



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



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**MINUTES OF THE MAY 25, 2010 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Vice Chairman Kowalski called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Dagon, Hilbert, Murphy, Nelson, Nicol, Ross, Stankye and Walsh.

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

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

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

Guests to the meeting were identified as Earl Provencher, Chief of North Thompsonville Fire Department in Enfield, Barry Rickert, Deputy State Fire Marshal; James Carroll, CFA Program Manager; William DeFord, CFA Adjunct Instructor; Patrick Leonardo, Operations Manager and Nancy Morrissey, Communications Manager, American Medical Response-Springfield, MA.

Mr. Morrisette said we would like to formally recognize our guests from AMR and asked Director of Training Piskura to share some information with the Commission.

Mr. Piskura said during our Recruit Class 14 week resident program the culmination of all the training comes together when we do scenario based training and live burns at the Springfield Class A Burn Building that's operated both by Springfield FD and the state of Massachusetts. He said while we're there we have to meet and comply with all the provisions of NFPA standard 1403. Part of the requirement of 1403 is that we provide standby medical assistance and EMS transportation. He said he's proud to say we are one of the few state level academies that have the complete package as far as providing those standby assist services. Some of this is relatively costly as you're paying your own staff or you're paying contractors. He said through the efforts of Adjunct Instructor and Recruit Coordinator William DeFord we've been able to maintain a relationship with AMR of West Springfield where they provide these services cost free. He asked Instructor DeFord to comment.

Mr. DeFord said this is a relationship that began a few years back and as Mr. Piskura had mentioned we follow NFPA 1403. He said this began with a phone call because he's a career firefighter in the state of MA although he resides in Suffield, CT. He said he's worked with these folks a lot over his 17 year career so he called them and explained what the requirements were for NFPA 1403. He said he thought it was a great opportunity for their staff to come in the field and see our live burns as well as thought there might be a possible pro quo where they also provide fire ground rehab. He said their paramedics and EMTs are a phenomenal resource. He said he pitched the proposal to them and they responded favorably and have ever

since. He said we do three live burn days in the spring and three in the fall unless we have a large enough class in which we split so it could actually be six days and every one of those days at the Springfield Training Center, they provide an ambulance with two paramedics to assist our adjunct staff with rehab type functions and they do it free of charge. He said he thought it was worthy of recognizing that public private partnership that has otherwise gone unnoticed publicly.

Vice Chairman Kowalski thanked the representatives of AMR for all the support activities that they do and presented them with a certificate of appreciation for ensuring our safety during the live fire training component of the Recruit program.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called on Mr. Piskura for recognition of Adjunct Instructor William DeFord.

Mr. Piskura said at the conclusion of our most recent recruit graduation he was approached by two different individuals from the same fire department that expressed specific gratitude toward one of our instructors in the Recruit program due to his personal assistance and obvious dedication to the success of their student. He said that department was West Shore Fire District and both the Chief and Deputy Chief had approached him separately and they both had the same remarks to relay. He said they were acknowledging Instructor DeFord's concern and dedication toward a student's medical issues as they presented themselves. He said Mr. DeFord followed the student to the hospital where he had gone two separate times and met the Deputy Chief there. Once it was determined that the student's medical condition was finally stabilized Instructor DeFord then moved towards getting the student to successfully graduate. Mr. Piskura said the Chief and Deputy Chief were very appreciative about maintaining this student and making sure that he could graduate with his class. He said they attribute that to the personal efforts of Instructor DeFord.

Mr. Piskura thank Instructor DeFord for making the CFA look good and presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of his dedication and compassion for our students by ensuring their well-being and success.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the April 27, 2010 meeting

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2010 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report April 15, 2010 – May 14, 2010.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Walsh to approve the staff report for the period of April 15 through May 14, 2010. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette stated that the staff report contained the details of the FY 2011 budget adjustments. He said as an agency we fared relatively well in comparison to other agencies and overall are confident we can maintain core services. There are some impacts specifically to the two grant programs we administer, the Supplemental Grant program as well as the Entry-Level Training Reimbursement program. Both programs did incur reductions. He said he believes for the Entry-Level Training Reimbursement program we're going to be close to making all the payouts as may be

necessary. He said it's still a challenge getting departments to apply for the reimbursement so if the level of applications remain stable, then we will be okay barring further budget adjustments. He said he would be happy to entertain any questions or discussions regarding the budget as presented.

In addition to that, Mr. Morrisette said we had a retirement notice submitted by our Secretary I, Elaine Mancino and it may be a challenge to re-fill that position. He said he was directed that he would have to go directly to the Governor's office to obtain approval before we can even solicit through Department of Administrative Services (DAS) a request to re-fill that particular position. Mr. Morrisette said in attending a recent Governor's staff meeting the basic point made was don't even ask to fill any positions. He said his plan of action would be to schedule a meeting with the Chief of Staff to discuss. He said that's the current budget and staffing situation with the exception we may have discussed this briefly last month but we've been trying to adjust the classification for adjunct instructors. We've had an inability to provide raises to individuals at the three levels of instructor and we've been working with DAS for several months trying to have that adjusted. The problem rests with an interpretation by DAS as it relates to moving an instructor from Level I to II. It appears the only resolution will be to revise the position specification. He said we have provided the revised language and as of right now it is moving ever so slowly through the approval process.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Nicol reported that the Committee has not had a meeting since our last Commission meeting but they will be meeting this Thursday. He said he did receive a draft copy of a letter prepared by Chairman Al Hawkins and he believes he had mentioned it at our last Commission meeting and it's a letter that will be sent to the Governor as well as other members of the Bond Commission. He said the letter is in draft format and he notices one area that has to be adjusted but that is the only action he can report on today.

Mr. Morrisette added that he has a couple of items and he will be meeting with Commissioner Stankye in his role as Treasurer for the CSFA after today's meeting. He said a couple of issues have arisen in regard to how we make the payouts or quarterly allotments to the Regional Fire Schools. A post audit has brought about an issue with the Comptrollers office being unhappy with how we request the checks be forwarded to the agency and in turn we pass them off to the Treasurer who then makes the payout to each of the Regional Schools. He said historically that's the way it's always been done where the Comptroller's office would issue the check directly to the Treasurer to make payouts but now that the funding comes through the Commission for the past several years it is being questioned. He said hopefully we can rectify that issue and make the appropriate changes if necessary. He also said we were requested by Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to determine whether or not an audit submitted by Eastern CT Firefighter Training School was an acceptable program audit in lieu of a state single audit. He said we've been going back and forth with both the Auditors of Public Accounts as well as OPM to determine whether or not what was submitted is acceptable.

Moving to item 4c.) FY 10 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette said as discussed and approved at last month's meeting we recently forwarded letters to the fire companies who have either lost their funding, as a result of not requesting it, or received an approximate 35% reduction to their particular accounts. He said we've not received any calls based upon the letter as of yet so hopefully people will accept it for what it is. He said with the

budget adjustment we are facing there will be an approximate 50% reduction in funding for the coming fiscal year.

Moving to item 4d.) FY 10 Entry Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrissette reported that there's not more to relay on this item other than the Executive Secretary is working closely with the Certification Registrar to obtain information as individuals are certified so we can process pending reimbursements. We are finding a lot of individuals whose departments never submitted a reimbursement for them so he's not sure how much time we'll have to scramble to contact these departments. He said we're doing the best we can to make as many payouts by the end of the FY.

Vice Chairman Kowalski asked if there is a list that we can share with Commissioners so they can help to contact these departments.

Mr. Morrissette replied that we could share the list with Commissioners.

Commissioner Nicol asked if there is anyway we could streamline the process and bypass the step of submitting the form and just make payouts as people are certified. He said what is happening is we're not using the funds and the Legislature is taking the funds away from us.

Mr. Morrissette said that's certainly a problem but he's not sure how to better streamline the process other than changing the statute because the big hook is in order to be reimbursed you have to be certified so in essence we have to wait until the closing days of the FY to process hundreds of candidates reimbursement. This is a significant burden on what we have left of a Business Office. He said we're trying to stay on top it on a day by day basis pulling the forms and processing payouts for them. He said we still expect to lapse well over two hundred thousand dollars.

A brief question and answer period followed.

Moving to item 4e.) 2010 Legislative Session Update – Mr. Morrissette said unless other Commissioners have any details the only two items he wanted to report on was SB 151 for which a copy was placed in Commissioners packets today. SB 151 now PA 10-51 An Act Limiting the Indemnification of Fire Service Instructors which was a CFDA proposal was passed. SB 195 regarding the future designation of Regional Fire Schools did not pass and there is a whole host of reasons. He said between amendments that were added to the bill as well as opposition coming from different parts of the state related to that was just a couple of reasons. He said he had offered that we just take care of the proposed technical changes, to make the language accurate as a start and worry about future designations at a later time. He said we'll have to bring it back next Legislative Session and hopefully get support for it.

Commissioner Nicol added that the only other thing and he believes the Commission talked briefly about it was SB 312 which passed with the provisions of a study be added to it. He asked if the Governor is scheduling a Veto Session

Mr. Morrissette remarked that he had heard they were planning on scheduling one.

Commissioner Ross commented that his understanding is the SB 312 is going to get signed and we are going to have to do the study for all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP's) centers

which is due by June 30, 2011. Based on the study, by 2016 anyone who has not met the recommendations of the study will lose their funding. He said they are putting an RFP together in anticipation of doing that study.

Moving to item 4f.) Entry Level Training Reimbursement Policy Issue – Mr. Morrisette said this has been discussed at two previous meetings. He said he put forth some language in Commissioners' packets and it's listed on page 3 and the proposal is under 4.4.1.1. He said this deals with individuals who may be responsible for paying for their own Entry-Level Training and to allow for reimbursement to be made through a municipality, municipal or state agency fire department. The municipality, municipal or state agency fire department must agree in writing to a transfer arrangement. Mr. Morrisette said we still hear that it happens on a local level where someone has to pay for their own training. It also occurs from time to time with our Recruit Program as we are seeing a number of volunteers go through the program. He said he believes we had six in the last class who are paying their own way. This policy change would provide for a mechanism to send the payment to a municipality who would then agree to pass through the funding to the individual.

Vice Chairman Kowalski asked if it's true that this doesn't matter which municipality the individual goes through and they don't have to be a resident.

Mr. Morrisette replied no.

Commissioner Ross asked if we're finding out if the six individuals that paid their own way through the program are finding jobs.

Mr. Morrisette replied that he believes to date not including the current class everyone has been hired. He said it's saving municipalities' significant money and overtime while the individual is at training. He said for the six individuals in the current class he's not sure what the status is.

Mr. Piskura added that two Recruits from the current class already have offers. He said what's happening is a new phenomenon which he's discussed with the Career Chiefs because prior to approximately two years ago we would dissuade people from entering the Recruit Program if they weren't already hired. He said there is a significant amount of activity that has appeared only in the last couple of years for people to pay their own way into the Recruit program and then within a year or so they get hired.

A brief discussion period followed.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that we would take action on this item under new business.

Moving to item 4g.) Mid-Atlantic Association of State Fire Commissions Meeting – Commissioner Nicol gave an update on the planning for this year's conference. He said the dates we had discussed will be September 9-11. Recently the State Fire Administrator had set-up meetings with the two hotels in Hartford which are the Marriott and the Hilton. He said they looked at both facilities and they are both promising and both have their advantages and disadvantages. He also said we just heard back from Phil Crombie who is arranging a tour of the Travelers Claims University in Windsor and it would be good for one of the afternoon tours

associated with the conference. We haven't made a commitment to either facility as yet but it looks like it will be one of the two.

Mr. Morrissette added that the other three things we are looking at possibly doing is a tour of the Forensic Lab and asked Commissioner Ross about the feasibility of doing it on a Saturday September 11. He said he also know that Commissioner Kowalski had made contact to arrange for a tour of ESPN as more of an entertainment activity and a tour of the CFA would be another activity for the group.

Commissioner Nicol said right now the activities that are being discussed may be too many and we may not have time to do all of them. He said to be able to get to all of the locations we would need a five day conference. He asked Mr. Morrissette if he wanted to add anything else.

Mr. Morrissette added that the government rate at the hotels is \$112 which is not bad for Hartford. He said the only problem is parking which is very expensive.

Commissioner Walsh added that there are other garages around the area of the hotels that may be less expensive.

Mr. Morrissette said because we have only one more month to meet before our summer break it may be a good opportunity to ask Commissioners to go back to each of their organizations and see if they may be able to provide some level of support for conference activities. He said it would also be our expectation that we would extend invites to the President or leadership of each of the statewide fire service organizations to participate in the conference. He said any level of support from the statewide fire service organizations would be appreciated.

Commissioner Nicol said transportation is also a concern so if Commissioners have any thoughts on it to let him or Mr. Morrissette know.

Commissioner Ross asked what the count is for the people expected to attend the conference.

Mr. Morrissette replied that we had provided the hotels with approximately 30 people each night. He said we're just beginning to finalize a list to send out to all the member states. He said Commissioner Nicol had recently spoken to a member of the KY Commission who indicated they may have about 10 people coming. He said that would be the out-of-state attendance and then add another 10-20 people for in-state. He said the first day we would also extend invites to all the U.S. Fire Administrator, Superintendent of the National Fire Academy to come and participate. We would also reach out to Hartford Fire Department to have a presence as well.

A brief discussion on the schedule of activities followed.

Vice Chairman Kowalski said if there is no objection he would like to add to the agenda under new business Entry Level Training Reimbursement policy change and entertain a motion to approve the policy.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ross to approve the Entry Level Training Reimbursement Policy 4.4.1.1 as presented. Motion carried.

Moving to item 6- Comments from the public – Chief Provencher said he lives a few town away and likes to attend our meeting when he can. He said he just wanted to come and support the good work that the Commission does and also the staff at the Academy. He said one thing he would like to mention on the Entry Level Training Reimbursement is from his personal standpoint the on again off again reduction to the funding can be confusing and he actually thought the funding was not available currently.

Deputy State Fire Marshal Rickert said he had a couple of items of interest for the Commission. The Fire Prevention Code is slated to become effective July 1, 2010. He said they are currently educating fire marshals and fire officials with the cooperation of the Office of Education and Data Management. He said there will be a general information notice next week regarding the use and sale of consumer fireworks in Connecticut and he hopes it will clear up any questions. Lastly, he said they have a meeting with the local Juvenile Firesetter Intervention committees and coalitions to get a more uniformed effort in CT and that's been working out very well. He asked if Commissioners had any questions.

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners or staff –Commissioner Brady asked for an update on the Q license program with the DMV.

Mr. Morrisette stated we are somewhat on a holding pattern due to our inability to hire Adjuncts due to the classification issue mentioned earlier. While the Governor's Office approved the hire of an additional twenty or so Adjuncts several months ago, some of which were intended for use as Q Testing personnel we have to wait until the change in the job specification is finalized.

Commissioner Brady asked if the DMV is still on board with handing this off to the Commission.

Mr. Morrisette replied that we haven't had any discussions with them in several months and we probably need to re-engage with them. He said he believes they are still providing the service as they can.

Mr. Morrisette reported that there was a lengthy discussion on the Haz Mat Awareness and Operations program development the past couple of months and we do have disks available for Commissioners. Also Program Manager Eric Munsell placed out on the table for your viewing all of the items that are provided to individuals who go through the T-t-T. We are in the process of scheduling additional T-t-T's in each of the regions which has to be completed by September 30th, the end of the federal FY.

Mr. Morrisette also stated that he wanted to thank a number of Commissioners who were able to attend the Recruit Class graduation last week. The Recruit Leads do an excellent job with the program. He said we were fortunate to have the Governor attend as well as Sen. Stillman one of the Co-Chairs of the Public Safety and Security Committee who couldn't say enough about the program.

He also reported that Commissioner Ross is looking at trying to schedule a make-up photo day for those Commissioners who had not had their photos taken when we met at the Forensic Lab. He said we should have the ones that were taken very soon. We were discussing potentially having a meeting in Middletown, possibly in June.

Commissioner Ross said he will work on it and should have an answer by end of the day.

Mr. Piskura gave an update on June Fire School which begins Monday, June 7th. He said we're offering 68 courses and 17 courses are full with over 900 students registered. He said we're very pleased with the results thus far.

Commissioner Nicol commented on the Congressional Fire Service dinner held in Washington. He said there was good representation from the CT Fire Service and thanks to the efforts of Commissioner Kowalski they had an opportunity to visit all the Congressional offices. He said he's been going for a number of years and the attitude is a little different there and he's not sure what's to come but they certainly listened to what we had to say on some of the bills particularly the grant programs. He said it was well worth the trip and if Commissioners have never gone they should make an effort to go and see what goes on there.

Commissioner Kowalski said it was a very busy day there and was well attended but he would like to see a lot more people and if we do then we could do what a lot of states do and sponsor a breakfast or lunch and invite the Congressional folks to come which is a lot easier and you accomplish more. He said we discussed with them the SAFER and AFG grants. He said we're looking to pursue for next year Sprinkler grants in terms of tax credits and also requiring residential sprinklers in single family federal subsidized homes. He said we didn't want to do that this year because of the overall housing industry issues going on right now. He said one comment that was made there which he found interesting was they said a lot of things wouldn't have happened if no one went there and that is the first he's ever heard that comment. He said he continues to receive emails discussing certain areas of our concerns and he also received emails thanking us for coming down to discuss the issues so he thinks it's important that we get down there.

There was a brief discussion on a few items that were brought up at the Caucus Dinner.

Mr. Morrisette reported that a bid opening is scheduled for tomorrow at 1pm in Hartford for Construction of the Burn Building for Hartford County. There was a tremendous response from the potential bidders and there were approximately 24 different companies that attended the pre-bid meetings.

Mr. Morrisette also reported on CPAT. He said most Commissioners are aware we had a tremendous out pouring of applications this winter/spring season. He said we're coming to the conclusion of most of the testing for that however it has generated a problem because we utilize a significant amount of contractors at the CPAT facility. He said we bring these contractors in on Personal Services Agreements (PSA), several dozen people or more to serve as Evaluators and we also supplement as available with Adjunct Instructors to staff the testing. He said because of the numerous days we've had to schedule to meet demand, we've essentially bumped up against the maximum dollar value of each of those contracts so we've run out of eligible contractors and have had to go back to OPM to request an adjustment. They did grant the adjustments, but there's some issue with the contracts and performance periods, etc. He said we're scheduled to meet with three people from the OPM Budget office at the CPAT facility this afternoon to allow them an opportunity to view first hand operations at that facility as well as see firsthand the crumbling facility and need for capital funding. He said if any Commissioner in their travels back today wants to stop at the CPAT facility they expect the OPM staff to be there between 12:30 pm and 1:00 pm.

He also reported that Commissioners may have noticed in the staff report that we had two issues with vendors back in the fall that we could not pay due to purchase orders not being issued prior to their delivery of services. These vendors delivered training during the Haz Mat Week in October. Sadly we've had to direct them to the Office of Claims Commissioner where they will have to seek permission to sue the state to get the money. He said we have the funds and its federal grant money but proper procedures were not followed by staff to secure a purchase order in time. He said we're trying to work with them as closely as possible to help them but it could be another year before they actually get paid, ultimately their claim must be approved by the legislature. Mr. Morrissette stated as a result of this problem we have conducted some staff re-training where we brought in the head of DAS Procurement for a briefing. The lack of a full Business Office here and working remotely through DAS SMART further complicates things.

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

Vice Chairman Kowalski adjourned the meeting at 10:52 am.

Dated:

Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary