



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

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MINUTES OF THE MAY 29, 2001 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Due to the lack of a quorum Chairman Carozza opened the meeting held at the Eastern Connecticut Fire School at 7:15 p.m. on an informational basis with the following members present: Commissioners Haber, Johnson, Maheu, Milewski and Nicol. Commissioners Brammer, Gomeau, Kowalski, Mullen Munkenbeck, and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present. (A quorum was attained at 7:25 p.m.)

Guests to the meeting were identified as George Pohorilak from the Department of Public Safety, Daniel Hunsberger, UPFFA, Tylor Wilcox, Tolland County Mutual Aid, Jim Preuss, Bolton Fire Department/Tolland County Mutual Aid, Jerry James, Columbia Fire Department, Clayton Shead, Shawn Davis, James Rivard, Jeannine Spink, Donna Eaton, Brian Eaton, John Paquin from Eastford Fire Department, Joe Surozenski, and Josh Bottone from the Bunguay Fire Brigade.

Chairman Carozza welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Mr. Morrissette introduced Al Hawkins and Lloyd Niles from the Eastern Connecticut Fire School.

Moving to item 5 a.) on the agenda Mr. Morrissette introduced George Pohorilak, Director of the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications and asked him to give an overview of their efforts to implement Emergency Medical Dispatch which was mandated through legislation passed last year.

Mr. Pohorilak stated that the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET) is responsible for the statewide 911 System, frequency coordination and administering the 911 fund that was established four years ago. They are involved in training as well as in planning initiatives. They also provide technical assistance to municipal and mutual aid safety organizations on the radio side. He reported purpose here today is to provide an update as to what is going on in the area of training. Recent legislation has caused them to start a new training initiative in the area of emergency medical

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dispatch. The Public Act said that all public safety answering points statewide must implement emergency medical dispatch (EMD) prior to July 1, 2004. One of the things required by the Public Act is to create a training program and provide funding for that. In taking a look at what was going on in the EMD world within Connecticut they realized that training programs established by various vendors already existed. A plan was created to reimburse public safety agencies for training that was provided by various vendors. Any public safety answering point who wishing to implement an EMD program, must first pick an EMD platform that they want to operate under, secondly they have to let OSET know that they are doing that and OSET will go forward with contracting for training and will subsidize training at the rate of \$270 per student for three days of training. The Public Act also requires a subsidy for ongoing training at the rate of \$90 for one day of training, once a year for each student after the first year of their initial training. This program will be put in place on July 1, 2001. On January 1, 2001, OSET started reimbursing public safety agencies for EMD training programs they put in place. Certain public safety agencies already had EMD and for them this works well because they can be reimbursed on an ongoing basis on training. This is landmark legislation for the State of Connecticut and OSET is very pleased to see it in place.

Another piece of that same legislation, somewhat related, was that all public safety answering points must tag EMS calls and report that information back to OSET. That program was put in place and OSET has started to obtain EMS data on calls to 911 that are EMS related. This information has been placed on the Department of Public Safety's web site.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how long the certification was valid.

Mr. Pohoralik stated that public safety telecommunicator certification must occur within one year of hire. Once an individual is certified that certification is in effect for five years.

Commissioner Johnson inquired when funding would be available.

Mr. Pohoralik stated that funding is available now.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Pohoralik for his presentation.

Commissioners Stankye and Wilkinson arrived at 7:25 p.m. A quorum was attained.

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 7:29 p.m. and asked Commissioners and staff members to introduce themselves.

Moving to item 2) Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2001 meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Nicol and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2001 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2001 – May 14, 2001.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2001 - May 14, 2001. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update of the Fallen Firefighters' Memorial project. Mr. Morrissette stated that fundraising efforts continue. As noted in the Staff Report we continue to anticipate an appropriation from the Legislature in the amount of \$100,000. This still remains in the budget. A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for June 12 at 2:00 p.m. at the Connecticut Fire Academy. Printed invitations have been sent to chiefs of departments throughout the state and also a general notice has gone out to the fire service via our list serve. He extended an invitation to the representatives of the fire service in attendance at the meeting.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette provided an overview of the minutes of the CSFA Education Committee that were distributed earlier. He asked Commissioner Wilkinson to give an update.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that this committee was scheduled to meet again on June 21 in Wethersfield. The last meeting was probably as productive as the first meeting and was held at the Connecticut Fire Academy. All but one regional fire school was represented at the meeting. He stated that he had no information to the contrary to lead him to believe that the funding for a feasibility study of the regional fire school system won't be in place. The last information that has become available is that friends in the legislature think that \$100,000 may not be enough and are making some moves to increase that amount to \$150,000.

Mr. Hawkins stated that he also heard that this was the direction this effort was going.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how this study would be conducted and who would oversee it.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that he did not know how the plan is suppose to go into effect at this point.

Mr. Hawkins stated that he had heard that a committee would be formed to oversee this study and that Representative Walter Pawelkiewicz from Windham has been named as the Chairman of that committee.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrissette gave a legislative update. A 2001 Legislative Session, Bill Status Report was distributed. Mr. Morrissette extended a thank you to Ted Schroll for providing this report for review this evening. He inquired if anyone had questions on any of 100 plus bills before the legislature that affect the fire service.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the status of the Bills regarding residential sprinklers, fireworks and municipal fire training.

Mr. Morrissette stated that at the last Commission meeting Commissioner Kowalski reported that an amendment was proposed to the Residential Sprinkler Bill requiring the State Fire Marshal research the need for sprinklers in one and two family homes. This move may essentially kill the Bill as it would turn it from enabling to a mandate once the need is assessed. This would have a greater impact on communities that do not want to enact a local ordinance.

Mr. Morrissette stated the last he heard regarding any amendments to the sparkler legislation that nothing will be moving. The fireworks industry put up a very strong lobby to prevent a repeal of the language that was put on the books last year. At this point it appears there will be no changes to the law on the books.

Mr. Morrissette spoke regarding the fire service training bill proposed the past five or six legislative sessions. This bill would provide moneys in the form of a reimbursement to municipalities and local fire departments to subsidize training for entry level, fire officer and originally fire inspector type training. The fire marshals have already moved ahead of us and have funding in place to cover the cost of that training. There's actually been no movement on the fire training Bill. It appears to have become lost among the other bills.

Mr. Morrissette stated that Senator Gunther had brought to his attention interest from the southwestern part of the state to establish an aero-medical helicopter service in the western part of the state. His idea is to propose a surcharge on motor vehicle registrations to fund this initiative. This is actually a direction that the fire service community was looking at as a possible means to fund the fire service training bill. He indicated that he discussed this in more detail with Senator Gunther with the thought that maybe we could both join forces covering both initiatives. Senator Gunther asked him to contact a Doctor at Waterbury Hospital who is spearheading a group of physicians and hospitals supporting this initiative. He spoke with the Doctor who is looking to have the Commission sponsor a meeting between the fire service and the EMS community to discuss this issue primarily the air medical service aspect of this. Also, he seemed receptive about joining forces with the fire service training bill. In Maryland there's a \$5 surcharge on motor vehicle registrations which fully funds their State Police Medical Helicopter Service in addition to covering fire service training and EMS training. Mr. Morrissette stated that Chairman Carozza asked him to bring this issue forth this evening and see if there is any interest for a presentation by this physician at the June meeting. If a decision is made to move forward on this matter then an informational session can be scheduled with both the fire and EMS communities.

Commissioner Milewski stated that he thinks it is important to have the Doctor come before the Commission and make a presentation.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the status of the FIRE Act Grant.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the expiration date for submitting applications has long passed. FEMA has received in excess of 19,000 applications with total request well over one billion dollars. There's only about ninety million dollars in current FY funding to be awarded to successful grantees. Review teams will assemble soon in Emmitsburg to begin to review, evaluate, and respond to the applications. FEMA is very happy that requests for funding far exceeded what they have available for award. The demand shows Congress that there is significant need within the fire service. At a recent CT Fire Chiefs' Association meeting he indicated he requested chiefs contact him in the event their department is successful in receiving a grant. If the departments were willing to share their grant application with us, we would make those available for training purposes to towns that may have found the grant process overwhelming. Last month the CT Fire Academy delivered two grant writing programs to aid departments applying for funds.

At the Congressional Fire Service Institute's Dinner in Washington, Senator Dodd was the recipient of one of their awards for his work in co-sponsoring the Senate version of the FIRE ACT legislation.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrisette reported on the status of the Limited Access Highway Account. A report of total claims processed to date was distributed to Commissioners. OPM has approved an internal transfer of \$22,000 to expedite relief for the estimated \$28,000 shortfall in this account. We expect the need to transfer an additional \$6,000 which will require FAC action.

Moving to item 5 e.) Mr. Morrisette stated that at the last meeting, the Commission authorized the staff to begin drafting language for consideration in regards to possible amendments to our legislative authority. Currently we are doing a search of enabling legislation in other states to evaluate what their representative authority deals with. We are looking primarily at the three areas that we discussed in detail at the last meeting. This will help us address some concerns from the Attorney General's Office in regards to a couple of the programs/services that we currently offer. We expect to have a draft available and ready for review, question and comment at the September meeting.

For the record Chairman Carozza called for a motion for having moved item 5 a.) to the beginning of the agenda.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Haber and SECONDED by Commissioner Milewski to move item 5 a.) to the first order of business. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 b.) Commissioner Haber read a letter from David Bowen, President of the CT Fire Department Instructors' Association requesting if the Commission would provide support and help sponsor the 16th Annual Fire Apparatus Drivers' Rodeo on Sunday, September 30, 2001.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to provide support to the CFDIA for the 16th Annual Fire Apparatus Drivers' Rodeo. Motion carried.

Mr. Morrisette stated that once again the CFDIA has renewed efforts in regards to funding for that event and this year they will reintroduce cash prizes. The first prize this year is \$500. The CFDIA is looking for at least 50 drivers for the planned rodeo event.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Morrisette asked Mr. Piskura or Commissioner Johnson to give a brief overview of the review taking place by a sub-committee of the CT Career Chiefs' Association regarding the Recruit Fire Training Program.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Recruit Program is a ten-week program where appointees from a career department enters the CT Fire Academy and is taught and trained on a variety of subjects related to the level of FF-1 and FF-II. We approached the Career Chiefs' Association with some issues that they were not aware of and they created a sub-committee to review the issues. The sub-committee of the Career Fire Chiefs initially met and made the following recommendations:

1. Residency during the program shall be mandatory.
2. The program will be extended to include the two-day Pump Operator and 2Q training.

3. A strict no-nonsense zero tolerance atmosphere, para-military operation be conducted during the program.
4. Student reviews to be issued on a three-week basis.
5. Immediate notification to the chief of all discipline issued to students.
6. Recommend the creation of an in-house full-time Recruit Program Lead Instructor to provide continuity throughout the program.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Career Chiefs' Association did not vote on these recommendations yet, but the Training Division believes that they can incorporate the six items recommended by the sub-committee.

A question and answer period followed.

Commissioner Johnson stated the Career Chiefs are still studying these recommendations and assessing the impact these changes will have on member fire departments. Hopefully, after a few meetings over the summer the Career Chiefs will come up with solid recommendations fully realizing that some of these recommendations may cost the municipalities more money.

Mr. Adam Piskura stated that just by making residency mandatory, this will add \$500 in tuition cost just for evening meals and that's not including the impact on the departments that didn't already reside at the Academy. This is a significant fiscal impact to the municipality.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that Chief LaVecchia of Milford asked him to re-emphasize on his behalf that adding the 2Q driver training is logistically difficult. If it's tough for the Academy imagine what it is for the local fire department. Chief LaVecchia said that he would pay any price to have a recruit return to his department with a 2Q driver's license. This area of training is so time consuming it's almost impossible for a local fire department. Chief LaVecchia also expressed concern over the fact that based on the minutes of the Career Chiefs meeting in May, ICS was removed from the curriculum. Chief LaVecchia was questioning why this area was removed from the curriculum without prior notification. In addition, Chief LaVecchia is one of the proponents that feels that the recruits should get more rope training because in his department it's logistically difficult to do that training in house once the recruits return from the Academy. As finances permit, Chief LaVecchia said that he could send any number of firefighters to a Rope 2 class as the need arises. It's extremely difficult to get everybody into a Rope 1 so he would prefer to see more rope training added back into the curriculum.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how much additional time would be added to the training curriculum if these recommendations are implemented.

Mr. Piskura stated that as an example if mandatory residency is added and the Training Division has access to the students in the evening that would make time available to do rope training. He stated that he is currently in the process of looking at the logistical impact these changes will bring about.

Commissioner Maheu inquired at what point do we draw the line where the Academy is responsible for certain level of training and there's a point where the municipality (i.e. diversity training) has to take responsibility for such training.

A discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza stated that the Commission meets on a monthly basis at the CT Fire Academy in Windsor Locks and that this is one of the meetings that is held at night, in the field, in hope of generating public interest. He asked if members of the public in attendance at the meeting had any questions.

Mr. James from the Columbia Fire Department inquired about the prerequisites for Train-the-Trainer for Haz Mat Awareness program.

Mr. Piskura stated that the Training Division is trying to hold to the criteria and has scheduled three sessions to be delivered in one day in June. He invited the individual to call him at the office to discuss his specific issue.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Nicol thanked Mr. Piechota and staff for all their efforts in providing assistance to the Re-accreditation Site Visit Team throughout the evaluation process.

Commissioner Nicol asked for an update of the CPAT program.

Mr. Piskura reported on results of recent testing conducted for Fairfield. On Wednesday and Friday of last week 65 candidates were tested with three candidates not completing testing due to medical problems. One candidate (29 years old) was transported to a local hospital and a stress test was performed. As a result of the stress test this same individual was referred to a cardiologist for further evaluation. Local first responders from the Meriden Fire Department treated the other two candidates on the scene and they refused to be transported to a hospital. Mr. Piskura gave an overview of the CPAT program process and safety procedures in place during testing.

A discussion period followed.

Mr. Piskura gave a brief update of the upcoming "Introduction To the Fire Service Program" to be held June 23 through 27 at the CT Fire Academy. We have 38 spots available and received 48 applications. The Training Division is also looking to run a three-day abbreviated course commencing August 24-26 to give people that could not enroll in the June program a chance to participate. Next year the Training Division hopes to schedule more offerings of this program.

Commissioner Nicol inquired what the tuition fee was for this program.

Mr. Piskura stated that the tuition was \$275.

Mr. Morrissette invited guests and fire service personnel who do not currently subscribe to the Commission's List Serve to leave their email address with Mr. Piechota and we will be happy to subscribe them.

Mr. Piskura stated that as advertised on the List Serve the National Park Service is looking for career members specifically in forestry and forestry management in fire service. A Recruiter will be available at the Academy's Annual June Fire School if anyone is interested.

Chairman Carozza expressed sincere apologies for his recent absence due to major pending issues in Waterbury that required his active involvement. Also he has been travelling extensively during the past month. He indicated he has remained in close contact with the State Fire Administrator. He expressed sincere thanks to Commissioner Kowalski for acting on his behalf during his absence.

Chairman Carozza thanked Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Niles from the Eastern Connecticut Fire School for hosting the Commission this evening.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.