



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



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**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2007 MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blaschik, Dagon, Kowalski, Mitchell, Nicol, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

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

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

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the August 28, 2007 meeting and the June 26, 2007 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the Minutes of the August 28, 2007 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Reports August 15, 2007 - September 14, 2007 –

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

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette gave an overview on activity regarding the budget. He said we're in the mid-term budget adjustment process. The initial deadline for development of technical adjustments has passed. He said technical adjustments are limited to any statutory mandates like bringing on a new facility, new equipment, etc. so we're very limited in terms of what we can request. He said he had outlined in the staff report three items that we requested as technical adjustments for FY09. The additions were request for additional funding for either overtime or a part-time position to administer the Entry Level Fire Service Training Reimbursement program. He said as he had shared with Commissioners before, as part of the initial fiscal impact statement he had shared with OFA information that we could take the program but recommended funding for staff support which never made it into the fiscal impact statement. If approved, a half position would be \$40,770 salary and benefits. Mr. Morrissette also stated that in error, OPM inadvertently reduced some of our Other Expense funding specifically for custodial services. He said he had put together an adjustment proposal to them to move away from contractual custodial support to a full-time custodian and that would have resulted in a savings. Unfortunately, they took the savings away but never made the adjustment so we're requesting that funding of \$5,985 be restored. He also reported that we're going to take delivery of two new support trucks funded through CEPF so we had requested \$3,000 to help support vehicle

maintenance. Our total Technical Adjustment request was \$49,756 for FY09 and \$52,201 for FY10.

Mr. Morrissette reported that the next deadline we are facing has to do with Expansion Options and Reduction Options. He said OPM prefers agencies limit new spending and any formal requests must be pre-approved by the Secretary of OPM, Robert Genuario. He said he is developing a proposal for consideration. The first relates to a Reallocation option of moving funds from our Other Expense account for contractual custodial activity and bring on board a full-time custodian which we believe would provide the flexibility we need to accomplish what needs to be done. He said we would still need a small contract for weekends, nights and when the full-time body would not be here. A small cost savings would result as part of this proposal. The other area relates to an IT position. He said we've been struggling for years in terms of undertaking most of our IT support internally. We have contracts in place for hardware support through a vendor which can sometimes takes days to have that person respond. The other contract we have is with a software vendor who maintains our database. He said we finally have some support from the Department of Information Technology (DoIT). Upon meeting with them two weeks ago their team that came out looked over the agency in depth and developed a justification statement that supports establishment of a full-time IT position. Mr. Morrissette said Commissioners are probably all aware of the issues related to Laptop security, databases and mobile computing devices which relates to cell phones. He said he's spent a significant amount of time the last week reporting on a number of issues; as soon as one report is submitted we receive another request for information. He said it's a full-time job being supported on a part-time basis. He also reported that as part of the DoIT activity that we had discussions and there were concerns on the part of DoIT that our database is essentially a product which does not meet state standards. He said they would like to see us transition to something which is DoIT compliant. DoIT is also suggesting we transfer other parts of our IT services like our Server which we maintain here at the agency down to Hartford for them to maintain. He said with that comes a cost estimated at \$350,000, but is something he plans to use to look to begin the Budget Expansion process.

Commissioner Mitchell arrived at 9:40 AM.

Mr. Morrissette also reported regarding Budget Reduction Option which is probably a bit more serious as it relates to the Governor's request that we develop a 5% budget reduction option. He said typically as Commissioners are all aware these are what we typically view as exercises. He said we distributed three options for discussion today in terms of proposals and he hopes that this is just an exercise. For the current fiscal year we had to put together a 10% reduction option so 5% shouldn't be too difficult. One of the issues however relates to the fact that we now have the Regional Fire school line items as part of our budget and that amounts to over \$800,000 or 19.5% of our total agency budget. The entire budget is subject to a budget reduction and the 5% is very significant to the agency. He said he had a brief discussion with Commissioner Wilkinson and said for this exercise he thought it was important to begin working into a mindset that they may have to become at some point a part of a reduction plan and solution. He said Commissioners will note that we have three options, two of which includes proposed cuts to the Regional Fire schools' operating budgets. He said he also had a discussion with Al Hawkins, Chairman of the Education Committee regarding this

and he understands the need to do that. Mr. Morrisette said what he is very sensitive to is these budget reduction issues, especially as it relates to the EMS side by the Department of Public Health (DPH). In the past, often times they looked solely at their Regional EMS Councils to absorb a significant part of any funding reduction. He said as part of our operations, we're not going to single out the Regional Fire schools like DPH which he thinks was disastrous politically. Reductions should be shared in an equitable manner. He said with that in mind, we always have the fall back of the Supplemental Grant Award program. The 5% budget reduction option amounts to \$212,000 and elimination of the grant program amounts to \$200,000 so Option 1 is very little pain to the agency and no impact to Regional Fire schools. Option 2 reduces the Supplemental Grant program by \$100,000 and then we have other reductions to Regional Fire schools for the balance. The third option is an across the board 5% reduction that would spread across every line item with the exception of the \$200,000. Mr. Morrisette said in terms of his requirement to submit a 5% budget reduction option he recommends Option 1. He said he added the other Options as an opportunity to open dialogue on the issue. He said he would like to entertain any questions or discussions Commissioners may have regarding these options. He is also available to work out any other scenarios if that would be of any help.

Commissioner Ouellette arrived at 9:55 AM.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if there is anything the Commission can do in discussing the additional administrative support.

Mr. Morrisette replied that the main thing is for Commissioners to be aware.

Commissioner Kowalski also asked if we anticipate in the future that the current \$750,000 that is being added to our budget for the entry level firefighter training reimbursement will be reflected in us having to reduce the bottom line by an additional 5%.

Mr. Morrisette said it potentially could as it is part of the bottom line. He said he didn't add that amount into this discussion because of it being a new program and we need to implement it and make it viable.

Commissioner Kowalski said he's just a bit concerned that the more funding we receive and manage as pass-thru funding the higher the percentage we have to produce and it comes out of the cost.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that some Commissioners that have been around for a while may recall in years past we've had to come up with five, ten and 15% reduction options so the five percent reduction is achievable relatively easy. Historically it has been an exercise except one or two fiscal years when it became a reality and we were forced to lay off employees. He said they want to be prepared if there is a significant downturn in the economy.

Commissioner Brady asked how long ago actual staffing cuts with layoffs occurred.

Mr. Morrisette replied the last round was seven or eight years ago. There was an earlier round of layoffs in the 90's.

Commissioner Stankye added that in terms of funding for the Regional Fire schools when they had the initial meeting with legislators at the LOB they had raised the question of whether the funding would be subject to such a reduction and they were assured that it was strictly administrative on the part of the Commission and that it would not be affected.

Mr. Morrisette said a discussion with key legislators would be a positive.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson that the Commission supports Budget Reduction Option 1 as recommended. Motion carried.

Commissioner Kowalski said understanding Commissioner Stankye's issue how difficult would it be to have a parallel submission that takes the Regional Fire schools out of the loop so it's not included in the bottom line and submit the two options. He said he recalls the meetings at the LOB and they were very sensitive to the concern of the Regional Fire schools that the Commission was going to take the money which is not the case and OPM probably doesn't know the difference and that's the problem. He asked if it would be confusion by submitting two options for the budget reduction.

Mr. Morrisette replied that it would be confusing at this time.

Commissioner Wilkinson added that he believes Option 1 is the best consideration for the new found money for the Regional Fire schools and he thinks the Supplemental Grant program benefits such a unique small segment of the state's fire service that it is probably the most vulnerable thing we could dispense with should a reduction be forced upon us.

Mr. Morrisette also provided a staffing update. He said last month he had communicated that interviews for the vacant Trainer position had been completed. The Committee involved with the process selected the top three candidates. A background check was done on the number one candidate and an offer was made.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson reported on behalf of the Education Committee. The Education Committee did not meet in August. He said the legislature and the Governor have not reached an agreement over the Bonding Bill. As far as the Regional School's project is concerned there isn't any significant impact by that. He said they are still desperately trying to spend their first allocation. He said he had a discussion with Don Ouillette, project leader for Department of Public Works (DPW) a week ago and he's still optimistic that they'll be on the October or November Bond agenda for property acquisition funds for both the Eastern property and the Valley School. He also said Commissioner Fleming from DPW has gone to Department of Public Utility and Control (DPUC) but Mr. Ouillette assured him the new Commissioner who was formerly Commissioner Fleming's Chief of Staff is very sympathetic to our project and we should have no issues as far as leadership at DPW is concerned. The Education Committee is scheduled to meet this Thursday night at the

Stamford Fire school and there is some subtle hope that the Lieutenant Governor will make an appearance at the meeting.

Commissioner Kowalski added that Commissioner Fleming did make the statement that we are in good hands.

Moving to item 4c.) Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the Supplemental Grant program. He said letters were mailed out and we've had a very good return as of yesterday of greater than 50% for a total of 85 of which 55 fire companies have requested checks and 30 have requested vouchers. He said we gave them until mid October to respond with their selection.

Commissioner Nicol asked when the checks will be cut for those that have requested the direct payment.

Mr. Morrissette said he believes it will be late October or early November. He said we try to do them in batches so we would wait until at least the deadline for a response and then a couple of weeks past that so we can batch and actually cut the checks.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry Level Training Reimbursement – Mr. Morrissette reported that we're still moving forward with implementation of the Entry Level Training Reimbursement. He said with the assistance of many Commissioners we've had the opportunity to go on the road and provide briefings to most of the major fire service organizations including the CT Fire Chiefs Association, the CT Career Chiefs, Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association and CT Fire Department Instructors Association. He said tomorrow night he'll be at the Fairfield County Chiefs meeting providing a briefing. He said letters informing fire chiefs of the program will be mailed this week. We've already received about 10 requests for reimbursement or request for a pre-authorization so that is moving forward and people are aware of the program. He also said he'll be at the Education Committee meeting on Thursday evening to provide a briefing to that group and ask for their support in disseminating information.

Mr. Morrissette also stated that he believes at the Career Chiefs meeting there was a discussion as to how the Career Chiefs would like us to administer their program. He said generally the majority of them agreed that they would like to see it administered as was proposed last month. Basically, they would issue a purchase order for the full amount of the Recruit program and at which time when it comes to bill them we would actually bill them for 50%. He said we'll give them the option to do it that way or do it as a reimbursement and they just need to note that on the pre-authorization form. He said his only concern is within the Policy document as we really don't address it there.

Mr. Morrissette also distributed copies of a letter received with feedback from one individual Bill Parker, Assistant Chief of Manchester 8<sup>th</sup> Utilities Dist. fire department regarding the policy document. He responded as an individual not necessarily a representative of the department. He had two initial areas of concern which may be a partial misunderstanding. Chief Parker felt that there is not equal representation in terms of the approval process for reviewing training programs. Mr. Morrissette stated that he and staff will be reviewing those so if there is something controversial we'll bring that back to the Commission for consideration. He said the other item relates to his comment

regarding if someone already has gone through training and has been certified they may not be eligible for reimbursement if they repeat the same program. Mr. Morrisette said our position is that we do have that from time to time where someone goes through the Recruit program more than once. Often time if the individual is employed by a new department their contract mandates new employees participate in Recruit Training upon being hired.

A brief discussion on the issue followed.

Mr. Morrisette added that we've not received any request to review programs as of yet. He said he's talked with the Chief of Bridgeport because they have a current Recruit class in Fairfield ongoing and he seemed very excited about the program. He said he also spoke with the Training Officer in Hartford because they will be embarking on a Recruit class soon and we provided them with the Policy and reimbursement forms. Mr. Morrisette stated one question that has come up which he knows Commissioner Walsh had mentioned to him was in relation to equivalency and whether the outside programs will be required to be 14 weeks in length similar to the CFA. We're in the process of identifying the key elements of the CFA Recruit Program to use as a foundation for any evaluation. He said unless the Commission advises that we need to mandate 14 weeks minimum we will look at comparing program goals and objectives and levels of competency. He said while certification is a requirement, we'll have to make sure they understand very clearly. He said if Commissioners want to have a discussion today we'll certainly take that into consideration and work it into our review of any local program.

Commissioner Nicol commented that the City of Waterbury is in the process of considering running a Recruit class as well. He said there was a discussion at the area Chiefs meeting and it was mentioned.

Moving to item 5a.) Election of Officers - Chairman Carozza called on Commissioner Nicol to Chair the Elections Committee.

Commissioner Nicol said it's time for our annual elections and called for a motion to nominate a Chairman.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to nominate Peter Carozza as Chairman. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol called for any additional nominations. As no other nominations were received Commissioner Nicol called for a motion to close nominations and to direct the Secretary to cast one ballot for Chairman Carozza.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to close nominations for the position of Chairman. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Dagon to nominate Kevin Kowalski as Vice Chairman. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol called for any additional nominations. As no other nominations were received Commissioner Nicol called for a motion to close nominations and the Secretary cast one ballot for Vice Chairman Kowalski.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to close nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol sought nomination for the position of Secretary.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Ouellette and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to nominate James Wilkinson as Secretary. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol called for any additional nominations. As no other nominations were received Commissioner Nicol called for a motion to close nominations and the Chairman cast one ballot for Secretary Wilkinson.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to close nominations for the position of Secretary. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza thanked Commissioner Nicol for Chairing the Nominations and Election Committee.

Commissioner Nicol congratulated those that were elected and turned the meeting back to the Chairman.

Chairman Carozza thanked members of the Commission and the staff for their support. He said he hopes for a great 2008. He expressed a vote of confidence for State Fire Administrator Morrissette who has done an outstanding job under some very difficult decisions. He said he wanted Mr. Morrissette to know that he'll continue to have his support and the support of the Commission. He also extended a special thanks to the staff for all they do.

Vice Chairman Kowalski thanked everyone for their support.

Moving to item 5b.) Incident Management Teams Overview (tabled to October meeting per Chief Baldwin) Mr. Morrissette said we had discussed removing the IMT issue off the Commission's meeting agenda. He said he wanted to report that we would have Tim Baldwin, Chair of the DEMHS IMT Committee attend a Commission meeting to provide a briefing and this has nothing to do with the New London proposal. He said Chief Baldwin contacted him last week and they are in the final phase of the development of their IMT proposal to DEMHS and they hope it will be approved at the next DEMHS Coordinating Council meeting. He said Chief Baldwin plans to attend our October meeting with several members of DEMHS' Committee to conduct a briefing in terms of the future direction of IMT's here within Connecticut.

Commissioner Walsh asked for clarification purposes if this is a new agenda item.

Mr. Morrissette said yes.

Moving to item 5c.) Approval of Annual Report FY06/07 - Mr. Morrissette said Commissioners should have received a copy of the annual report for the agency and we are seeking final approval. He said because of timing and deadlines it has already been transmitted to the Governor and the legislature and other places it's required to be sent to by statute. He said one thing he noted in the transmittal cover letter is that we had a phenomenal year and it's amazing what the staff was able to accomplish being down one full-time body plus people filling multiple roles. He said both the full-time staff and the adjuncts rose to the challenge. A significant reason for the increase in deliveries specifically had to do with our relationship with DEMHS and some of the grant funding that we receive to coordinate and deliver a lot of the NIMS training that is ongoing throughout the state. He reported that the grant funding expires at the end of this month. We are hopeful it will continue for at least an additional year if not further.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the annual report FY 2006/2007 and congratulate the staff on an excellent job last year. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nicol added that in reading the report he didn't see any information of the Commission's involvement with the Mid-Atlantic Association of State Fire Commissions. He said we should mention that because there may be a fiscal responsibility down the road when Connecticut hosts the conference.

Mr. Morrissette said his intention would be to submit that request as part of a future Biennium budget submittal.

Moving to item 5d.) Certification Division Overview - Mr. Morrissette stated that Mr. McGowan would like to provide a briefing to the Commission on some of the activities related to the Certification division. He said Mr. McGowan had submitted two separate reports to him for the annual report. One was a summary of activities and the other was a more comprehensive report which he thought might be a better opportunity to layout some of what has been accomplished in his short tenure and where he's looking to go in the future.

Mr. McGowan thanked the Commission for giving him the opportunity to comment on what's going on in the Certification division since he's joined the division. He distributed a copy of his presentation. The Certification division is nationally accredited by both the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress. The division offers 20 levels of professional competency and develops local promotional/entry examinations. A total of 1975 candidates successfully completed the certification process in FY 2007. Mr. McGowan also outlined the key responsibilities of the division which includes the CFPC certification system, training and certification cooperation, ProBoard site visit, national registry ALS practical skills. He said his goal is to set up appropriate testing facilities and he hasn't had an opportunity to delve into this responsibility yet but his thought is to utilize the Regional schools as a regional source for delivering practical skills and written skills as well. Mr. McGowan said his final items of concern are related to some housekeeping issues. He sought the Commission's approval to change the Regulation on the next opportunity we get to add to our list of certifications; the Juvenile Firesetter I and



II; HAZ MAT Awareness and Operations; Tanker Operation; Incident Safety Officer-Suppression; and Fire Inspector I which may be covered under the DPS but he wants to make sure it's covered under the Commission as designee. In futuristic thinking we would also look to add Telecommunicator and Fire Investigator as well.

He thanked the Commission for the opportunity and said he would be happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Nicol asked if when the Commission provides a service to firefighters for examinations do we charge a fee for it or is a service we provide.

Mr. Morrissette said historically it's been provided as a service as it traditionally has been an activity of the full-time staff whose salaries are already covered. He said there maybe occasions in which we have been asked to proctor exams for which we would have invoiced the municipality for proctoring services.

Commissioner Stankye asked if the Commission would be stepping on the toes of the Fire Marshal's certification program in seeking to add the Fire Inspector I and Fire Investigator certification.

Mr. McGowan said we are working cooperatively with the DPS Office of Education and Data Management because there is an NFPA standard and the accreditation of the two Boards especially the ProBoard who looks for an annual audit to make sure that we're still meeting the Accreditation Board's concerns and issues. He said we just do a mini audit site visit the same way the ProBoard would conduct a site visit to the Commission.

Mr. Morrissette said regarding the housekeeping items it is very plausible that the Commission has approved most of the levels in the past but it would take too long to verify through meeting minutes over many years.

Commissioner Blaschik added that he'd like to see Fire Inspector. He said he believes at this time there is still a Fire Inspector III and he'd like to have it incorporated into NFPA 1037 even though they aren't doing it on their side at DPS but he would like Fire Inspector II and III also included with Telecommunicator and Fire Investigator levels.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to accept the certification plan as presented. 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 Brady said he and Commissioner Kowalski met with the Department of Labor (DOL) a few weeks ago regarding the Junior Firefighter issue and two items had come up that relates to directing traffic and marine rescues. He said there will be some additional information forthcoming from the DOL but it was agreed that there will be no directing traffic by minor firefighters with the exception of private properties like fairs. As far as marine rescues they would be permitted to participate in training activities only.

Commissioner Kowalski added that pictures are being submitted for the brochure so the brochure will be printed at the DOL and they assured us that it would be available in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Morrissette reported that Commissioner Nicol will be attending the Mid-Atlantic Association of State Fire Commissions meeting this coming weekend in Virginia. He said we will be preparing a presentation for Commissioner Nicol to deliver.

He also reported that Commissioner Wilkinson was elected as president of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association at their recent convention in West Haven.

Mr. Jim Birmingham stated that most Commissioners know him as he's retired from West Hartford fire department and the Fire Academy. He said the reason he's here today is he had set-up an informal between Mr. Morrissette, a few Commissioners and a private businessman Kevin Kita who owns Hartford Sprinkler Company. The reason he brought them together Mr. Kita told him of a problem he's having with licensed plumbers he hires as sprinkler technicians. They are not able to perform certain types of testing which is not in the curriculum offered when they go through the appropriate training. He said he just thought we might be able to assist.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:02 am.

Dated:

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