



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



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**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 30, 2007 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Commissioner Nicol called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blaschik, Dagon, Mitchell, Murphy, Stankye, Ouellette and Walsh.

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

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

Commissioner Richard Nicol chaired the meeting in absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Nicol welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Megan Murphy of Trumbull to the meeting. Fire Marshal Murphy will be representing the Connecticut Fire Marshal's Association (CFMA) filling the position of former Commissioner Richard Morris.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the September 25, 2007 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to approve the Minutes of the September 25, 2007 meeting. Motion carried.

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

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

Moving to item 5a.) Incident Management Teams Overview (Chief Baldwin)
Commissioner Nicol said there are guests present and the agenda would be adjusted to accommodate them. He asked Chief Tim Baldwin, Chair of the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Incident Management Team Committee (IMT) to introduce himself and the other members of the Committee who were present. Members of the IMT Committee were identified as Doug Whalen, Don Moore, Michael Kronick, Nick DeLia and Jeff Chandler. Chief Baldwin stated that the IMT Committee was established to make recommendations to the DEMHS Coordinating Council and DEMHS Commissioner regarding the creation, training and support of a minimum of five (5) Type IV regional incident management teams and one Type III statewide incident management team, with the goal of enhancing and supporting Incident Command in the use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

All six teams will be certified by DEMHS. He distributed copies of a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission and said the presentation is an update as to where they are today.

Chief DeLia gave an overview of the IMT project. He said the Incident Management Committee is composed of 15 representatives from fire, law enforcement, emergency management, Hartford Hospital and DEP. He said it is a very diverse multi-discipline group that has been working very well. Incident Management Teams provides a high level of command and general staff response to major incidents and can be established on a local, regional or state basis. There are five Type IV teams, one for each region and one Type III statewide team. Chief DeLia said that the IMT's have been very instrumental in maintaining accountability and resource management at several incidents around the state. Some examples of assignment and activations of the team were the TOPOFF 3 exercise, Interroyal Factory Fire in Plainfield in 2005, 2006 Thames River Fireworks, and National Propane 4th Alarm Fire in Norwich. The team can also be used to support EMAC requests, Haz-Mat drills and Regional Public Health drills. Chief DeLia said Type V, IV and III teams are not intended to take over any incident but are available to support the Incident Command System already in place and fill any voids that are necessary. Type I and II go in and takes over the incident. He also said the IMT project may provide assistance with Planning, Logistics and Finance. The Planning section is responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources. The Logistics section is responsible for providing facilities, services and materials for the incident. The Finance section is responsible for all financial, administrative and cost analysis aspects of the incident. He said the system is intended to work from the bottom up or the top down so if the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated for an emergency it can flow down from the fire side through the State Fire Administrator and the State fire mobilization plan or the other way through the emergency management side through the local emergency management director or DEMHS Area Coordinator and then into the EOC. He said that is where they are at the state level and they've had tremendous cooperation. He said there have been some interesting debates on how to make it work for the different disciplines.

Chief Baldwin added that they are currently in the process of putting together the written plan so they have the tools for the Type IV and V development to work from. He said the team still needs to work out some activation issues. Once the plan is written it will require legal review by DEMHS. He said they are in the process of getting the word out to the different regions. One obstacle they've been faced with is the training keeps on changing out of Washington and Emmitsburg. He said they plan to move forward with getting the teams developed and then they will begin doing some catch up as far as the training.

There was a brief discussion with some questions and answers.

Commissioner Nicol welcomed Chief Denis McCarthy of the Norwalk Fire Department to the meeting. Chief McCarthy is here to give an overview of the FDNY FireZone concept.

Moving to item 5e.) FireZone Proposal (Chief McCarthy) – Chief McCarthy stated that he had a conversation with Mr. Morrisette about a week ago regarding a project he’s working on and found out that it is something the Commission had previously dealt with and had been interested in back in 2001. He said he had an interest in the FireZone in New York when he went and visited in 2005. FireZone is New York City’s state-of-the-art fire safety educational center that is operated by an educational foundation that is connected to the New York City fire department. The FDNY FireZone provides fire safety education for anyone that visits New York City. The FireZone occupies approximately 2,700 square feet of space that was given to them by Rockefeller Center. He said they conduct tours for school groups and are open to the public and is very successful. There is a store associated with it that is operated separately that sells hats, memorabilia, etc. The proceeds from the whole operation not only support the venue but also provide training money for the NYFD for special projects. It is a very popular interactive fire safety education center. He said he traveled to New York City and met with Jean O’Shea, Executive Director of the FireZone to express his interest. He said Ms. O’Shea said there is no franchise and she would give him everything simply because they are interested in fire safety. He said they have a couple of development projects in Norwalk and some popular tourist attractions like the Stepping Stone Museum which is an interactive educational program primarily focused on energy and technology and attracts approximately 2000 visitors yearly. The Maritime is also very popular. There is a new development, about 20 acres, that is intended to be a destination pedestrian mall. He said he had met with the developer and suggested the FireZone concept. He said that New York City spent about two and half million dollars to develop their site and he expect the cost of the project in Norwalk to be about one and half million dollars and some of the start up cost would not have to be on this project. There is going to be a lot of corporate involvement at every level from the design and implementation to corporate sponsorship and that is where the bulk of the work will need to be done. He said he envisions this as a regional project that goes beyond the scope of the Norwalk fire department and the Commission’s support of this project would help add some weight to the project and give it validity. He said he hopes to draw on expertise from people around the state. He said having the Commission’s support of the project would allow them to reach out to interested parties across the state to set up a foundation and he leaves the concept as a discussion item for the Commission to consider sponsorship and assume a leadership role.

Mr. Morrisette proposed that the Commission support the concept.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Blaschik and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Dagon that the Commission support the concept of the FireZone project and provide whatever resource available. As the project develops the concept would have to go back before the Commission to approve new resources. Motion carried.

Chief McCarthy thanked the Commission for their support and stated that he and Mr. Morrisette will have further discussions and will keep the Commission informed on the progress of the project.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrisette stated regarding the budget, he had provided a lot of details in the staff report and there were handouts detailing the Budget Expansion and Reallocation Options he had submitted to OPM. He

said he is looking to see if there are any questions the Commission may have. He also said the Administration is projecting a small surplus this fiscal year so we'll have to see how these options are viewed and supported by OPM and the Administration.

Commissioner Brady asked if we're actually eliminating the Supplemental Grant Program to fulfill the Reduction Option or is it part of the contingency.

Mr. Morrisette replied that it is the Reduction Option that was discussed last month and would be done as a contingency and only if necessary.

Mr. Morrisette asked Director of Training Piskura to provide an update on staffing and the Trainer selection.

Mr. Piskura reported that after a year and a half vacancy, William Trisler has accepted the Trainer position. Mr. Trisler's has had significant certifications and firefighting responsibilities in the United States Navy. He is currently employed as a contract worker for the Navy in Springfield, MA. He is also a current volunteer firefighter in Ellington and an instructor for the Hartford County Regional Fire School. Mr. Piskura said he's already committed to an ethics program which he's offered to existing staff. Mr. Trisler will commence employment in November and we'll introduce him to the Commission at the next meeting.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Stankye reported on behalf of the Education Committee. The Education Committee met in Stamford and they showed off their newly renovated classroom space. He said as far as the Committee goes nothing has changed and the bonding package is still up in the air. He said nothing is going to happen until the Legislature gets moving again. The Valley school lost out on the land they had planned to purchase because the owner could not wait for the state any longer and sold the land to someone else. He said they are back to seeking out properties again.

Moving to item 4c.) FY 08 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette reported regarding the Supplemental Grant program. He said there are still about 35 fire companies that have not responded making a selection. He said 73 fire companies selected direct payment and 51 selected vouchers. He said checks will be issued today to the 73 fire companies. He distributed a list showing the companies that haven't responded to us and asked Commissioners to reach out to them. He said we're about a week ahead of last year in terms of processing the direct payments.

Commissioner Brady requested the list be emailed to Commissioners.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry Level Training Reimbursement – Mr. Morrisette reported that he doesn't have an updated accounting as of today but we did mail out to all the fire chiefs information related to the Entry Level Training Reimbursement program. He said because of meetings and disseminating the Pre-Authorization form we have begun to receive a number of requests for either reimbursement or pre-authorization. He said all the background information related to this program is on the Commission's website including the original letter of transmittal to fire chiefs, the pre-authorization reimbursement form and the policy document. Therefore, if Commissioners are asked

questions they can direct people to the website to download related information. He also said if there are any questions people can contact him, Yvonne Lewis or Ed Bycenski in our Business Office. He also stated that under new business we will have a brief discussion regarding some of the issues we are facing specifically as it relates to Recruit training equivalency and whether or not a particular department should be reimbursed at the Recruit level.

Commissioner Nicol asked if there is any idea as to the financial commitment on the program in terms of how much we've encumbered thus far.

Mr. Morrisette said he doesn't have the accounting because the spreadsheet hasn't been finalized as of yet but if he had to estimate it would be somewhere between \$100,000 and \$200,000.

Moving to item 5b.) Recruit Training Equivalency – Mr. Morrisette said this is not an issue as it relates to determination of FFI as we granted blanket approval to the Regional Fire Schools for their deliveries. Fire departments basically submit the approved pre-approved reimbursement forms at the conclusion of the program and attach an invoice to the form. He said we've had approximately six local fire departments deliver training programs and what we're asking these departments for is a syllabus and a letter from the fire chief documenting the per person cost which could be inclusive of instructor salaries consumables, testing fees, etc. He said we're not looking for detailed financials but we're telling them that we have the option to audit further. Mr. Morrisette said the issue we're facing is with the Recruit firefighter training. A number of departments have already begun training or are planning to begin classes very soon. He used Bridgeport as an example that they did not include FF II in their recently offered program. They offered FFI and some specialty programs. He said he sat down with Mr. Piskura and Mr. Lewandowski to try to review their syllabus but they came to a crossroads where they weren't quite sure if they had the ability or authorization to prorate training. He said the statute basically say FFI or Recruit so if they are presenting their course syllabus as equivalent to Recruit and they are only certifying personnel to the FFI level along with some specialty training and not FFII is that considered the same as Recruit? He said he contacted the Office of Fiscal Analysis to try to identify whether or not they have the ability to render some legal opinion and the Budget Analyst he spoke to made the point that her read of the statute is "it is no more or no less than the CFA Recruit Firefighter Training". He said he spoke to the Hartford and Waterbury fire departments and he believes Waterbury fire department will be adding FF II to their program and Hartford will as well so it's less of an issue at this point; however he's still stuck with the Bridgeport proposal. He said our Associate Attorney General has been deployed with the military and his back-up is relatively over-burdened and he's not had the opportunity to meet to discuss it in more detail but the general feeling is that the Commission established a policy upfront. He is not sure whether we need to better define Recruit or should we actually look at prorating some of the components and try to assign dollar values, or do we just want to reiterate that it must consist of the CFA components with the foundation being FF I and FF II. He said he brings this to the Commission for discussion and if we need to get a formal legal opinion we can.

Commissioner Walsh remarked that he thinks it's time the Commission state what the required training is. He said if the state is doing FFI and FF II then the municipality

should do the same. He said too often it's about how fast you can do the training and what can be cut out of it. He said whatever level the CFA is doing the municipality should be delivering at the same level.

Commissioner Ouellette said basically we came up with guidelines based upon the Legislation that was passed and if we start changing that we're looking for trouble. He said everyone was well informed ahead of time what the guidelines are and if a municipality wants to do FFI that is their decision and that is the reimbursement they would receive.

Commissioner Brady added that it is the Commission's purview to dictate to a municipality what their Recruit level training should be. He said maybe Bridgeport fire department is comfortable with the level they are getting out of that program.

Commissioner Walsh asked if we're mandating or simply steering them towards it.

Commissioner Dagon said he feels the policy the Commission developed is reasonable and if they weren't then we would have an obligation to look at them. He said the Commission should take the position that the policy is reasonable and the expectation is that departments should offer the same level of training if they want to be reimbursed. He also said the other thing we should look at is if there is a real hardship on the part of a department in providing the level of training that we expect in order to be reimbursed.

A brief discussion followed with some questions and answers.

Mr. Morrissette added that until we can formally publish each component of Recruit Training program we are probably going to be a little bit more liberal and flexible in terms of approving requests.

Moving to item 5c.) Rescue Technician Core Certification - Mr. McGowan stated that several complaints were expressed to the Training and Certification Divisions regarding a CORE competency practical examination. He said the Smart triage component had a change in how it's done in the state of Connecticut. Upon review and after considering the concerns of those who failed one skill work station, it was determined that a single opportunity certification retake would be necessary. He proposed that the Training Division offer appropriate training for the candidates who did not successfully meet the requirements for the practical skill. Following the training, the Certification Division will offer a one-time non-precedent setting test. Six individuals will be identified and notified to contact a Program Manager to make arrangements. The Certification Division will make changes to the skill station to reflect the state Department of Public Health's direction with the subject matter.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to support the proposal presented by the Certification Division to resolve the issue.

Commissioner Nicol asked Mr. McGowan to report on the Commission's site visit by the ProBoard.

Mr. McGowan stated that Commissioners Nicol and Kowalski participated in the site visit. He said as part of the site visit the ProBoard has a responsibility to have a brief conversation with them to see how the Commission as a ProBoard entity serves the customer. He said he's happy to say as a result of those conversations, as well as the site visit team's overall responsibility of viewing the facilities, reviewing our records, procedures and a whole host of other things they will be making a recommendation at their November board meeting to reaccredit the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control to full status. He said there were a couple of minor situations as any good site visit team would want to relay to us and we've already made some adjustments. He thanked Commissioner Nicol and acknowledged Commissioner Kowalski for their assistance.

Moving to item 5d.) Donations to the Agency – Mr. Piskura stated that we've had a very active physical training program as part of the Recruit program and Commissioners may remember an earlier Ethics Law prohibited donations to state agencies. That law was changed during the last Legislative session and now permits donations. He said we have some motivated people in the physical training program that wanted to enhance the program so they secured donations of truck tires and bricks. He said he wanted to document through the Commission that we formally accept these donations so we have a public record in case we're audited the items were officially accepted by the Commission. He said he'd be happy to answer any questions Commissioners may have.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to accept the donation and send a thank you letter. 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 – Mr. Morrisette reported that Commissioner Wilkinson's mother passed away. He said he believes the arrangements are being made for the wake on Friday and a funeral on Saturday. A card was circulated for Commissioners to sign.

Mr. Morrisette also reported that the Department of Labor forwarded to him a draft copy of the brochure detailing minors participating as members of junior, cadet and Explorer programs. The document indicates it also covers issues related to EMS and law enforcement related programs. He said he was asked last week by an individual that they didn't see any EMS language in terms of EMT's etc and what activities they can perform. He said the brochure doesn't appear to include that information rather just all the items Commissioners Brady and Kowalski had worked out with them. He said he would forward the document to Commissioners for review and if there are any comments he's sure the DOL would like them before they go to print the final document.

He also reported that we will be receiving the final Audit report. He said the draft Audit report was presented about three weeks ago and he had consulted with Chairman Carozza to determine whether we would request a formal exit interview. He said their discussion was they didn't feel it was necessary so the report should be issued in the next week or two so Commissioners should receive a copy by the next Commission meeting. He said the report does not cover any of the issues we had discussed a few months ago under Executive Session. He said he personally had some discussions with an Auditor over

specific questions of concern and he's not sure where that's headed but it appears that they may hold it until the next Audit period 12 to 18 months from now. He said he will keep Commissioners informed.

Commissioner Nicol said the Memorial Service held at the Academy this past Sunday was well planned and extended thanks to the staff for a job well done.

Commissioner Blaschik thanked Commissioners and staff for all their cards and support when he lost his brother. He said it was very much appreciated.

Commissioner Stankye remarked that he noticed the new informational display sign installed near the Memorial. He said it looks good and thanked the UPFFA for the donation.

Mr. Piskura distributed to Commissioners copies of the Freedom of Information Commission's *Highlights of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act* which contains guidelines to be followed relative to freedom of information requests. He said the most valuable information he found out is that once a request is received you have four days to respond to the request. He said it's not four days to respond with the information being requested but you have to acknowledge receipt of the request and what you are going to do with it.

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

Commission Nicol adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.

Dated:

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