



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



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**MINUTES OF THE MAY 31, 2005 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Peter Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Blaschik, Nicol, Ouellette, Kowalski, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewis, Morrissette, O'Neil, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Mr. Morrissette introduced 3 guests to the meeting; they were Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association (CSFA). Daniel Milewski, former Commissioner, Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and Ron Vietts from the Commission's Business Office. He welcomed them to the meeting.

State Fire Administrator Morrissette stated he was very pleased to recognize two people today the first being Ron Vietts. He asked Peter O'Neil to make a brief presentation.

Fiscal Administrative Supervisor, Peter O'Neil said that Ron Vietts works in the Business Office and is responsible for agency payroll, travel authorizations and vendor payments. He said Ron has done quite a bit for the agency behind the scenes. Ron worked for a few other agencies before joining the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control in 1988. He presented Ron with a plaque and extended congratulations in recognition of his 30 years of service to the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Morrissette also recognized Daniel Milewski a long standing Commissioner representing the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut (UPFFA) who had served with the Commission since December 30, 1991. He said Mr. Milewski had served with dignity and was a good advocate for his constituency.

Chairman Carozza made a brief presentation to Mr. Milewski on behalf of the Commission and presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and Connecticut's Fire Service.

Mr. Milewski said it has been a real pleasure working with such a dedicated group of individuals who are out to advance the Fire Service. He said the staff and members of the Commission were all fantastic.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2005 meeting. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approve the staff report for the period of April 15, 2005 through May 14, 2005. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget Update – Mr. Morrissette reported that the State had still not adopted a Budget as yet. He noted, as indicated in the latest staff report, the last draft of the budget he had seen had \$100,000 added to revive the Limited Access Highway Program. He said he raised some concerns with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) specifically to our Budget Analyst and had spoken with several Legislators in regard to what the proposal would do if was enacted. Specifically, it would place us in a deficiency scenario probably within 3 or 4 months due to the anticipated volume of claims. He has not seen any budget implementer language as of yet. The language in the implementer bill would outline how the program would be managed.

Commissioner Nicol said currently we have no legislation as before where payments were made for each call. He asked if the \$100,000 wouldn't be feasible to revive the process and administer a one-time Voucher program like we did this year.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that is why he raised the issue, specifically if a line item is included for the Limited Access Highway. If it is the specific intent to revive the previous program the proposed funding is not sufficient. A Voucher would be more manageable and ensure all eligible fire companies receive some benefit.

Commissioner Nicol asked if we thought something in the form of legislation would be done this year as they only have until June 8th until the legislative session ends.

Mr. Morrissette replied that Budget implementer language would be desirable to prevent any misunderstanding. He said Ted Schroll is here today and inquired whether he was aware of any information concerning any implementer bills.

Mr. Schroll remarked that he had not seen any specific language to date.

Commissioner Nicol asked if it was practical to do something out of the Public Safety Committee in the form of legislation to govern the \$100,000.

Mr. Schroll remarked that there is always a possibility, but he wasn't aware that funding had been put back into the Budget.

Commissioner Nicol remarked that he would hate to see the \$100,000 pulled from the Budget because there would be potential problems.

Mr. Morrisette said the funding is there as a place holder and it's a Budget discussion issue amongst Legislators.

Mr. Morrisette reported that as noted in the staff report James Scavetta a Qualified Craft Worker has tendered his resignation following 10 years of service. His last day was May 20th. Fortunately, the hiring freeze was recently lifted and specific positions are being reviewed and considered for refill on a case by case basis. We contacted OPM to make them aware of the vacancy and began development of our refill justification. Internally we've taken a look, specifically at the position classified as Qualified Craft Worker-Electrical and we have chosen to reclass the position to a few pay positions lower. The position is titled General Trades Worker which would offer us greater flexibility in terms of the type of duties/responsibilities that the person can perform. He said from a labor perspective we've been fortunate with all of our employees working within their job classifications. Our first step to refill is to verify whether any of the three individuals currently on a SEBAC are interested in the position. If so, we are bound to hire the most senior person on the layoff list. If no one on the list is interested, we are then able to look at any transfer lists and then open the position to the general public.

He also reported that we're moving to refill part-time Fire Service Instructor vacancies. We expect to fill approximately thirty (30) positions within the next month or two.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson reported that there were 2 recent meetings to report on. The first meeting was held at the Legislative Office Building on occasion of Fire Service Day although he was not present that day. The meeting was convened between various members of the Committee including Jeff Morrisette, representatives of the Department of Public Works (DPW), Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Management Homeland Security (DEMHS) and several Legislators. During the course of the discussion a number of different items were discussed and the primary point was the need to pass legislation to further DPW's authority as it applies to the Regional School redevelopment project. They discussed the logistics of establishing a holding agency for the properties of the various Schools. A concept was discussed about taking the operational funds of the Regional Fire Schools from under the umbrella of the Comptrollers Office and placing it under the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control's (CFPC) budget. Further discussions surrounded more active utilization of both the Fire Academy and the Regional Schools as it applies to future Homeland Security training issues. The second meeting was that of the regular Education Committee which met on May 24th in Wethersfield. Much of that agenda was revisiting some of the issues discussed at an earlier meeting held in early May. He said Committee Chairman, Al Hawkins reported that since that meeting all of the Regional Fire Schools are in support of moving the operational funding from the Comptroller's office to CFPC with the caveat that they all want to maintain their individual local control. He also reported that the

New Haven project is moving along in a timely fashion with the architect and engineers developing their proposals. Additional work needs to be done to address the improvements to be made at the Fire Academy under the auspices of the Hartford County Regional School. Discussions with the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the need for additional land have been slow. They are also starting work on developing an RFP to acquire properties for the Valley and Willimantic Schools. The next CSFA Education Committee meeting is scheduled to take place June 23rd in Wethersfield.

Mr. Morrissette added that there is a meeting scheduled this afternoon with DOT as it relates to property at Bradley Airport. We've had a request for land in for several years and have had various meetings with DOT staff and more recently with DOT Commissioner Korta and Commissioner Fleming from DPW. We hope at this afternoon's meeting we will be presented with some land options.

Commissioner Kowalski asked if there is a requirement for a vote regarding the budget issue and asked what the policy is for us.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that he was told after the May 11th meeting that the Regional Fire School line items would be moved under the Commission's budget. Discussions with the Regional Schools would need to take place regarding details of this move and how the funding would be administered. It now appears that because of timing this late in the Legislative Session that this will not happen this year and it would be premature to do anything regarding establishing policies.

Moving to agenda item 4c.) Service Voucher Update – Mr. Morrissette reported that we've made contact with all eligible fire companies. The final tally is 95 entities will use their \$530 as a voucher and 70 as a direct payment to their fire company. He reminded Commissioner's that as they go to their county and organizational meetings to mention that the vouchers have to be committed by June 15th.

Moving to item 4d.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrissette said we have an updated Bill tracking chart. He said Ted Schroll is here and if anyone has any questions on any specific bills or issues he may be able to answer them.

Mr. Schroll gave an overview of several Bills for this legislative session. He also said the issue of career firefighter's being able to volunteer has surfaced again and an amendment is being proposed.

Commissioner Nicol added that at the CSFA Training Committee meeting a report was issued on the progress of the plans for the New Haven School. The original plan was approximately \$5 million and there is talk of constructing an indoor Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) center. The architect's estimate as of now is about \$2.5 million over budget.

Moving to item 5a.) Program Sanctioning –Mr. Piskura referenced an MOU distributed this morning drafted between the Stamford Fire Department and the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. He said this document was created subsequent to the Commissions' policy enactment. The draft MOU was sent to the Stamford Fire Department for review and comment. Their requested amendments have been received. The Stamford Fire Department does not want to be the named entity in the MOU. They would prefer it be the Fairfield County HAZ MAT Team as the named entity. Another area noted was that four (4) members of the Stamford Police Department Bomb Squad are allowed to participate in the program for educational purposes only. Currently, by our agency Regulations they will not be allowed to sit for the certification exam. It appears that the Stamford Fire Department would like to see the MOU as either longstanding with no end dates or as a template for future deliveries. He said from his perspective each request should be handled on a program by program basis. He stated we have to move quickly to execute the MOU as this course is already scheduled.

Commissioner Kowalski inquired whether the Fairfield Regional Haz-Mat Response Team was a formal organization. He said he would have concerns with an organization signing a document if it was not a fire department or incorporated entity.

Mr. Piskura indicated he will have further discussions with Stamford regarding execution of this document.

Commissioner Johnson arrived at 10:23 AM.

Mr. Morrissette said since our last meeting he received a call from the Stamford Fire Chief regarding concerns with issues identified in the Commission's last meeting minutes.

Commissioner Ouellette asked when the Stamford Haz-Mat Tech program is starting.

Mr. Piskura stated that it already began in the beginning of May. He said he was assured by Captain Newman that they were following the elements of the draft MOU. He said he does not have a problem with what they're doing and our Program Manager Bill Auclair has observed the program at least twice. The quality of the program speaks for itself and there are no concerns with that aspect. According to Captain Newman, the go to person for the Fairfield Regional Haz- Mat Response Team is Chief McCarthy who is now Chief of Norwalk Fire Department.

Chairman Carozza asked how soon we could attempt to resolve this issue.

Mr. Piskura said he would attempt to contact Chief McCarthy today and it may be handled over the phone or he certainly would meet whenever they're available.

Commissioner Kowalski said we need to get this issue resolved very soon and if there needs to be a meeting with Commissioners present he would be happy to participate.

Commissioner Johnson added that it would be good to have a few Commissioners present to support the Director of Training and Fire Administrator.

Chairman Carozza asked Commissioners Wilkinson, Stankye and Johnson to be available to attend a meeting should one be necessary.

Moving to item 5b.) NIMS Training Implementation – Mr. Piskura stated that we're offering pre-orientation classes to the public sector because the session generally last for 3 hours because of questions. We ask that they bring in a cross section of the municipality and we're getting a good response. Currently we have about 50 requests for that 2 hour delivery and are utilizing our full-time staff to deliver the programs. Today we had 2 people return from a NIMS Train-The-Trainer in Maryland at the National Fire Academy (NFA) which at the very end became very controversial because he received several emails that the NIMS course sponsored by the NFA was not NIMS compliant. The final day of the class he received an email that they finally made it NIMS compliant. He said these are the types of courses that we will make available throughout the state for various components of NIMS compliance. He also stated that the NIMS implementation training matrix distributed at the last Commission meeting was brought before the Chiefs Association at their last meeting in Wethersfield and the Career Chiefs for review and approval. He also said that the State Fire Administrator is the Chair of the DEMHS Training Committee and he would like to present the matrix to them and say that this has been approved by the representatives of the Connecticut Fire Service; we would like to see that entered as one of our goals to be NIMS compliant for the Fire Service discipline along with all the other disciplines like DOT, DPW, Law Enforcement, EMS and all the others and they will each do their own version of that document which is a relatively important document.

Moving to item 5c.) National Certification Registration – Mr. Piechota stated that some changes have occurred over the fee charged for national registration and accompanying certificate from the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board). He stated that he wanted to bring the Commission up to date on where we are and how we certify firefighters so if the Commission wishes to make any changes we can do it now. For calendar year 2004 the total number of persons eligible to be certified by the Pro Board were 1, 396, for International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) 1, 352. The difference is we don't have as many levels accredited by IFSAC as by the Pro Board. As the Commission is aware upon completion of state certification, the Certification Registrar will complete an application for the individual for IFSAC and the Pro Board as they're certified and send that application to the individual along with their Connecticut Certificate. The individual then signs the application for one or both and sends a check to the organization for \$15 each. Last year of the 1,350 approximate people eligible to be certified nationally, approximately 400 availed themselves of the opportunity to the Pro Board which is about 29%. He said IFSAC did not provide the final numbers as yet but he believes it's about the same. Our current fee policy has been in place for about 11 years. We charge \$5 per person for practical examination and \$7.50

per person for a written examination. In 2004 we gave 1,819 written exam. He said he offers for consideration that if the Commission were able to provide national certification to all the individuals who are eligible for both organizations, it would be a significant value added to the certification process in our state. If the Commission wanted to do that at no additional charge to the individuals, it would be a fiscal impact of about \$10,500 based on the 2004 numbers. The difference is the Pro Board has just reduced their fee from \$7.50 to \$6.50 per person if the agency registers all individuals it certifies. He said IFSAC only charges \$1 per person and as far as we can tell the difference are some structural differences. The Pro Board is completely self sufficient as they pay rent to the NFPA and the salary of their support staff. He believes Oklahoma State University (OSU) underwrites some of IFSAC's expenses. The Pro Board pays for persons from accredited entities to travel to training and education seminars and advisory committee meetings at no expense to them versus IFSAC who requires individuals who participate to pay their own way. The Pro Board just made a change to their site visit fees to individual agencies and it will be a flat \$500 and they'll absorb the rest of the expenses. IFSAC on the other hand charges a fee for the application and the agencies are responsible for all expenses of a 3 person team. Additionally, IFSAC charges a fee for each new level for which an entity is accredited.

Commissioner Kowalski said it would be helpful to have the figures in writing and we would probably want to look at the Commission's budget before we move to spend any money at this point.

Commissioner Blashick asked if the Fire Inspectors would be included in that.

Mr. Piechota replied that Fire Inspectors would fall in the same category.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Nicol to table this item for the next meeting.

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff – Commissioner Nicol stated that at the last Education and Training Committee meeting a report was made by both Don Ouillette and Bill Seward, Director of the New Haven School indicating that they're pursuing, with the reconstruction of the New Haven Fire School, a butler building which would provide a facility to conduct indoor CPAT and he thought about the possibility with the ongoing discussion to provide a Burn Building in Hartford at or near the Fire Academy. He said he wondered if we could see about adding an indoor CPAT center as long as it does not increase the project's budget.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that an indoor CPAT facility would best be located in the central part of the state if it were to serve as a statewide center. He did note however that one of the biggest areas that he believes feels disenfranchised is Fairfield County and that was one of the issues mentioned in his conversation with Chief McGrath last week. The

Chief expressed concerns with the weather related cancellations at the Meriden facility and that the Coastal Fire Chiefs group is looking at potential locations in Fairfield County. If New Haven comes through with being able to support indoor CPAT Testing that would go a long way to rectify the weather related issues. Administration of CPAT on any level beyond a single fire department is a significant undertaking. He stated that we had requested funding in our Capital Budget to build out an indoor facility in Meriden sometime in the future but whether that funding becomes available we'll have to wait and see. New Haven is our primary target right now and we've also been contacted by Chief Struble in Wallingford as there is a closed power plant in that town that he would like us to look at for possible use.

A brief discussion period followed.

Mr. Morrissette mentioned that as a reminder, a number of Commission appointments expire at the end of August and we will be sending letters to the statewide fire service organizations within the next few weeks reminding them to follow-up with the Governor's office quickly. At this time it appears that Commissioners Haber and Johnson may not be seeking reappointment.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:09 AM.

Dated:

Edward F. Haber, Secretary
Commission on Fire
Prevention and Control