

Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

Meeting minutes

March 22, 2007 – 19:00

Wethersfield Fire Department

Company #3, Kelleher Court

The meeting was called to order at 19:15 with the following representatives present:

Connecticut State Firefighters Association – Charles Stankye, Jr., Ted Schroll

Burrville Fire School – Rich Winn

Eastern Connecticut Fire School – Al Hawkins, Les Shull

Fairfield Regional Fire School – Chris Day

Hartford Fire School - Chet Haber, Mike Jepeal

Middlesex County Fire School – Fred Dudek

New Haven Regional Fire Academy – Bill Seward

Stamford Fire Department Regional School – Tony Conte

Wolcott Regional Fire School - Paul Perrotti

Valley Fire Chief's Regional Fire School - Charles Stankye, Jr

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

Guest: Ct. Department of Public Works - Don Ouillette

No one was present from the Connecticut Fire Academy

The minutes of the February 22, 2007 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved – motion by Haber second by Wilkinson.

1. Status of properties acquisitions

Eastern Connecticut Fire School – There is a meeting scheduled for Friday, March 30 between attorneys for Rogers Corporation and the Department of Public Works to review the last draft of the proposed sales agreement.

Valley Fire School – There is a tentative price for the Oxford property. D.P.W. property acquisitions personnel are working on a draft purchase agreement.

Middlesex Fire School – Don Ouillette reported that there is still no action by the city of Middletown on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding.

Wolcott State Fire School – Legislation has been introduced in order to transfer the Cheshire Department of Corrections property to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. The Department of Corrections has reportedly signed off on the language of the legislation.

Burrville Fire School – Don and the directors of the fire school are continuing to seek the best connection within the Department of Environmental Protection in order to try to work out a long-term lease agreement.

2. New Haven Renovation – Design

Don reported that the design is about 50% complete for the New Haven Academy. The New Haven department of Emergency Management has removed the academy from their list of emergency shelters. Bill Seward expressed pleasure with the progress of the design process. No Memorandum of Understanding is in place for the New Haven site between the D.P.W. and the city.

3. Hartford County – Design

Don reported that there were interviews conducted last Tuesday of the four design teams that had responded to the request for proposals. Two of the contactors made a poor showing, two seemed quite well qualified to undertake the

project. The point scoring documentation has been forwarded to Commissioner Fleming for review and hopeful action. Results of the selection should be known within a week or two.

4. Bond funding update

Don Ouillette reported that he is hopeful that the Hartford County design contract and the Eastern Connecticut school property sale could make it to the same bond commission agenda. Hopefully that could happen as early as May-June.

Don reported that after the New Haven, Hartford, and Eastern Connecticut projects were complete the he intended to implement the remaining projects with a design-build process. Don further reported that the D.P.W. was in the process of formalizing a revised design-build process. That process should be complete within about six months.

Ted Schroll reported on the progress of the raised bill number 1119. That bill will increase the \$20 million in bonding authorization contained in the governor's budget to \$30 million. Ted indicated that the bill seemed to have significant support but doesn't know what will happen during the session. Ted reported that the bonding bill is the last business to be addressed in the session, after the passage of the general budget. It appears that the worst case scenario is that we will have \$20 million for this next biennial bonding package.

Ted inquired of Don about the projected timing of the construction portion of the New Haven Project. Don replied that the design was as much as eight months from complete. After the design is complete then construction bids would be solicited. Those could take another three months.

Paul Perrotti reported that Jack Casner called him earlier today to report that the transfer of the Cheshire Corrections property was "all set".

Ted Schroll reported on his opportunity to attend a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor. They had an opportunity to discuss the capital project timeline.

5. Operational Budgets

Al Hawkins reported on the meeting on March 13 with the Appropriations sub-committee on Regulation and Protection. Also in attendance were Ted Schroll, Chet Haber, Rich Winn and Jeff Morrissette. There was significant discussion which consisted of an initial presentation on the operations budgets for the regional school, a presentation by Jeff on the operations budget for the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, followed by a lengthy question and answer period. The mood of those legislators present seemed quite positive.

6. 2007 legislative initiatives

- **State Bond Commission**

There was discussion about drafting a form letter for distribution to state fire service organizations, departments, and other individuals in order to solicit support from the Governor and Secretary Genuario. The consensus was that we should track the progress of the Department of Public Works closely and try to coordinate the push for letters of support with efforts of D.P.W. staff. Al Hawkins will develop a draft letter and circulate it for comment via email.

- **Training bill**

The training bill was voted upon favorably by the Public Safety Committee, it has now been referred to the Appropriations Committee. Apparently if the bill stays within the Appropriations Committee there is no deadline for action.

Staff from the Office of Fiscal Analysis has been asking several questions of Jeff Morrissette relative to statewide training activity and associated costs. It appears that they are in the process of trying to verify information that came from Jeff and his staff and was included in testimony by John Brady.

7. Other items from membership

Don Ouillette noted that the preliminary report from the Baltimore Fire Department regarding the February death of a recruit firefighter in a training fire conducted in an acquired structure was available on the internet. Don recommended that everyone access and review that report. The report cites thirty-six separate sections of N.F.P.A. 1403 that were apparently violated during the subject training exercise.

One area of concern was the assignment of students in the class as the R.I.T. team.

The Division Chief in charge of training has been fired. Two other officers have been placed on suspension.

There was a recent program at the C.F.A. that was put on by fire officials from Pennsylvania. That presentation covered a training incident where an instructor died in a live fire training evolution.

Ted Schroll reported that there is an initiative underway during this legislative session to remove the state cap on bond funding.

Paul Perrotti inquired on behalf of Jim Trzaski about the status of the equipment promised from the State Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Fit testing machines, LCD projectors and notebook computers had been offered to the regional fire schools quite some time ago. Al Hawkins will contact Wayne Sandford to inquire about the status.

Chet Haber reported on a scheduled tour of the Kingston, Rhode Island training facility and burn building. That tour is scheduled for this Saturday. Anyone interested can meet at the fire school at 10:00.

Jim Wilkinson reported that Fire Service Day at the Capital is scheduled for April 24th. He encourages anyone available to attend and help to represent the regional fire schools.

Rich Nicol reported on the planning of a magnet school in the Hartford area. That school will specialize in Public Safety, with programs to train on Police, Emergency Medical Services and Fire. The projected budget is \$30 million.

Rich Winn reported that the High School in Torrington has been in the discussion stages about the use of the Burrville Regional Fire School for an alternate education program on the fire service.

8. Next meeting date

There was suggestion that consideration be given to rotating the Education Committee meeting to the various regional fire schools so that those who were new to the committee would have a chance to visit the various schools. There was not a lot of support expressed for the idea. Al Hawkins suggested that we bring it up again at a subsequent meeting. There could be more support for the plan as the weather improves.

The next Education Committee meeting will be on April 26, 2007 at 19:00 at the Wethersfield Company #3.

The meeting was adjourned at 21:18 (motion by Haber second by Stankye)

Submitted by:
Al Hawkins, chairman