



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



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**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2009 MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Kowalski, Mitchell, Nicol, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

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

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Carozza called on guests to provide self introductions.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Fritz Hilbert, Chief of Mystic Fire Department; a nominee to the Commission replacing Commissioner Wilkinson representing the Connecticut State Firefighters Association; Bruce Kelly, Fairfield County Haz Mat; Bill Trisler and Jim Carroll, CFA Program Managers and Carlo Piacentini, CFA Adjunct Instructor.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 2009 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2009 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report January 15, 2009 – February 14, 2009.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Walsh and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Kowalski to approve the staff report for the period of January 15, 2009 – February 14, 2009. Motion carried.

Commissioner Murphy arrived at 9:49 am.

Chairman Carozza stated that the Commission had a presentation before moving forward.

State Fire Administrator Morrissette recognized Executive Secretary Yvonne Lewis for attaining 10 years of state service. He said as January 23, 2009 Ms. Lewis has five years of service with the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and was previously employed by the Office of Legislative Management for five years.

Chairman Carozza presented Ms. Lewis with a certificate in grateful appreciation and recognition of ten years of loyal and conscientious service to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Ms. Lewis said thanks and it is a pleasure to serve the Commission.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding the budget. He said we had an opportunity to meet with the Appropriations Regulation and Protection Subcommittee on Thursday of last week to review and defend the agency's budget. He said there were a number of representatives of the Regional Fire Schools in attendance in addition to Commissioner Nicol and Ted Schroll of the CSFA. He said there were very few questions regarding the operational aspect of the budget. Most of the questions centered on the Supplemental Grant program as well as the Entry Level Training Reimbursement grant program. He said we distributed to Commissioners this morning a reconciliation of the FY2010 and 2011 budgets as recommended by the Governor. He said the document illustrates the overall budget and the impact to the various accounts. He also said Chris Tracy was in attendance at the work session, representing the CSFA Education Committee specifically to respond to any questions related to the Regional Schools operating budget accounts. He said overall the questions were very positive and he felt that some of the questions sounded as if the legislators wanted to provide additional funding to support the grant programs. He asked Commissioner Nicol if he wanted to add anything.

Commissioner Nicol said he got the same feeling that it looks like there may be an opportunity to restore some of the funding that the Governor eliminated as part of her recommended budget.

Mr. Morrissette asked if there were any questions regarding the detailed summary that was distributed.

Mr. Morrissette added that some Commissioners may be aware that in the past several days the Governor released her third Deficit Mitigation Plan and the Commission was not impacted by it. He said it's also his understanding that the majority is developing their own Deficit Mitigation Plan to offset the Governor's and as part of that plan there was a proposal to eliminate the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS). There was an effort by DEMHS in the past 24 hours to have a number of fire and police chiefs go up to the Capitol to defend that. He said in speaking with Deputy Commissioner Sandford of DEHMS last evening the Democrat controlled Majority informed them that the proposal is now off the table. It appears this proposal may have been to counter the Governor's recommendation to eliminate a number of legislative boards and commissions. Mr. Morrissette said the Legislative leadership is supposed to possibly release their plan as early as tomorrow. Preliminary indications are that the Commission is not part of that plan which is good although now that they had to take DEMHS off the table, he doesn't know if they have to come up with a proposal with an equal amount of cost savings which could impact this agency. He said we'll keep Commissioners apprised.

Mr. Morrisette reported regarding staffing. He said he had an opportunity to speak with all but one of the Temporary Worker Retirees (TWR) whose positions were not re-authorized by the Governor. He indicated he did thank them all for their efforts as part of their support of the agency for many years. He said a couple of the individuals had offered to continue working on a voluntary basis just because they love what they do.

Commissioner Nicol asked how many people are on the TWR list.

Mr. Morrisette replied there are six plus one additional individual that was recently hired. When it was discovered that the individual was a TWR situation, the decision was made that it was not going to be supported by the Administration so unfortunately the individual was actually interviewed and hired without an ability to continue their service.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Nicol stated that there has not been a meeting since our last Commission meeting. He said there will be a meeting on Thursday evening. He said due to scheduling, the meeting will not be held at the usual locale in Wethersfield instead the Committee will meet at the Berlin fire station at 7pm.

Mr. Morrisette added one item as it relates to the Hartford County project that we did receive notification from Department of Public Works (DPW) that we still have an issue regarding the land here at Bradley Airport. He said he's aware that part of the process is they have to go to the FAA for approval of construction projects and the FAA will determine what the benefits to aviation will be. He said since there is an indirect benefit somehow there was a discussion with Bradley and it appears that in order to have the land approved some structure concessions may need to be made to Bradley International Airport to allow them to accomplish certain type of training. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow morning with DPW, DOT and representatives from Hartford County Fire Emergency Plan to discuss the current status of our land request.

Moving to item 4c.) FY09 Supplemental Grant Program Update – Mr. Morrisette gave updates regarding status of grant programs. He reported that for the Supplemental Grant program currently there are still 25 fire companies that have not responded to us. He said we have a balance of just over \$79,000 in that particular account and that is inclusive of those fire companies that requested vouchers and those that have not responded to make a selection. He said we've spent more than 50% of the funding but he's still concerned that such a large balance exists.

Commissioner Blaschik arrived at 9:55 am.

Moving to item 4d.) Entry-Level Training Reimbursement Update – Mr. Morrisette reported regarding the Entry-Level Training Reimbursement program that we've encumbered \$424,000 out of the \$555,000 in that account and paid out \$369,000 thus far. He said we are fast approaching the balance within that account and this does not include numbers from the current recruit class which should add about \$80,000 to the total so we're going to be very close. He said he hopes we don't exceed the \$555,000 because we probably won't have any means to provide reimbursement. He said the other issue he

wanted to mention under matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff is that we are experiencing delays in turning around certification results. He said we did send out a listserv message to that effect late last week. We have a technological issue which he's not sure has been corrected as of yet but it should be very soon. He said we're probably better than eight weeks out for test results and it's now compounded the fact we now offer 27 levels of certification and the staffing is the same as when we had 13 levels of certification. While some of the levels are very lightly utilized, some of the other high volume levels of certification now have multiple internal tests. He said last month the Commission had approved plans for the five separate tests for FFI/FFII combined. He said while we are making strides without additional staffing, we are certainly over what our regulations state for results processing. He said we really need to look into some type of automated system and we've been trying to move in that direction. He said he's making the Commission aware of this now because he anticipates it will cause problems at the end of the fiscal year as we try to pay out all of the entry level training claims by the close of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if we can appropriate monies out of the Auxiliary accounts to pay for support.

Mr. Morrisette replied in terms of staffing no. He said we can certainly utilize the money but we won't be allowed to bring in temporary workers. He said we will have to rely more on overtime and additional internal resources being put toward the effort.

Moving to item 4e.) 2009 Legislative Session Update – Mr. Morrisette said we've provided the latest legislative tracking chart from Ted Schroll. He said we had a number of public hearings in the past few weeks some as late as yesterday. He also stated that Fire Service Day has been selected as Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Capitol and there will be tables staffed by representatives of the various fire service organizations as well as some type of reception. He also reported that we continue to receive a lot of legislative inquiries and the most recent was a request regarding revenue from Senator Stillman, Co-Chair of the Public Safety and Security committee. He said they are looking very closely at revenues that agencies are receiving and the potential is that they would look at sweeping any money from the Extension and Auxiliary accounts, so we are working on and will transmit the information to her today. Additionally, there have been regular inquiries by members of the legislature on a whole host of diverse issues.

Moving to item 5a.) Certification Regulation Interpretation - Director of Certification McGowan said he had a few updates from the Certification division. He said he hopes Commissioners received a copy of the Certification Regulations that he is asking for their opinion on today. He said earlier this month an issue was presented to him and he thought best to seek from the Commission an interpretation of what the term "fire department" means with regards to the State Regulations for the Commission. As it reads right now under section 7-323-78 Definition of terms "fire department" means the Agency that provides fire suppression and/or fire prevention services to a state, county, municipality, organized fire district or institution; also any recognized fire education or training program. Specifically he had been asked if it might be possible for Commission employees while not currently a member of a career or volunteer fire department to be

certified should it benefit their position as an instructor or other support staff. He said this also comes on the heels of one of his goals this year which is to go back and review our Certification Regulations which have not undergone a comprehensive review since 2005. He said although he's not ready yet to look at that document this particular item came up. He said he's specifically asking for the Commission's interpretation of the phrase and meaning of "fire department" and whether we could construe that to include employees here at the Academy be they full time adjunct or staff members.

Mr. Morrissette offered an example stating we would have a number of adjuncts who may be retired from their specific fire department however they may be involved with the training of individuals to a level of certification but may not be holders of that certification themselves. This would allow them to go through the testing process to achieve certification to that level. Mr. Morrissette said we believe that the current definition does allow these individuals to be certified however we wanted to pass it by this body first.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if this would be restricted only to the Connecticut Fire Academy.

Mr. McGowan replied not necessarily rather, he just used that as his first example.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to table the Certification Regulation Interpretation that would allow staff and adjuncts who may not be affiliated with a fire department to seek certification.

Moving to item 5b.) Haz-Mat Technician Prerequisite Requirements – Mr. McGowan stated that as a result of our Awareness and Operations certification now comes the question of prerequisites for Haz-Mat Technician. The 472 standard has a stipulation the prerequisite for Technician being Awareness and Operations. As the agency has never certified until recently to the Awareness and Operations level we have not had these certified levels as a requirement. He said he's looking at it from the narrow focus of the NFPA certification standard and not from OSHA compliance nor does he want to take away from the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) at the local level.

Mr. Morrissette offered clarification to the Commission stating that historically we certify individuals as Technicians but we hadn't internally within the Commission had the authority to certify Awareness and Operations because that was always left up to the AHJ. He said now that we offer Awareness and Operations certification it is the interpretation of the NFPA 472 standard that you would be certifying Awareness certifying Operational to enter into Technician. He said at present there are very few people with Awareness and Operational certification from the Commission. The majority entering the Tech level would be certified by the AHJ typically the local fire chief.

Commissioner Brady said he foresees a real problem unless we push this out five or six years because the next group of people in Technician classes care going to be folks who have been in the fire service a long time so if we're going to put a requirement like that we would need to push that date out.

Mr. Morrisette said we have not had any discussions with the DEMHS Subcommittee that deals with the regional Haz-Mat teams to determine their opinion.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that the legality of it is that the OSHA standard says that they shall be certified by the AHJ initially but if you look at the 472 Standard it says you shall be certified in Awareness and Operational. It doesn't say state or agency certified it says shall be certified so theoretically we can interpret that as saying that the AHJ certified you prior to this and obviously the migration is to have the state or the Commission certify you but right now we can interpret that very broadly recognizing the AHJ. He said he would advise that we interpret the Standard more broadly.

Commissioner Walsh added that we also have to take into consideration municipalities that do their own training.

A short discussion period followed.

Mr. Morrisette asked Bruce Kelly a representative of the Fairfield County Haz-Mat to comment.

Mr. Kelly said basically five years down the road everyone will be trained to the standards that the state set forth. He said even his own department since he does most of the training for Haz-Mat he's taking that program and putting it towards meeting the requirement. He said his main concern is that people are qualified it's not just that they took the old course and they can now wave the magic wand and take the Technician course. He said when he took the original Technician course back in the 80's he'd already taken the 40 hour course through Field Safety Corp in Stamford and when he went to the course he knew more than the Instructors did so it's not a question of the 40 hour course not been qualified enough. He said the Operations course that the state has now put forth is a standard that we need to go to.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to table the Haz-Mat Technician Prerequisite requirements until we get more information perhaps from the ProBoard to have a better understanding on our direction. Motion carried.

Moving to item 6- Comments from the public – There were none.

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners or staff – Chairman Carozza called for a motion to go into Executive Session for personnel matters.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to go into Executive Session. Motion carried.

The Commission went into Executive Session at 10:22 am.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Nicol and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to close the Executive Session with no action taken. Motion carried.

The Commission adjourned the Executive Session at 10:50 am.

Chairman Carozza asked if there are any other matters to be raised by Commissioners or staff.

Commissioner Blaschik asked about the construction or modification of fire stations in the Stimulus package and wondered if anyone had more information on the process.

Commissioner Kowalski said he looked online and they are looking at doing it the same way as they did the Fire Grant program and it is suppose to be ready for a May or June kick-off. He also said the package is not supposed to interfere with any other grants such as the Fire Act or SAFER grant.

Commissioner Wilkinson added that there was something on a website that mentioned a cap of \$15 million per grant.

Chairman Carozza asked if there was any plan to hold a meeting at the Capitol this year.

Mr. Morrissette said we certainly could. He said we've held one in conjunction with Fire Service Day but this year it is scheduled for Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. He said we could hold the meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> as scheduled or move the meeting to Wednesday but we would have to notify office of the Secretary of the State and publish it. He said we would check on the availability of meeting space at the Capitol.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Walsh and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blaschik to research changing the April Commission meeting date of April 28<sup>th</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup> the same date as Fire Service Day at the Capitol. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Walsh to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:52 am.

Dated:

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Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary  
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control