



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



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**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 27, 2007 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Blaschik, Dagon, Kowalski, Nicol, Mitchell, Murphy, Stankye, Ouellette and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewis, Lewandowski, Morrissette, McGowan, O'Hurley, Piskura and Singer were present.

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

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

Mr. Morrissette said the only guest was Deputy Chief Dan Nolan from the Hartford Fire Department and a number of staff members who are not typically in attendance.

Chairman Carozza moved to agenda item 1 Introduction of new employee William Trisler.

Mr. Morrissette asked Director of Training Piskura to introduce Mr. Trisler.

Mr. Piskura said we're happy to finally fill the position of Trainer which has been vacant for over a year and a half. He introduced Bill Trisler who is a volunteer firefighter for the Ellington Volunteer fire department and formerly a full-time school teacher. He said we're pleased to have him and look forward to his contributions.

Chairman Carozza extended a welcome on behalf of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and wished Mr. Trisler good luck.

Mr. Morrissette said he's also pleased to recognize three dedicated employees who have or within the next 30 days will attain 15 years of state service.

Kim Singer, Training Registrar, Mark Lewandowski, Deputy Director of Training and Ed O'Hurley, Certification Coordinator were all recognized for fifteen years of loyal and conscientious state service.

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

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to approve the Minutes of the October 30, 2007 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Reports October 15, 2007 - November 14, 2007.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the Staff Reports for the period of October 15, 2007 - November 14, 2007. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were no objections he'd like to move to item 5g. New business.

Moving to item 5g.) MOU between Hartford Fire Department and Connecticut Fire Academy.

Mr. Piskura said he was approached last week by Deputy Chief Nolan of the Hartford fire department asking to use the CFA Burn Building. He said in the past we've used each other's facilities. The Hartford fire department's Burn Building has been out of operation for a while and they are starting a new Recruit class and have reason to use the CFA Burn facility. He asked Deputy Chief Nolan to comment.

Deputy Chief Nolan said in the past the Hartford fire department and the CFA had a hand shake agreement in using each other's facilities. He said he understands that when the state is auditing those types of agreements they need to be comprehensive and complete. He said they typically use the CFA flashover simulator and they have four Recruit classes scheduled for their department over the next year. He said the Hartford fire department will use one Instructor from each facility and most of their Instructors are also affiliated with the CFA and have worked well in past so they hope to continue in the future. He said if the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is adopted by the Commission today the city of Hartford would like to review it and make it an official document.

Commissioner Kowalski said it's good to encourage any type of cooperative arrangement. He asked if this will be a three way arrangement because it's a consolidated fire training school with Hartford County so he assumes that Hartford County would be named in the MOU.

Mr. Piskura said he didn't anticipate that because predominant use of the facility would be during the week days.

Commissioner Kowalski said even though Hartford fire department is part of Hartford County if there is any agreement he thinks we should include representatives at least as a Regional School in the MOU. He said he's sure use of the CFA facilities would be based on priorities when two organizations are vying for the same tool but because it is a consolidated school it would be important to give the Regional school an opportunity to comment on it.

Commissioner Ouellette asked if the MOU is between the CFA or the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that the way it's written now it's titled between the Hartford fire department and the CFA proper but it can be expanded.

There was a discussion on the issue and whether the Hartford County School should be documented in the MOU.

Commissioner Kowalski remarked that he's not trying to complicate the issue but he wants to make sure all parties are involved and he believes this is the only MOU we've ever had with another agency on the use of CFA facility and all the resources we have on the training grounds. He said we don't have any other MOU so we're doing something new here today.

Mr. Morrisette said to clarify that point, typically the CFA or Hartford County would be the service provider but this is a shared services type of agreement and that is why it is documented in more detail than what we typically do.

Commissioner Kowalski said he doesn't believe that we should be limiting the Hartford fire department use schedule. He said if for some unforeseen reason they have the need to do an evening training class or a night fire class they shouldn't be restricted by the MOU. He said as long as everyone is aware of what's going on here, as far as the Regional School we should give the Regional school a place at the table. He said he doesn't foresee a major problem with this and the Hartford fire department should not be restricted to use the facility.

Mr. Morrisette said the language within the MOU addresses that it is on a space available basis and scheduled through the respective entities. We have a very good history of cooperative scheduling.

Commissioner Wilkinson added that it is certainly refreshing to see, that as a state agency and a municipality, a continuation of a cooperative relationship. He said we're all here for each other's joint benefit. He said there's nobody more respectful of the needs of the Regional fire schools than himself and as follow up to Commissioner Kowalski's remarks he would hate to muddy up an MOU such as this with some sort of potential unseen implication which would obligate the city of Hartford to provide resources or manpower to assist activities that would occur nights and weekends when they might not be in a financial position to do so. He said an MOU is something that could be built upon down the road so that if there was a need on a regional basis to provide large fire training perhaps some sort of agreement could be worked out in the future with the city of Hartford for a nominal fee and the city could be reimbursed for the cost of manpower that might be required to open up and secure the facility. He suggested strongly that the Commission proceed with the MOU as presented and keep the door open for future expansion as the need becomes evident.

Chairman Carozza asked whether the legal counsel at the city of Hartford would change all the wording.

Deputy Chief Nolan remarked that both parties have to be in agreement. He said he wanted to keep it simple but now it has to be documented and before the document is adopted both parties must fully agree on it and it can be terminated within 30 days if it doesn't come to that agreement.

Mr. Morrisette added that based upon Deputy Chief Nolan's comments, this is conceptual in nature and we are collectively trying to push forward that concept because of timing issues. Therefore, the final MOU may look a bit different but the shared services concept is what is being formalized through the MOU.

Commissioner Dagon asked if the Commission is being asked to authorize a continued process for a final agreement to be reached sometime in the future.

Mr. Piskura remarked that in the past a phone call between the two entities would have been sufficient but with all the increased focus whether from the state Auditors or the office of State Ethics he wants to be able to document what we're doing and the Commission's concurrence.

Commissioner Nicol asked if we have an obligation or responsibility to have our attorneys review the document and if so have we done that.

Mr. Morrisette said no but the basic framework is very similar to what we've proposed or presented in the past for similar issues.

Mr. Piskura said typically an MOU is less formal than a contract therefore it's not treated as a contract and as long as the parties are in agreement it's generally acceptable. This particular MOU was constructed by the CFA staff and that's why it's here before the Commission.

Commissioner Kowalski remarked that if this is just a notification to move forward then he doesn't feel a motion is in order.

Chairman Carozza added that he believes Deputy Chief Nolan is looking for approval by the Commission to move forward.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Dagon and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson that the Commission proceed with formalizing the shared services agreement between the Connecticut Fire Academy and the Hartford Fire Department.

Commissioner Kowalski amended the motion and asked that a notification to Regional Schools be included in the MOU.

Mr. Piskura added that based on that logic we would also have to add Bradley International Airport because they are also one of the three entities that utilizes the facility.

Commissioner Ouellette remarked that there is a **MOTION** on the floor.

Chairman Carozza said he would take a vote on the **AMENDMENT** first.

The **AMENDMENT** was defeated.

Chairman Carozza moved back to the original motion. **MOTION** carried.

Commissioner Kowalski voted nay on the **MOTION**.

Chairman Carozza asked if there were no objections we would move to item 5h CPCU Donation.

Mr. Morrisette said we have another guest to introduce at today's meeting. He introduced Alyce D'Angelo from the Connecticut Chapter Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters (CPCU) who is here today to present a donation to the agency.

Ms. D'Angelo said the CT Chapter of CPCU Good Works Committee is always cognizant of touching the lives of children and families in need and they appreciate all the work the CFA does in training firefighters and emergency services personnel who protect our communities and put their lives on the line for us on a daily basis. She said she is personally delighted to present to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control a check for \$1,000 for the purchase of training materials.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that we're very appreciative for the donation.

Chairman Carozza expressed thanks on behalf of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Chairman Carozza returned to unfinished business item 4a.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrisette gave an update regarding the budget. As noted, our mid-term budget adjustment expansion items were all rejected. He said he was told there will be very few agencies where expansion items were accepted based upon the projection of the state revenues and the spending cap. He said the Reallocation Option regarding the establishment of a full-time custodial position is still being considered and he's hopeful that request will be approved based upon the fact that there is projected savings in that particular option. He also reported regarding the budget that the Capital Equipment Purchase Fund (CEPF) was finally approved although they are running a year late so the funding we will receive is actually FY07 funding which was just approved by the Bond Commission about two weeks ago in the amount of \$300,800. He said this will cover equipment needs specifically those items having value of over \$1,000 and having a useful lifespan of five years or greater. Data processing equipment having a value of below \$1,000 may also be procured using this funding source. He said the staff is reviewing the original list of equipment identified as part of our budget proposal and have prioritized that list so we will be putting that forward to request the funding in the near future. He said there is no telling when the FY08 funding may be available that will total \$270,000. Currently we have a very small balance of under \$1,000 remaining in our CEPF so this infusion is very much needed.

Mr. Morrisette also reported regarding staffing. He said it was reported that the Assistant Bookstore Supervisor position list should be promulgated today so we should receive it for review and scheduling of interviews for candidates. He said we've also advertised a Storekeeper position which goes along with one of the recommendation in the Audit Report. We were approved for that position as reported last month. The closing date for applicants for that particular position is November 30th.

Mr. Morrisette also reported that we're fast approaching the third quarter of the fiscal year and we'll soon begin processing the allotment for the Regional Fire Schools. He asked Commissioners if they had any questions regarding budget or staffing.

Commissioner Nicol asked if the Budget Reduction Option was rejected.

Mr. Morrisette said no it is the proposed Budget Expansion items that were rejected. The Budget Reduction Option was accepted as proposed hopefully it will not need to be enacted.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson stated he has a very brief report. He said the committee hadn't met in a couple of months predominantly because there's been no significant movement on any of the projects. He said he's not sure if he reported previously that they learned that due to the prolonged legal review process that the state requires the proposed land for the new Valley School in Oxford was lost. The current owner moved on another proposal so they are back to square one looking for a site. He said on a positive note the Bond issue log jam did clear up and the committee was in line for \$20 million dollars in this current two year cycle. We were very gratified to find out that when it does settle we've been authorized for \$18 million and considering the impact that many of the other requests suffered we're very fortunate to move forward with the \$18 million dollar allocation.

Moving to item 4c.) FY08 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette reported regarding the Supplemental Grant program. He said he had a full accounting but did not have it available at the meeting. There are still about 26 fire companies that have not responded to make a selection on how they wish to receive their funding so there have been improvements since our last meeting. He said he knows several Commissioners have made calls or contacted fire companies in their area and we're doing exceptionally well.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry-Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Entry-Level Training Reimbursements. He said thus far we have encumbered \$203,129.50 worth of pre-approved training and we've paid out just under \$30,000 for training that has been completed. He said we're almost half-way through the fiscal year and we've only used about one third of the funding that was made available to us. He said he's sure with a new training season beginning in the January and February timeframe we'll begin receiving more reimbursement requests but it appears based upon early projections we may not spend the entire \$750,000 allotment. He asked Commissioners for any assistance they can provide in promoting the program. He said obviously we're also promoting the program internally and all the forms and policies are available for download from our website.

Moving to item 5a.) 2008 Commission Meeting Proposed Schedule – Mr. Morrisette said Commissioners should have received in this month's packet the proposed schedule for the Commission's meetings during calendar year 2008. He said we're required to submit that to the Secretary of the State's office in the near future.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye that the proposed 2008 Commission meeting schedule be accepted. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5b.) December Meeting Status - Mr. Morrisette stated our normal course of action for the December meeting is to keep that as an optional meeting should we have a need to meet. He said at this time it appears there is no need for a meeting so we would like to formally cancel the December meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Ouellette and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to cancel the December Commission meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5c.) OSFM Office Request – Mr. Morrisette asked Commissioner Blaschik to comment on this item. Commissioner Blaschik remarked that he had been in conversations with Mr. Morrisette about Trooper John Sawyer who is responsible for the Advance Arson Investigation class and the Vehicle Fire Investigation class delivered here at the Academy. He said Trooper Sawyer resides in this area and it would be helpful if additional office space was available that it be made available to Trooper Sawyer. He also stated that down the road they would like to better partner in the Public and Life Safety Education and the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention arenas. He said they are not looking to take over an office rather have a desk available when he is in the area.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if we have the space.

Mr. Morrisette said we were looking at possibly cohabitating Trooper Sawyer with the Honor Guard who currently occupies one of the dorm rooms upstairs. He said at the present time he doesn't see it as an issue as Trooper Sawyer is typically only here one or two days a week and he gets along very well with the staff.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approved the OSFM's request to share office space utilized by the Statewide Honor Guard or other appropriate area at the Connecticut Fire Academy. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5d.) Auditors Final Report FY 04, 05 and 06 – Mr. Morrisette said Commissioners should have received a copy of the Auditor's final report for FY 04, 05 and 06 prior to today's meeting. He said he was hoping Commissioners had an opportunity to review the report and he is open to respond to any specific questions Commissioners may have regarding any of the eight recommendations. He said as noted in the report several of the recommendations are repeats from previous audit periods. We acknowledge the deficiencies noted and we would struggle to try to attain full compliance without adequate staffing. He said from a spirit standpoint we have no issue with the report, for actual compliance we're doing our best in all cases to comply. He said a few of the items are Bookstore related and we're moving as fast as we can, specifically regarding the Point-of-Sale software and some internal procedural issues as it relates to inventory. He said Mr. Piskura can provide details on those if Commissioners would like that. He also said timely deposits are a function of staffing especially during peak periods when key personnel may be out of the office. In the past we have requested waivers from the state Treasurer's office. He said it appears since our Business Office staffing was depleted and we no longer have a Business Office manager we did not have

a standing waiver on file with the Treasurer's office for one of the FY years audited. He said with the downsizing of the Business Office there isn't a focal point or a manager who can oversee and be responsible for the daily operations. He said DAS SMART Business Office staff in Hartford should be ultimately responsible for management of our Business functions. The other big area requiring addressing is the inventory issue. He said we're a little more confident now with the approval of a Storekeeper position and it is our anticipation once an individual is hired, while it is a fairly low level position in terms of salary, there is a huge responsibility that comes with it which is to establish the baseline for our agency inventory. This will probably take six or more months to accomplish once the individual is trained. He said once that is complete the selected candidate would essentially serve as the day-to-day Quartermaster in the Training Division. Mr. Morrissette also said there was one recommendation relating to Compensation Time for Managers and the lack of pre-approval. He said we have implemented a pre-approval procedure not only for Rank and File Overtime but also for our Director of Training. He said in discussion with the Governor's Office it came to his attention the State Fire Administrator will no longer be eligible for compensatory time. He said the final deficiency noted was the misclassification of a position within the Bookstore in which we were utilizing a part-time Fire Service Instructor position to assist in that endeavor. The Bookstore position that was approved will take care of that issue. He said for the most part we are moving forward with the recommendations which have been identified and we're confident we can comply. He said the only other outstanding issue relating to agency inventory is there is an annual state form (CO-59) that needs to be submitted which was formally the responsibility of our Business Office manager. He said that form has not been submitted in two years and we've reached out to the SMART unit in Hartford as they are supposed to be responsible for that and they indicated they cannot do it. He said we really have to have a meeting to determine a course of action. There are some issues that the Auditors found that some of the numbers in a previous CO-59 submittal just don't seem to balance so we need to bring in our former Fiscal Administrative Supervisor as well as someone from the SMART unit to try and reconcile what the differences are and reestablish a base point for moving forward. He said that's probably the most pressing issue because it was due several months ago.

There was a brief discussion on the issue.

Moving to item 5e.) Affirmative Action Plan – Mr. Morrissette said he probably should have deferred this item for a later date but we have finalized our Agency's Affirmative Action Plan. He said it is the first formal plan mandated by the state and although he doesn't have a copy for Commissioners yet as it is actually going through a final approval process by both the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities and the Legislature. He said we are afforded the services of a part-time Affirmative Action Officer out of the SMART unit in Hartford who comes for a half a day every other month. He said now that the Plan is finalized and awaiting approval he'll probably go to quarterly visits with the agency but there are follow-ups and he's following up on our hiring and recruiting practices for positions. He said collectively we came up with a very good product and there is a lot of interesting data so as soon as the final Plan is approved we will make it available for Commissioners to access. He said he wanted to keep the Commission up to date on that because it was a statutory requirement that we submit the Plan by the end of November.

Moving to item 5f.) Authorization for Administration of FFI/FFII Certification Examination – Mr. Morrissette asked Director of Certification to follow-up on this item. He said at one time the Commission had the sole responsibility to authorize the Certification Division to administer combined FFI and FFII examinations categorized as Recruit. He said internally we pre-approve our own programs however if we have requests from external programs those need to be approved individually. We have three requests before us today from the city of Bridgeport, Hartford and Waterbury who are all in the process of running Recruit programs. He said all three departments are looking to comply with the Recruit requirements for the reimbursements and as such they would like to be tested very similar to the process utilized here within the Academy's Recruit program. Simply this would entail combined practical and written examinations. He said based upon a previous vote taken by the Commission those requests need to be presented for approval.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if these are all going to be consistent testing and whether the tests will be to the same standards.

Mr. McGowan said yes.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to approve the Certification Division to administer a combined FFI and FFII examination for the Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury fire departments. Motion carried

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Commissioner Blaschik reported that his division at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) has selected a new director Rob Ross. He said most Commissioners know Mr. Ross was an adjunct instructor here at the CFA and was formerly the fire Chief of Middletown and most recently was the fire chief for the South Fire District in Middletown. He said Mr. Ross began work the day after Thanksgiving. He said he thinks Mr. Ross will be an asset to the DPS and he looks forward to working with him.

Commissioner Wilkinson expressed appreciation on behalf of his entire family for the many kind words and cards he received when his mom passed away.

Commissioner Nicol reported that the Minutes of the meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Association of State Fire Commissions were distributed today and the report can stand as it is. He said Connecticut will be hosting the conference in 2010 so we should begin thinking of what we're going to do for the conference as far as size, programs, etc. He said he briefly spoke to Mr. Morrissette already and he's not sure how we should proceed but maybe after the beginning of the New Year we can discuss the issue at one of the Commission meetings.

Mr. McGowan reported on the following items for the Certification Division.

The Commission has received formal recognition both in the form of an email and letter from the ProBoard that we've have been reaccredited for the next five years. He said a

formal presentation will be made in Tampa in January and they've made arrangements for him to attend. He said he's waiting for a final report of their recommendations and concerns and he'll bring that to the Commission's attention when that occurs.

Mr. McGowan also said that they worked with the staff in putting together the Training Calendar for next year and he wanted to formally thank Mr. Piskura for allowing them to help in that opportunity. He said they've been able to add a couple of new information items that further promote Certification within the Training Calendar. He said one of the recommendations or concern was a change in the prerequisite for any of the Rescue Technician Courses. In the past we've allowed Medical Response Technician (MRT) to be involved with that process as students in that certification. He said we're recognizing that because of some of the stipulations requested for certification that MRT's are not capable of holding those concerns. He said formally we're talking about Spinal immobilization and Backboard immobilization that is required for part of the certification. He said MRT's are not trained to that level and we do not train for the inside training component for any of the Rescue competencies so we're looking to and we've already changed the minimum status for certification at least to the EMT level. He said we're looking at it from a liability standpoint not only for the firefighter but also for the Commission. He said legally, if we offer this as part of the Certification process the firefighter may believe that they can perform these skills in the field and if they mishandle the situation it opens us up to scrutiny. Therefore, we have removed that as one of the prerequisites.

Commissioner Kowalski remarked that he feels that will impact the program. He asked if we're aware if anyone in the medical community is looking at this and coming up with something like an MRT plus or something below the EMT level.

Mr. McGowan said he believes we might write a formal request to the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) and ask them if they might consider changing their concerns for that.

There was a discussion on the issue with some questions and answers. It was mentioned that OEMS' attitude towards any request to add another level of certification may not be positive.

Mr. McGowan also reported some changes to be made to the NFPA 472 standards. He said they are looking to change the Haz Mat block of learning and certification to about eight different levels of certification and make it very specialized in some areas. He said he and Mr. Piskura have had discussions with the Program Managers about grabbing a hold of this and Mr. Piechota also has some deep concerns about the correlations that would have to be made.

Commissioner Blaschik asked if we make any effort to have representation from the Commission or staff on those NFPA committees.

Mr. Morrissette replied that from time to time we've had representation on various NFPA Technical Committees but he's not sure where we stand currently. He said Mr. Piechota had previously represented the agency on two committees.

Mr. Piskura also added that we've had a few adjuncts that have been on NFPA committees. He said mostly we rely upon self identification and if someone says they would like to be involved with a committee we try to support it.

Mr. Piskura reminded Commissioners that Recruit graduation of the first 14 week class is scheduled for 10 am on December 20th and it would be nice if we could have a few Commissioners present to show support as he will not be able to attend. He said it will be held in the Theatre of the Performing Arts in a state of the art facility at the Learning Corridor in Hartford. There is an attached parking garage for guests.

Mr. Morrisette added that he's scheduled for Jury duty that day and will not know until the night before whether he has to report or not, so he may not be in attendance at the Graduation.

Chairman Carozza extended to the staff and Commissioners present a very happy, enjoyable and safe holiday season.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:40 am.

Dated:

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