to go on the agenda. As far as the property acquisition for Willimantic an RFP is due back from the current property owners next week. If that's okay DPW will start on the property purchase procedures. Their hope is that if it all works out the request for funding to purchase that property will be on the June Bond Agenda. He said

with respect to the property issues associated with the Burrville School a very productive meeting was held at the Legislative Office Building involving representatives of the DPW, DEP and some area Legislators. It was a new found interest in the parties to rapidly accommodate the property rights agreement and hopefully that will move forward very rapidly. He said there has been no progress whatsoever on property acquisition for the Middlesex School in Middletown. An RFP was published in the papers for the Valley School and three proposals were received back from various interested parties. Additionally a couple of other sites have come to light. He said interestingly the site they had hoped for in Oxford where the property owner got tired of waiting for the state to move and moved on to another offer is now back in play. Apparently that other offer fell through so they are optimistic that site could work for them. He said to quote Project Manager Donald Ouillette there has been more progress in the last month than there has been in the last six. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for February 28th in Wethersfield.

Moving to item 4c.) FY08 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette reported regarding the Supplemental Grant program. He said there have been no significant changes since our last meeting. There are still a couple of fire companies that we need to touch base with to have them make a selection on how they wish to receive their funding. He said we'll do another targeted mailing to those companies with the address that we have. Mr. Morrisette also reported that he was contacted by Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) late last week that they are going to be pushing forward with trying to reinstate the Limited Access Highway Reimbursement Program. He said they were approached by a fire department or two to reinstate the Program so they were doing some research. He said he believes it was voted upon by CCM as something they want to move forward so he provided some background in terms of the history of the Program; its origination, it was repeal and ultimate rebirth as the Supplemental Grant Program. He said he offered to provide any assistance they need to hopefully make an informed decision on whatever they are going to propose.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry-Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Entry-Level Training Reimbursements. He said a little over \$300,000 has been either encumbered or expended thus far so one positive thing is we are seeing a number of career departments offering Recruit training or planned courses in the very near future in addition to the very large class here at the CFA coming up in a couple of weeks. He also stated that we've run certification statistics for a period of time July 1st to the present and we're looking at cross referencing in terms of those individuals whose training and certification was reimbursed because we believe there is some significant holes in that so that will be our targeted effort over the next month is to try to go back and capture all those individuals or departments and municipalities who are eligible for the reimbursement but for maybe lack of information or otherwise have not submitted for reimbursement. He said we'll monitor the program closely and we sent a letter a few weeks ago to remind fire chiefs that the program is in existence and we encourage them to participate for any individual dating back to July 1st.

Moving to item 5a.) CFPC Legislative Responsibilities – Mr. Morrisette said Commissioners should have received communication received from the Governor. He said those Commissioners that serve on other Boards and Commissions and have had

meetings since this letter was transmitted back in December have probably all seen it already and gone through the exercise. He said Chairman Carozza was requested to remind Commissioners of their responsibilities as a Commissioner with the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control so we've provided a copy of the statute 7-3231 which outlines the duties of the Commission. He asked Chairman Carozza if he wanted to go through those or just leave it with Commissioners and stressed what their responsibilities are.

Chairman Carozza remarked that he's sure everyone here is aware of the responsibilities and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Morrissette added that this may be a good opportunity for Commissioners to pay particular attention when they review the statute if there is something we should be doing different or if there is something which can be eliminated to let us know and we can look to put it together as a legislative proposal sometime in the future. He said most of these have not changed in the last 30 years.

Moving to item 5b.) 2008 Legislative Session- Mr. Morrissette asked Commissioner Brady to report. Commissioner Brady reported that a meeting was held the beginning of January with Speaker Amann. He said Mr. Morrissette, Commissioner Wilkinson, Chief Levecchia and Mr. Schroll were all in attendance. He said they discussed the Entry Level Training Reimbursement Program and where they wanted it to go in the next Legislative Session. He said they were looking for some guidance from the Speaker on what his recommendation would be whether to go on hold or wait. He said Speaker Amann's suggestion was to go after capturing the entire funding and programs that we had asked for the last time which was in fact Firefighter I and II; Recruit training; Fire Officer I and Fire Instructor I. He said there is going to be a proposal going forward in this Legislative Session to seek the entire funding.

Mr. Morrissette added that based upon some of the preliminary information they also want us to have some fall back options. He said although we're proposing getting the full funding what's being communicated is there are other options we could talk about should it become necessary.

Mr. Schroll reported that the handout he distributed came from the annual meeting of the State Firefighters Association held on January 9th. He said all fire service organizations were in attendance except one. He said the CSFA decided to focus on a relatively short agenda as this is the short legislative session and supposedly there will be no new money only legislation of an emergency nature will be considered. He said there was agreement on attempting to expand on the legislation passed last year that reimbursed municipalities for firefighter training. They are requesting legislation be proposed to fully fund the Firefighter I and II, Fire Service Instructor I and Fire Officer I programs at the \$2.5 million and that payment/reimbursement for programs are at 100%. He also said there are a few municipal fire departments in the state that have programs to install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, and replacing batteries in existing detectors. Some of these programs are part of a public relations program and other programs are aimed at some residents who are less fortunate and unable to afford these items. He said with these programs there is a liability concern so they are asking for some form of hold

harmless legislation to exempt these fire companies from any liability as long as their services are performed within accepted practices and within manufacturers' instructions. He said those are the two proposals the CSFA has put forth. He said they've been made aware of other legislation that the CSFAS will be supporting but are not part of their proposals. He said there is a proposal that would allow career firefighters to volunteer as firefighters in their own communities and one that would provide for presumptive workers' compensation coverage for firefighters contracting certain infectious diseases in the workplace. He also said they were made aware of a proposal that would alter current statutes that affect firefighters. He said the Fire Chiefs' Association received a letter from the Attorney in the unfortunate accident that occurred in Waterbury where Captain John Keane was killed. He said apparently the attorney for the wife was attempting to bring a lawsuit against the driver of the apparatus. He said there is a statute CGS 7-308 that restricts a firefighters' right to sue for compensation if injured on the job by a coworker during the operation of a motor vehicle. He said it was brought to the attention of the CFCA and they were wondering if the CSFA was aware of it and whether they would be interested in changing the statute. Mr. Schroll said they brought it to the attention of the Legislators to let them know that we fully support the current statute as it is written and we would close any attempts to change it. He said he doesn't know what will happen so we'll have to wait and see. He also said he's aware of a possible proposal coming through again that also came up in the early part of last session from DEMHS about crisis response drills. He said they are looking to change the statutes Sec. 10-231 fire drills, crisis response drills. A Bill was passed in 2000 about crisis response drills. DEMHS is looking to change the word may to shall so they are looking to do a crisis response drill in substitution for fire drill that is required. He said they sent an email asking his opinion and at the time he sent an email to all the presidents of all the associations and only received a response from one association that stated it was not a concern to them so he told DEMHS it wasn't a concern of ours. He said it's his understanding that the UPPFA is going back to proposing legislation for infectious diseases, cancer and heart Bill again. He said they are also looking for workers compensation coverage for personal involvement in a motor vehicle accident resulting in injury or death of a passenger, pedestrian or driver passenger of another involved vehicle. He said until the Session starts he won't know if there is submission of any other related legislation unknown to them that they could endorse it or oppose to it. He said sometimes in a good year is we may not get anything but it is also a good year when you don't loose anything. He asked if Commissioners have any questions.

Commissioner Kowalski asked Mr. Schroll to add his email address to his distribution list because he didn't hear about the legislative meeting until the morning of the meeting.

Mr. Schroll said he's already on his list but he didn't call that meeting so the notice did not come from him.

Commissioner Kowalski added that the Fire Marshal's Association is moving forward with a substantial regulation change in the form of adopting NFPA fire prevention code. He said it is a very new process and will probably require in excess of 12 to 14 statutory changes to take care of the issues that had been occurring from time to time with the Marshals. He said it is to the communities advantage as well as the Marshal's that we propose this legislation.

A brief discussion followed.

Moving to item 5c.) Entry Level Training Reimbursement Request Review – Mr. Morrisette said he is seeking clarification on this issue. He said we had a situation in a recent recruit class not here at the CFA where it appears as if several individuals went through an approved recruit class but since they were already certified as FFI they were not re-tested out of concern for double jeopardy. He said the question is are they eligible for reimbursement based upon the fact that they've completed the training and they are certified, they just weren't certified at the conclusion of the particular training program. He said as he's not been able to validate what our thoughts are based upon the data which was submitted in our database he's presenting it as a hypothetical should the actual facts come to bear that it is correct. He asked Commissioners if they had any general thoughts on whether or not they are eligible for the full reimbursement.

Commissioner Dagon remarked that his expectation is the individuals should be tested after the recruit training class whether or not they had been tested before. He said the recruit class is distinctly different.

Mr. Morrisette said as part of the recruit class the only actual testing is based upon the standards and objectives of FFI and FFII not all the other things that comprises a recruit program.

A discussion period followed and the general feeling amongst Commissioners is that they should be re-tested.

Mr. Morrisette added with this particular situation his only concern is that it wasn't made clear in the beginning we just happen to catch it when we went to verify the records we found out that they were already certified.

Commissioner Kowalski said they have to take the test and be certified if they want to be reimbursed for the training.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Dagon that reimbursement funding be tied to a complete certification course which includes testing. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Commissioner Brady said he wanted to make it known that he is participating in a group on Credentialing of firefighters in Connecticut. He said Mr. Piechota brought him into the process a couple of years ago and the chairman of that Committee at the time had died. He said it has been reconstituted and Don Moore from the Bloomfield police department was selected as the new Chairman of that Committee. He said the purpose will be to develop a credential to be used for Intrastate Mutual Aid. He said there is representation from state and local police, EMS, DEMHS, DPW and fire. The intent is to get it resolved

within the next six to eight months and come up with something. The Committee plans to meet the third Tuesday of every month until the Credentialing is taken care of.

Mr. Morrissette said he wanted to provide a brief update on Chief McCarthy's visit last year where he appeared before the Commission to relay his interest to pursue establishment of the FireZone or something similar down in Norwalk in a larger development project. He said Chief McCarthy reported to him recently that the developer has agreed to provide the requested space pro bono of a little over 2,000 square feet to try to move the project forward. A formal request was submitted to Liberty Mutual to be the primary entity to fund the project and they've been requested to support it with a donation of \$1.5 million. He said he believes the original FireZone project in New York City was reported to have cost them approximately \$2.5 million and it was felt that it could be done cheaper here in Connecticut so the \$1.5 million will certainly be a good start. He said whether or not state funding will be sought sometime in the future would probably be a reasonable request. He said there is a group that Chief McCarthy has gathered and we'll have representation on it. He said he along with Commissioner Wilkinson will be meeting with them tomorrow morning to look at the organizational structure and they will probably seek some type of a 501c or other status to move the project forward. He said he just wanted to update the Commission on that issue.

Mr. Piskura distributed copies of the Fire Officers Weekend brochure. He said the Fire Marshal's office has been fairly liberal with awarding credits.

He also reported that the projected enrollment for the next recruit class starting in two weeks is 55 and to accommodate the building load we've been able to use some of our capital budget award to make some building modifications. He said upstairs in the day room the wall has been breached into the next dormitory room to provide quiet study area. He also said that because of 55 recruits we've removed the old podium from the auditorium which was designed for slide projectors at the time and are no longer required. He said eventually we'll be filling in the center with seats so we'll have more seating there because that's where we'll be holding our group classes because of size. He said he expects this trend to continue the next four or five years and that's why we're making these modifications. He said there are other request to increase storage and the dormitories but we're trying to address the construction related items prior to the start of the next class and the others as time and money permits.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:35 am.

Dated:

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