



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



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MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 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, Dagon, Hilbert, Kowalski, Mitchell, Murphy, Nelson, Nicol and Walsh.

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

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the flag.

State Fire Administrator Morrissette introduced Barry Rickert, Retired Danbury Fire Marshal currently employed by J.P. McGuire and Bill Trisler, CFA Program Manager.

Moving to item 2) Approval of the Minutes of the September 29, 2009 meeting.

A **MOTION** was made Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Murphy to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2009 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 3) Staff Report September 15, 2009 – October 14, 2009.

A **MOTION** was made Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Mitchell to approve the staff report for the period of September 15, 2009 - October 14, 2009. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrissette reported regarding budget and staffing. He said we have received guidance documentation for the FY2011 mid-term budget adjustments proposals. He said last month he had detailed some significant cuts to the current fiscal year budget in the amount of \$175,000 impacting both our Personal Services and Other Expense accounts. He said for FY2011 they are seeking an additional 5% reduction of which he needs to provide to OPM a detailed reduction option by November 30th. At this point we are still trying to figure out how to implement the original reduction as these cuts were targeted to contracts and fees assessed by the Department of Information Technology (DoIT). He said the reductions are not feasible in terms of how we conduct contracting within the agency. Thus, the savings will need to be achieved through other means. He said he wanted to make Commissioners aware of that reduction requirement.

Mr. Morrissette also reported regarding staffing. Staff member Ed Bycenski who has been out on extended medical leave is tentatively planning to return to the office on November 2nd. He submitted a request to the Governor's office requesting an extension to the Temporary Worker Retiree (TWR) status of Ron Vietts who has been covering for Mr. Bycenski. Mr. Bycenski has asked for flexibility because of his medical appointments. Mr. Morrissette stated that he did receive the approval for the extension of the TWR position for an additional 60 days. He asked if Commissioners had any questions.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Nicol reported that the Education Committee met on October 22nd in Wethersfield at Co No. 3. Project Manager Don Ouillette reported that the Bond Commission will meet on October 30 at 10:30 A.M. at the L.O.B. to appropriate \$4.1 million for the construction of the New Haven Fire School. Mr. Ouillette also reported that the Hartford Regional Fire School project is scheduled to go to bid in late November or early December. Committee Chairman, Al Hawkins indicated that letters of support for property acquisition are being prepared on behalf of the Willimantic School. Mr. Ouillette stated that a Phase II environmental study would be necessary for the Burrville School. Director of the Hartford County School Chet Haber is to set up Legislative meeting for December. State Fire Administrator Morrissette stated that he had submitted the request for 2nd Quarter Regional School budget allotment. Mr. Hawkins reported that Northeastern Utilities is replacing their fire extinguishers and indicated that any Regional Fire School in need of extinguishers should contact him. Mr. Morrissette reported that Jim Fleming of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association (CARS) would be donating eight C.P.R training manikins to the Regional Fire Schools. They will make a presentation on November 5th at 6P.M. at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. Mr. Morrissette also indicated that the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI) is planning to pilot test a certified instructor program for live-fire burn instructors on March 20 & 21, 2010. Rich Winn announced that Chet Haber was the recipient of the C.F.D.I.A. Richard P. Sylvia Instructor of the Year Award. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on December 3rd.

Mr. Morrissette said if any Commissioner would like to attend the CARS donation ceremony on November 5th to let him know so he can RSVP on their behalf.

Commissioner Nicol also stated that the Bond Commission meeting will be held on Friday October 30th at the LOB in hearing room 1E at 10:30am. Mr. Hawkins is asking people to attend, in uniform, to show support as this will be the first Regional School that will be approved for construction.

Moving to item 4c.) FY 10 Supplemental Grant Program – Mr. Morrissette reported that to date we have 118 responses out of the 161 fire companies eligible to participate in the Supplemental Grant program. He said 66 fire companies requested direct payment and 52 requested vouchers. Mr. Morrissette said both the Supplemental Grant and Entry Level Training Reimbursement programs have generated a tremendous amount of telephone calls and requests. He said we are holding the processing of payments until Mr. Bycenski returns to work.

Moving to item 4d.) FY 10 Entry Level Training Reimbursement – Mr. Morrissette said after last month's meeting we made some minor revisions to the policy and sent it to fire chiefs along with the pre-authorization form. He said we've had quite a few requests for reimbursement for individuals who did become certified after July 1st. He said there has not been any push back as a result of the policy changes approved last month.

Moving to item 4e.) Capitol Region Education Council's Public Safety Academy (CREC-PSA) Update – Mr. Morrissette asked Mr. Piskura to provide an update to Commissioners on the CREC PSA. Mr. Piskura said the PSA in Enfield is anticipating graduating their first class in 2012 and they expect the graduation to occur in their newly constructed building to be built

somewhere in the Greater Hartford area. They are still occupying their Enfield facility. There is a new Principal, this new school year. The first Principal that started the school has relocated to Colorado to complete his Ph.D. He said it's an interesting process to see and be involved with as more people are becoming aware of the school. He said they want to be invited to attend any of our functions so if you're looking for a speaker for a convention type function and you want a display they are willing to staff a booth to talk about the Public Safety Magnet School. He asked if Commissioners had any questions.

Chairman Carozza asked if there was a date set for the graduation.

Mr. Piskura replied no because it's so far out they haven't determined a date as yet.

Moving to item 4f.) DMV Q Testing – Mr. Morrissette said as a follow up to last month's discussion regarding the DMV Q testing and DMV's position of not having adequate staffing to continue. He said there was a meeting subsequent to our Commission meeting with the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association as well as it was a discussion item with the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs group. He said he doesn't know if any representatives here have any follow up from their organizations on the issue. Our limitation are the same as the DMV thus if we were to take this responsibility on, we would have to establish it as a new program with dedicated per-diem staff. He said there does seem to be interest and support that this agency strongly consider taking on this new duty. He said the issue is still alive and he met with our Assistant Attorney General and Bob McGarry from the DMV a few weeks back to discuss the issue and determine whether there were any legal, liability or regulatory concerns. The Attorney General's representative felt the process for DMV to delegate the Q endorsement testing administration to our office could be a very simple process achieved solely through a MOU between DMV and the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. The key issue was to ensure that DMV provides thorough training and that it's documented. Also, the DMV Commissioner should provide a letter to each testing agent authorizing them to act on his behalf. He said he did a review of the potential fiscal impact of this new activity. A fee of approximately \$40 would need to be assessed each candidate. This fee would cover both the personnel expenses and administrative costs of the program. He said he understand that some departments pay nothing at the present time and others pay \$400-\$600 for an inspector to travel to their department for a test.

Commissioner Kowalski asked relative to the pricing schedule if that is just for the test.

Mr. Morrissette said the fee would be just for the test. It would be up to the department whether or not they want to contract with the Academy or other entity for that training.

Mr. Piskura added that the Q training program was handed-off as a Train-the-Trainer some time ago thus fire departments may deliver it locally.

Moving to item 4g.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrissette distributed a copy of a legislative proposal for consideration during the 2010 Legislative Session. The proposed new language is underlined and items to be deleted are bracketed. He said the proposal revises CGS 3-123e specifically as it relates to disbursement of funds to the CSFA for Regional Fire Schools, Regional Emergency Dispatch Centers and state County Fire Radio based Networks. When the Regional School pass-thru funding came to the Commission a few years back; that statute was

never amended to reflect current practices. Also we propose adding language under CGS 7-3231 similar to what was reviewed and approved relative to the Commission being the designated entity to approve future Regional Fire School designation.

Moving to item 5a.) EMS Testing Revision – Mr. Morrissette said some Commissioners may be aware that the Department of Public Health Office of Emergency Medical Services (DPH OEMS) has published some changes to their testing processes as it relates to EMT, etc. He said we've received a number of calls and the changes have received a lot of discussion statewide. These changes were just announced on October 20th and there is really little to no time to make the changes and to some it's a significant fiscal impact. These changes may present a good opportunity for the Commission to fill a void that's been created by these new requirements.

Mr. Piskura added that it's not just the fiscal impact but they are shifting the burden to the instructor by taking what they used to provide and making the instructor now bear the cost of providing it to their students. He said they are also hamstringing the instructor to do and follow a structured curriculum from the National Registry whereas in the past prior to their implementation; they were allowed to do an environmental scan of their operation and if they determined for example we had a particular problem with something they could take part of the curriculum and devote it to that. He said with this new policy change they can't do that so there is a significant uproar that is increasing because this is now being made public in short notice format. He said that's the feedback we are receiving so it's the fiscal impact first and secondarily it's the structured curriculum that they cannot deviate from.

Moving to item 5b.) CPCU Donation– Mr. Morrissette said for the past several years the Connecticut Property Casualty Underwriters (CPCU) has made a donation to the agency of \$1,000. He said this year they have also been generous and presented a donation in that same amount at a meeting held a few weeks ago that he and Commissioner Blaschik were invited to speak at. He asked that the Commission formally accepts the donation of \$1,000.

Mr. Piskura said the group typically asks for a list of five to ten equipment items the Academy is in need of. They like the ability to choose what item they want to dedicate the money to go toward. He said this year they chose to provide a remote control mouse for the newly installed projectors in our classrooms as well as in the existing classrooms. He said the classrooms all have upgraded audio visual equipment operated through a laptop so we're now going to have the ability for the instructor to roam the room with a remote control mouse.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brady and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Murphy to accept the CPCU donation to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5c. LMS/Database Project – Mr. Morrissette said this is for informational purposes at the present time but he wanted to bring this forth as it relates to the budget and some of the issues we faced last fiscal year with the Legislature sweeping funds from our non-appropriated accounts, specifically the agency's Extension and Auxiliary account. We may be subject to an additional sweep of funds this fiscal year thus we need to identify worthy projects to consider investing in before any sweep occurs. We have identified two possible projects, the first being funding an engineering study to address the impact of the smoke generated from the Hartford County projects Burn Building to be constructed in the Academy's rear parking lot.

As this project appears to be moving along and will probably go out to bid in the next 30 to 60 days we need to act. The project does not have funds for the study and engineered solution to modify the Administration Building's HVAC system. The Burn Building is expected to generate considerable smoke which this building's HVAC system was never designed to withstand. DPW estimates HVAC filtration design could cost from \$15,000 to \$20,000 and the actual cost of installation could be approximately \$100,000. The second project relates to the agency's database which has been in place for about 17 years when we transitioned from our Meriden facility to the Academy. The current 4th Dimension database is not a state standard database and is not supportable by DoIT. They have been encouraging us to migrate to something supportable. With DoIT's assistance we have been researching alternatives for some time. A Learning Management System (LMS) has been identified as being a possible fit. We might also want to take a look at the Community College system and explore whether they may have something we could piggy back upon. We need to move toward greater automation and on-line registration. We have known this for years however we have hit many dead ends in our pursuit for a solution. This LMS we identified is in use by a number of state agencies and there is a working group that meets monthly which one of our Program Managers, Mark Salafia has been attending. He said from the training side it looks very good but we haven't explored it in detail from the certification side. The initial cost to us was originally identified at approximately \$30,000 to make the modifications to the core system to meet our specific needs. There is also an annual usage charge for each registrant. There are about 60,000 + records in our database currently with about 7,000 unique users per year. He said we would find savings predominantly by eliminating a significant amount of mailing associated with registrations and confirmation, etc. He said we found out last week through Mike Varney at DoIT that he has found us some significant savings in the annual per person usage charge by providing us with 5,000 free licenses a year. Both these projects would be appropriate uses of our restricted accounts and would directly benefit Connecticut's fire service. No action is needed at this time.

Mr. Piskura added concurrently we're working on the Bookstore Point of Sale software (POS). He said we're consistently being critiqued by the State Auditor for our inventory practices and the current point of sales software has been corrupted. We keep getting upgrades to the software but it never completely solved the inventory problem. We have to replace the POS software and we're looking at an environmental scan, identify a good product and then make the purchase which will be approximately \$6,000 to \$8,000. He said we're working with the same contact at DoIT for both of the projects.

Commissioner Nicol asked regarding the restricted accounts if the expenditure would be one time or annual.

Mr. Morrisette said there would be an annual expenditure but he doesn't know at this time how it would be paid. He said when the state budget was adopted, DoIT went from a special account agency to a general fund agency so they're not sure how they will operate in the future. He said he can't really answer that question other than initially if we do move to do this we would make the payment from our Extension and Auxiliary funds.

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

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners or staff – Mr. Piskura stated that we've been involved in some changes to the Fire Service Instructor program and he asked Program Manager Bill Trisler to give a brief presentation for the changes he's implemented into the program and what he anticipates doing in the future.

Program Manager Trisler said as of January 1st we're going to transition from IFSTA's Instructor program to Jones & Bartlett's Instructor program for two reasons. The textbook itself is smaller and less volume of reading for the student but at the same time he believes it is a higher level, less to carry around, meets the objectives and we get service from Jones & Bartlett for free online coursework. He presented a brief overview of the revisions to the Fire Service Instructor program and introduced the CFA's first blending learning program in which students will complete course work online.

A brief discussion period followed the presentation.

Mr. Piskura said this audio visual presentation is a result of our partnership with the New England Disaster Training Center and the Military. He said the entire system was paid for by the Military department in our joint project with Camp Hartell. He said we had a meeting with the Military yesterday and there's been a couple of changing positions. General Lippincott is retiring and is being replaced by Lt. Col. Stanley Beckford. They anticipate we'll be able to begin scheduling classes on the props by March. The negative part of what they reported was the CT Department of Transportation (DOT) has withdrawn the availability for us to obtain two passenger rail cars that we selected out of all their surplus cars. He said General Lippincott will no longer be involved with this process and he asked permission for the State Fire Administrator to work directly with the DOT Commissioner. Mr. Piskura said he got a call coincidentally the same day from Deputy Chief Jim Beloit of the Ridgefield Volunteer fire department who said he has been working for three months on locating a chemical tank rail car for us. He is a significant stockholder and he used his status with Dow Chemical to finally get to someone who is in charge of decommissioning railroad tankers. He said we finally have a connection and we're in the process of drafting the request letter that they've asked for so we may be able to pull a chemical tanker out of upstate New York and donate it for our use here. The Military department plans on building the siding to our specifications regardless of whether we have the rolling stock or not. We are going to progress as if everything is in place and at the same time still pursue these devices. The trench prop will be built in its entirety as there is funding in place. The railroad siding project is dependent upon the donation or the purchase of railroad cars.

Commissioner Murphy asked for an update on the Live Burn Instructor certification.

Mr. Piskura replied that nothing has changed other than we had negotiated with the ISFSI about pricing and donations. He said they have yet to formalize their response to us. He said we're scheduled in March to certify live burn instructor both in a fixed facility and then we'll go up to Springfield for the Class A Burn Building. Additionally, we'll have about 24 seats and we anticipate the CFA staff to fill about half and we've offered the other half to the Regional Fire Schools as a priority. If that doesn't fill it then we'll open it up to anyone that is interested. He also said this is only a pilot so it's not a finished product and when they do it, there will be revisions. Once those revisions have been made we're expecting to be one of the reoccurring sites so we'll make that one of our standards and offer the training ourselves.

Mr. McGowan stated as a reminder the IFSAC Accreditation team will be on site November 2nd through 5th and tentatively a 1pm interview process is scheduled for Tuesday November 3rd. He said he presume they want to interview a Commissioner so if someone can be available either in person or through a telephone conversation he would appreciate the time.

Commissioner Kowalski said he participated the last time and it was a painless process.

He also said hopefully next week the final document for the junior firefighters the future of fire service in America will be coming out from the IAFC. This is a report that was started about seven months ago based on some concerns from folks across the country that there is no general standard on junior firefighters in the fire service. He said it should be a good document and he was told it went to the printer yesterday at noon and they anticipate a release at the VCOS conference in Florida next week. He said they will be sending a package to each school and the Fire Academy will get some as well as any department who wants it. He said they got good feedback from the Board of Directors of the IAFC so it should be a very good document.

Mr. Morrissette stated he had sent to Commissioner's the name of the new DEMHS Deputy Commissioner Betsy Hard, former Bloomfield Police Chief. He said he's had an opportunity to work with her in the past as a member of the DEMHS Coordinating Council.

Commissioner Kowalski said we should invite the Commissioner and Deputy to one of our Commission meetings.

Chairman Carozza took the opportunity to thank the Commission for nominating and electing him as Chairman at last month's meeting. He said had a personal function to attend and apologized for his absence.

Mr. Morrissette thanked all those who were in attendance at the state Firefighters' Memorial. He said it was a reasonable success considering the weather. He thanked Commissioner Hilbert for coordinating the bus from the New London area.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Kowalski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Hilbert to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am.

Dated:

Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Secretary