

Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

Meeting minutes

Meeting – February 23, 2006 – 19:00

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:05 with the following members present:

Burrville Fire School – Richard Winn

Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Lloyd Niles, Al Hawkins

Fairfield Regional Fire School – Scott Bisson

Hartford Fire School - Chet Haber, Mike Jepeal, James Baldis

Middlesex County Fire School – Jay Woron

Wolcott Regional Fire School – Jim Trzaski, Paul Perrotti

Connecticut State Firefighters Association – Ted Schroll, Scott Potter

Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – Jim Wilkinson, Rich Nicol

Connecticut Fire Academy – Jeff Morrissette

Guests: Ed O’Hurley, C.F.A.; Don Ouillette, DPW

There was no one present representing the New Haven Regional Fire Academy, Stamford Fire Department Regional School, or the Valley Fire Chief’s Regional Fire School

The minutes of the January 26, 2005 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved – motion by Wilkinson second by Jepeal

1. Live Fire Training changes – Ed O’Hurley

Ed advised the group that the Certification Division will now be conducting verification for all live structural firefighting for Firefighter I and Firefighter II programs. The “Live Burn Verification Form” has been amended and now provides a space for the initials of the CFPC auditor. One chief examiner will be assigned to verify all structural burns. Ed distributed copies of the new form.

2. Status of properties acquisitions

Valley Fire Chiefs’ School Advertisement has been out for about a week and a half for property. All proposals are due by March 3, 2006.

Wolcott Fire School Don Ouillette asked to confirm that the principle contacts for the school are Jim Trzaski and Paul Perrotti. Jim affirmed that they are the contacts designated. Don asked if the Waterbury Fire Chiefs are “locked in” to the Cheshire site. Jim replied that the Waterbury Area Fire Chiefs Association have voted to relocate the school to the Cheshire site. Don asked for a formal letter of intent to pursue the Cheshire site and then he will begin working on transfer of the property from the Department of Corrections.

Eastern Connecticut Fire School Don Ouillette reported that the Attorney General has reviewed the language contained in the Professional Services Agreement used by the D.P.W. for such services as appraisal services. He has some legal issues with those documents. Because of the contract issues the appraisal firms have not yet been enlisted to appraise the parcels being considered for the Willimantic school. Don pointed out that after the appraisals are complete, a selection committee will be formed. He also pointed out that a Phase III environmental clean-up commitment will be required from the current property owner if the selection committee decides to pursue the South Windham site.

Hartford County School Funding is contained in the Governor’s budget to enter into a lease agreement with Bradley Airport for the property for the Hartford County burn building and storage facility. Don wants to solicit a commitment from the Bradley Airport directors so that he can start the design process. Representative Pawelkiewicz has submitted a bill to fund the lease in the event that the funding is not contained in the final budget document.

Fairfield and Middlesex Don will forward copies of the Memorandum of Understanding from New Haven for consideration for the Fairfield and Middlesex sites. Don asked that this process be reviewed with local politicians to make sure that they were agreeable to the process. Don will send a copy of the M.O.U. to Jay Woron for the Middletown location.

Burrville Fire School Don reported that there is a new regional director for D.E.P. who has authority over the Burr Pond Park site. D.P.W. plans to meet with him to open a dialogue about developing a long term agreement for the continued use of the fire school property.

3. New Haven Burn Building/Renovation – status

There appears to be a verbal commitment for the M.O.U. agreement. That agreement has not yet been signed. Don indicated that he had asked Goodkind, the selected design firm for New Haven to provide an updated construction estimate based upon changes in construction costs. The new estimate, projecting that construction would be completed in 2007 has risen by approximately 5% with a projection of a \$230,000 shortfall of the budget included in the study report.

Don said that he is still hopeful that there will be a bond commission meeting in March (March 31).

4. Homeland Security Training opportunities

No news. The I-200, 300, 700 program is still not available. DEMHS has additional information available on their website explaining the process for requesting backfill expenses.

5. Operational Budget – possible increases

Jeff Morrissette will be attending a budget workshop on March 2 for the C.F.P.C. budget.

Jim Wilkinson reported on the poll of the regional fire schools to move their operations budgets to the Regulation and Control section of the state budget. Jim took that request to the Executive Committee of the C.S.F.A. last Thursday. The Executive Committee passed a motion unanimously to support the move. The motion further directed that activity and audit reports should continue to be forwarded to the C.S.F.A. Treasurer. There were questions about what the effective date of the change should be. At this point we think that the change will take place this legislative session.

Jeff Morrissette said that he would check with Representative Merrill to find out what method would be used to address the operations budget shortfall for the current fiscal year.

There was a prolonged discussion about the actual operations budgets compared to the appropriated amounts. Al Hawkins will draft a letter and revised spreadsheet for distribution to members of the Appropriations Committee. This revised spreadsheet will reflect the shortfall amounts identified by Richard Winn for the Burrville School.

6. Other items from membership

There was discussion about the status of H.B. 5125 which calls for the formation of a committee to study firefighter training standardization and funding. Lloyd Niles suggested that this committee should be prepared with a couple of names of potential representatives of this committee for inclusion into the study committee. Jeff Morrissette added that he felt that we should professionalize the fire service and set minimum training levels.

Jim Wilkinson reported that he would be working on proposed changes to the C.S.F.A. by-laws that would address forming the Education Committee as a permanent standing committee of the Association. Jim hoped that he could get the proposed changes accepted by the Executive Committee at the May meeting so that the changes could be acted upon at the annual meeting in September.

The convention this year will be hosted by the Valley Fire Chiefs with the departments from Derby, Shelton and Ansonia working as joint hosts.

Jim Trzaski offered his appreciation for the work of the Education Committee on behalf of the Wolcott Fire School.

Jim Baldis suggested that we form an ad-hoc committee to work on an action plan in the event that the New Haven design contract funds do not get released at the March bond commission meeting. Jim will work up the framework and share it with other Education Committee members by email. Hopefully, we will know in time for the March 23rd meeting whether there will be a bond commission meeting for March. At that time we can discuss the perceived status of the capital plan and decide whether to implement a plan to protest the inactivity for funding of the regional fire school rebuild.

7. Next meeting date

The regular meeting date will fall on March 23, 2006. That meeting will be at 19:00 at Wethersfield.

Submitted by:
Al Hawkins, chairman