

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 30, 1998 COMMISSION MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:55 a.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Andresen, Chatfield, Haber, Mullen, Munkenbeck, Nicol and Vendetta. Commissioners Gomeau, Johnson, Kowalski, McCarthy, Milewski, and Peabody were excused. Staff members Morrissette, Mancino, O'Neil, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Chief William Lanning, Assistant Chief Phil Crombie and Kyle Zimmer from the South Windsor Fire Department and G. Hoffman, R. Keane, J. Kupernik, M. Lewandowski, E. O'Hurley, A. Ouellette, D. Richardson and J. Tsokalas from the Connecticut Fire Academy.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the meeting proceeded on an informational basis.

Chairman Carozza inquired if Commissioners had any questions on the minutes of the April 28, 1998 meeting, and on the Staff Reports for April 15 - May 14, 1998 and May 15 - June 14, 1998.

Moving forward to item 5 a.) on the agenda Chairman Carozza asked Mr. Morrissette to make a presentation to Part-time Instructor Kyle Zimmer.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he would like to take time out of the meeting to make a presentation to a co-worker, Part-time Instructor Kyle Zimmer. He stated it's not often that we have an opportunity to recognize one of our own for such an event. On April 15 at about 1:30 p.m Mr. Zimmer was driving through the Town of West Hartford and came upon the scene of an auto accident. Through the training and knowledge he's acquired over his 22 year career with the South Windsor Fire Department, Mr. Zimmer sensed some urgency to the incident and acted to make several rescues just before the vehicles ignited into flame. The unique thing about this particular incident is that the Hartford Courant felt that Mr. Zimmer's actions were deserving of a special editorial. The editorial recognized Mr. Zimmer for his actions, his background and his training, but it also recognized the positive aspects of the fire service as a whole. So the tribute which went to Mr. Zimmer actually falls upon each and everyone of us in the fire service.

Mr. Morrissette presented a certificate of appreciation to Kyle Zimmer and congratulated him for his heroic efforts on April 15 which showed very well upon him as an individual, the South Windsor Fire Department and for the fire service as a whole.

Mr. Zimmer thanked the Commission for the recognition.

Returning to the normal order of business Chairman Carozza asked Mr. Morrissette to report on Unfinished Business.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrisette reported that there was no changes in regard to any full time positions. He stated that one area which was reported briefly in the Staff Report relates to some activity which he and Director of Training Piskura are working on with State Personnel. This activity is to develop a more equitable method of compensating part-time staff members and to seek an increase to the hourly rate.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the current compensation rate for part-time instructors.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the current compensation is set at \$18 per hour for chief instructors and \$15 per hour for instructors. This has not changed since 1992.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how these compensation rates compared with those of the Regional Schools.

Mr. Morrisette stated they are all pretty much in line with our rates of compensation.

Commissioner Nicol suggested the agency let the Regional Schools know about the efforts underway pertaining to the compensation package for instructors.

Having now reached a quorum Chairman Carozza asked to return the meeting to the normal order of business.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the April 28, 1998 meeting. Motion Carried.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 1998 - May 14, 1998. Motion .

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the Staff Report for the period of May 15, 1998 - June 14, 1998. Motion Carried.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrisette gave a budget update. He stated that the agency would begin working on its biennial budget for submittal around September 1. As of today the agency has not received any guidance in regard to development of that budget. He then asked Mr. O'Neil to give an overview of the FY 1998/99 budget appropriation.

Mr. O'Neil stated that the original appropriation figures the agency received covers all the full time positions, moneys left went into part-time instructor salaries. The allocation for the part-time salaries represents a shortfall but our Budget Analyst notified us last week that there is a salary adjustment account from which funds would go back to all the state agencies. Our Analyst indicated we would receive about \$42,000 for personal services which would bring us back up to our initial level from last year.

Mr. Morrisette reported that the Department of Public Works has transferred approximately \$17,000 to the agency to effect the link roof repairs. A purchase order will be issued to the low bid contractor.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette stated that previously under a discussion about legislation he had discussed the possibility of doing some type of bill signing ceremony with the Governor. The Governor's office at one point indicated that the fire service was on their "A List". About a week ago we were notified that because of difficulty scheduling the various events and groups the Bill Signing Ceremony for a Fire Service issue succumbed.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette gave a status report on the 1-800 Fire Line project. He stated that letters were distributed statewide to all fire chiefs along with a copy sent to each of the chief elected officials in the communities. Approximately 70 local contact data forms have been returned thus far. In our letter it was noted that the program would kick off on July 1. A number of press releases have been sent out to fire service publications for internal notification and in addition some press releases were sent out to both radio and news print throughout the state. Andy Ouellette will be serving as coordinator over the next six months. The toll-free phone line is in and operational. It is expected that the first several months will be spent learning the ins and outs and to plan to pursue a formal press conference in the fall. So far the agency has received a lot of positive feedback. Some departments have taken this program and incorporated it into their local recruitment and retention program. We have also received some local press as a result of local departments generating press releases with some very good local home grown ideas.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how the success of this program would be measured.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the agency will collect data and conduct some follow-up to measure the success of this program.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrisette gave a Public Fire Education Subcommittee update. The Committee comprised of Commissioners Johnson, Munkenbeck and Peabody have been meeting. A draft report has been generated and submitted to the State Fire Administrator for review. It is expected that a final report should be available for the September Commission meeting.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the ARFF Prop Project. He stated that as of last week, DOT is still waiting for a report from the FAA as a result of their recent visit to review the Academy's current props. Until this report is received no action will be taken

Moving to item 4 g.) Mr. Morrisette stated that in terms of planning a Strategic Planning Retreat he is looking to solidify the actual week this event will take place. A number of facilities appear to have vacancies the third week of November. This event could encompass a minimum of one day, preferably more with the possibility of an overnight. He asked Commissioners to check their calendars for the week of November 15 - 21 and let him know if those dates are okay. Commissioner Vendetta indicated these dates may conflict with the NFPA's Fall Conference.

Moving to item 4 h.) Mr. Piechota gave an overview of an analysis he conducted of Certification Exam Pass/Fail results. Several months ago Commissioner Peabody raised a question concerning the low pass rate particularly for the FF-II level exams. Staff did a formal review and determined that the test items/questions were not posing a problem. In further analysis via the computer on the actual tests, results showed that the tests were valid with a validity rate of 85-90%. We talked with a few of the instructors who delivered the program both at the Academy and out in the field. The test results for the programs delivered at the Academy are much better than for programs delivered in the field. The lead instructor explained that at the Academy the students are given specific reading assignments with quizzes given each morning after. The program at the Academy is very structured and the results bear it out. In talking with some of the instructors in the field this is not the case. While talking to the people who write the IFSTA manuals we discovered that the manuals are written at an 11th-14th grade reading level. In speaking with educational professionals we were informed that the average reading level of high school graduates nationwide is at about the 7th grade level. So as soon as you give someone a document that is at the 11th to 14th grade and on average they can only read at the 7th grade level you immediately set them up for failure. We plan to meet with some educational professionals in the state to ask for suggestions. In addition, we will work with the

Training Division to find how the homework assignments and the quizzes are structured and possibly develop a document that can be handed out with the program to instructors in the field. However, it appears that if the people taking the test only read at the 7th or 8th grade level and the reference material we are using is at the 11th to 14th grade level then the low level of pass rate may become the norm. We are pretty comfortable that the test that we're giving is valid based upon the Standard as well as the reference documents we are using.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Morrissette stated that Public Act 98-195, an act concerning the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) was signed by the Governor on June 4. Part of the Act calls for a reorganization of OEMS's Advisory Committee. The bill establishes a new 41 member Advisory Board responsible for assisting the department coordinating the efforts of all persons and agencies in the state concerned with EMS. As part of this Board group 21 of the 41 members of the Board are individuals to be appointed by the Governor. In this group a representative of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control is to be appointed. We received a letter from Warren Wollschlager, Bureau Chief of Regulatory Services for the Department of Public Health requesting that we submit to his attention the name of an individual to represent the Commission on that Board. This will necessitate action by the Commission.

Commissioner Chatfield inquired if the Chair had a recommendation.

Chairman Carozza stated that if none of the Commissioners are interested he recommends Adam Piskura, Director of Fire Training.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to recommend appointment of Adam Piskura, Director of Fire Training to serve as Commission Representative on the EMS Advisory Board. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Piskura gave a brief overview of the activities of the Industrial Advisory Committee. He stated that the group has been meeting diligently and they have been basically getting their house in order. They have developed and adopted a mission statement which he shared with the Commissioners. The Committee is now at a point where they are soliciting actual designated members to the various categories they have adopted (i.e. utility industry, manufacturing, processing, etc.). The intent is to have them meet within their discipline or sub-discipline and possibly meet four times a years as an entire group and then feed information to the Commission.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrissette inquired if Commissioners had any questions on the FY 1996/97 Final Audit Report, and if not he asked for approval of the report.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the FY 1996/97 Final Audit Report. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 e.) Mr. Morrissette brought out for discussion the status of the summer meeting schedule with this summer being a period when a biennium budget will be developed. In past years, July and August meetings have been reserved for emergencies or contingency meetings. However, again this year being a budget year what would the Commission like to do as far as approving a budget prior to submittal?

Commissioner Chatfield asked to have a copy of the biennium budget draft distributed to the Commissioners asking for comments to be returned to the Chairman and/or State Fire Administrator and go on from there.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chatfield and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber that a copy of the biennium budget be distributed to the Commissioners and ask that they pass on any comments to the staff. Motion carried.

Commissioner Haber read a letter from Wayne Maheu, Director, Bureau of Education and Data Management, Department of Public Safety thanking and recognizing several Commission staff members for their assistance in making this year's Annual Fire Investigation School a huge success.

A MOTION was made by Chairman Carozza and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to place the letter from Wayne Maheu, Director, Bureau of Education and Data Management, Department of Public Safety on file. Motion carried.

Commissioner Munkenbeck thanked Adam Piskura for meeting on a regular basis with him and other members from the Safety Institute.

Commissioner Nicol reported that the Fire Apparatus Rodeo had been rained out a second time and was now rescheduled to September 12 and thanked the Commission for their continued support of this event.

Commissioner Chatfield invited the Commission to meet at the Town of Prospect's new Fire Station for their October or November meeting.

Commissioner Chatfield reported that Prospect's Grant Director Gina Ash was successful in getting a grant for the purchase of 45 defibrillators for the 12 towns in the greater Waterbury area.

Mr. Piechota gave a brief overview of the recent changes made to the Commission's Internet home page. The Commission has been fortunate to have acquired the services of Mike Varney who is responsible for Internet Services for the State of Connecticut's home page and is also one of our part-time instructors.

Mr. Morrissette reminded Commissioners to pick up their binders for the next fiscal year. He directed them to the front of the new binder where they will find a comprehensive listing of agency regulations. In addition, following the meeting a tour of the new FAA Tower has been scheduled for 11:30 a.m. for any Commissioners who may be interested.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Vendetta and SECONDED by Commissioner Nicol to adjourned the meeting.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:55 A.M.

Dated: _____

Secretary, Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control

MOTIONS

Commission Meeting - June 30, 1998

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A MOTION was made by Commissioner Vendetta and SECONDED by Commissioner Nicol to adjourned the meeting.

STAFF FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

Instructor Compensation - Commissioner Nicol suggested the agency let the Regional Schools know about the efforts underway pertaining to the compensation package for instructors.

Public Fire Education Subcommittee - A draft report has been generated and submitted to the State Fire Administrator for review. It is expected that a final report should be available for the September Commission meeting.

Strategic Planning Retreat - He asked Commissioners to check their calendars for the week of November 15-21 and let him know if those dates are okay. Commissioner Vendetta indicated these dates may conflict with the NFPA's Fall Conference.

Biennium Budget - Commissioner Chatfield asked to have a copy of the biennium budget draft distributed to the Commissioners asking for comments to be returned to the Chairman and/or State Fire Administrator and go on from there.

Commission Meeting - Commissioner Chatfield invited the Commission to meet at the Town of Prospect's new Fire Station for their October or November meeting.