



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



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MINUTES OF THE JUNE 26, 2001 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Due to the lack of a quorum Chairman Carozza opened the meeting at 9:31 a.m. on an informational basis with the following members present: Commissioners Brammer, Kowalski, Maheu, Munkenbeck, Nicol and Wilkinson. Commissioner Vendetta arrived at 9:35 a.m. and Commissioner Munkenbeck arrived at 9:37 a.m. Commissioners Haber, Gomeau, Johnson, Milewski, Mullen and Stankye was excused. Staff members Morrissette, Lewandowski, Ouellette and Piechota were present. (A quorum was attained at 9:37 a.m.)

Guests to the meeting were identified as Dr. Joseph P. Dineen, St. Mary's Hospital, Waterbury; John A. Breslin, AMEN; Peter Talbot, Cox Communication, Ed Peruta, American Cable Productions and Rick Peruta, Wethersfield.

Chairman Carozza moved to item 5 b.), Aeromedical Program for a presentation by Dr. Dineen from St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury and John Breslin from Bethany.

Dr. Dineen distributed booklets illustrating the data collected and information pertaining to the Aeromedical Program which he and Mr. Breslin will give a brief overview on.

Mr. Breslin stated that Dr. Dineen has had a great deal of interest in improving emergency service in the shoreline area and western part of the state. He stated that he and Dr. Dineen do not represent any corporation they are just citizens who are trying to start an initiative to improve the EMS transportation in a section of the state. Their objective was to try to see what they could do to improve aeromedical service that is lacking especially along the shoreline and the southwestern part of the state. They examined what was available which was Life Star that operates out of Hartford Hospital. They operate a very small helicopter and as a result they cannot travel in any kind of bad weather or high wind so they miss at least 30% of the calls. Secondly, their capacity is limited to one patient and it's not a very fast aircraft. Contrary to the emergency services that are operated in other states, Life Star is 70% involved in transferring patients from one hospital to another and only responding 30% of the time to real emergencies which is just the opposite in other states.

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Dr. Dineen reported on recent emergencies where Life Star was not available because of bad weather. He spoke about the Sikorsky S-76 helicopter that can land in unprepared areas and felt that the Sikorsky should be considered as a mode of transportation for this proposed program. This aircraft's spacious interior maximizes efficient, full-body delivery of services and procedures. It provides smooth, quiet, level flight performance that is critical to both the patient's well being and optimal functioning of medical personnel and equipment. He stated that they do not wish to be competitive with Hartford Hospital but to be supportive. He hopes he can get Sikorsky involved in this state's aeromedical transportation. When he met with some Senators to discuss this initiative they felt that nobody knew what they were doing and that he needed to get input from the Fire Chiefs, EMS personnel, etc. After contacting Mr. Morrissette by phone he was invited to come before the Commission today to present an overview of this program in a limited way and to begin efforts to get this message out throughout the state.

Mr. Breslin stated that Senators Crisco and Gunther have expressed interest in this program and they are backing a Bill in the General Assembly that will provide funding for this program. He stated that he and Dr. Dineen are planning to go to New Jersey to view their program.

A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Morrissette stated that as information was coming out on this initiative and the possible revenue source, he contacted Senator Gunther. He wanted to be sure the Senator was aware that the fire service was also looking at the same funding source to support fire service training. He asked Senator Gunther if there was a potential for joining forces on this initiative.

Chairman Carozza inquired if Dr. Dineen would be receptive to have a representative from the Commission or the State Fire Administrator go to New Jersey to visit their operation.

Dr. Dineen replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Nicol inquired on the status of the Bill.

Dr. Dineen stated that he did not yet know the status of the Bill.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if they had discussion with Governor Rowland or Lt. Governor Rell on this initiative.

Dr. Dineen stated that they have purposely avoided involving Governor Rowland up to this point because of his Waterbury connection. He thinks Governor Rowland knows of this initiative but they have not yet approached him.

Commissioner Nicol suggested they make the contact early on to get the Administration on board.

Chairman Carozza thanked Dr. Dinnee and Mr. Breslin for their presentation and stated that the Commission would certainly take a serious look at this initiative.

Chairman Carozza officially called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2001 meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Vendetta and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2001 meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the period of May 15, 2001 to June 14, 2001.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Maheu and SECONDED by Commissioner Vendetta to approve the Staff Report for the period of May 15, 2001 - June 14, 2001. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Fallen Firefighters Memorial. He stated that the groundbreaking ceremony was held, and he felt it was very successful as many compliments were received. The next meeting of the committee is July 18, however he will not be in attendance at that meeting. He hopes at that time the committee will have a better idea where we sit with proceeding with the actual groundbreaking and site work. To date he has not seen any formal plans from the Engineering firm.

Commission Nicol inquired if the wetland issue had been resolved.

Mr. Morrissette stated the wetland area has been flagged. The Engineering firm and the Department of Transportation will need to work out the final details and approvals.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update of the CSFA Education Committee. He stated that the committee met again on June 21 and asked Commissioner Wilkinson to comment.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that the meeting was very productive. The group adopted a mission statement that they will forward to the State Firefighters Association for support. The committee will not meet again until September 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Wethersfield. The representatives of the various entities were asked to come prepared to discuss such things as establishing some responsibilities in curriculum so that the regional schools and the Connecticut Fire Academy don't develop an adversarial competitive type of existence. The Regional Schools are also very concerned because they have to take steps to improve their capital operating areas. The estimate is that the collective group of regional fire schools are about \$120,000 a year in the red on the operating side of their budgets. As for funding for the structural improvements, information is coming that \$200,000 has been earmarked for this study. The funding will be included in the Department of Public Works' budget.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrissette stated that he had not received a legislative update from Ted Schroll as to the final status of proposed legislation. The update that was distributed last month is fairly accurate, in addition, copies of new Public Acts that have passed were distributed before the meeting. We are still awaiting passage of the state budget. We understand \$2.6 is still in the budget for the thermal imaging camera program. In addition, the \$100,000 for the Firefighter Memorial project is still intact. No other information has been received as to any changes to the agency budget nor any updates on any bills that were contained in last month's status report.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if there was any indication of increases provided to the Regional Schools' operating budget.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he was not aware of any increases to the regional schools' budget.

Commissioner Vendetta reported that the residential sprinkler bill under consideration as enabling legislation is essentially dead. The Speaker of the House contacted the Deputy State Fire Marshal and requested he develop a draft model ordinance for review and consideration next session. This may alleviate some of the problems with 169 municipalities developing their own ordinance. This will also alleviate some of the problems with the Home Builders' Association.

Commissioner Kowalski stated that there was a law passed also that requires sprinklers to be installed in all new Educational Occupancies as of 2004.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrissette reported on the status of the Limited Access Highway Account. He stated that a final transfer of \$10,000 in funding has been processed. The Finance Advisory Committee approved that action on June 12. With OPM's release of additional funding, 220 backlogged claims have been processed for payment and fire departments should begin to receive payments within the next two weeks.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrissette stated that he had hoped to have some information from Commissioner Johnson regarding the status of the Recruit Training Program. He was not able to make today's meeting to provide an update, so at this time he asked to table this item for the September meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilkinson to table the Recruit Training Program update for the September 25, 2001 meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza stated that if there were no objections he would like to move to item 5 c.) for a presentation on a Cable Training Initiative.

Mr. Morrissette stated that attending today's meeting is Peter Talbot from Cox Communications and Ed Peruta from American Cable Productions. These gentlemen would like to make a brief presentation to the Commission.

Mr. Peruta thanked the Commission for the opportunity to attend the meeting today. He stated that he was a former volunteer firefighter and volunteer ambulance member and he comes from a family that has long history in the fire service that continues to this day. The main reason that he has not been and is not currently a volunteer fire or EMS person is simple, he does not have the time that is required for the various mandated training necessary to remain active. But he does have a desire and knowledge that can assist the Fire Academy with their training goals. He stated that he has over the years, and more so in the past several months, been able to talk with members of the public safety community about the current required training. Approximately seven months ago he was asked by Cox Communications to submit a program proposal. One of the proposals he submitted led to discussions about using the three areas offered by a cable franchise, those being phone, cable television and

internet to produce various safety educational programs. At the time he personally contacted the town managers of Rocky Hill, Newington and Wethersfield and all three town managers were very enthusiastic about the possibility of making training easier on volunteers and in some cases on career firefighters. This will enhance local recruitment and retention efforts.

At this time American Cable Productions together with Cox Communications are here to offer a studio and technical support together with live and taped program time on a Cox Communications channel for interactive public safety training classes. We are here today seeking your approval to begin the planning necessary for this concept for the projected start date of September 1, 2001. Initially the programs will be available to enroll public safety personnel in the 19 towns currently serviced by Cox Communications. It may be possible to expand the live interactive programs to other cable franchise towns in the future. These programs will be designed to recruit and retain selected public safety personnel in the fire and EMS service. The concept is simple and will use cable, telephone and Internet services provided by Cox Communications. Enrollment will be offered through the CT Fire Academy for firefighters and EMTs and area businesses. Participation in the wide interactive program may be controlled through the use of a designated pager in the studio where return calls will be made to enrolled participants who page in. He stated that they in fact have three corporate sponsors for this program already. There is no expense to the taxpayer or to the Fire Academy.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he asked these gentlemen to make a presentation to the Commission after he and the Director of Training had an opportunity to tour American Cable's studio in Rocky Hill. From an agency prospective he stated that he thinks it deserves our attention. This is very similar to an initiative that the Commission was looking at back in the late 80s or early 90s. At that time we had looked at the feasibility of establishing a system to connect every fire station in Connecticut through a microwave system and at that time sought out some advice from people in the business. At that point we were told if you can't do it on a professional level people will lose interest very quickly. With today's technology and technical assistance from the cable company he believes at minimum it deserves pilot testing.

A question and answer period followed.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to support this program initiative and move forward to develop a pilot program. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette introduced and welcomed Gary Keith, Regional Vice President and Meri K. Appy, Public Education Vice President from the NFPA.

Ms. Appy gave a brief overview of her background and stated that she was here to present an overview to the Commission about two educational programs NFPA would love for Connecticut to be directly involved in. She spoke briefly about the "Learn Not to Burn" program and about NFPA hearing from school systems that they're inundated trying to teach all the things they are trying to teach. What school systems were saying was that they would rather "you guys" out there in the safety world get your act together and come to us with a uniform program. The program is called "Risk Watch". Risk Watch was developed with the help of a Technical Advisory Group comprised of a select team of professionals representing national organizations (i.e. American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association of Poison Control Centers, American Automobile Association, American Red Cross, etc.)

with recognized expertise in each risk area. They provided research data, technical content, and appropriate prevention messages as well as a review of curriculum lessons. Risk Watch is a comprehensive injury prevention curriculum for children in preschool through grade eight. Risk Watch helps kids beat the odds. With proper education, children can learn to be much safer and prevent injuries. Risk Watch activities combine teaching and imagination to help children learn to promote their own personal safety, as well as that of their families and communities. Risk Watch modules are grade-specific to make teaching easy and require as little as nine hours per school year.

Ms. Appy gave an overview of NFPA Risk Watch – Champion Award 2002 Program. She stated that NFPA was committed to helping states reduce unintentional childhood injuries. In the year 2002, NFPA will select up to 15 states to receive an NFPA Champion Award. NFPA will provide Champion Management Teams free training, education materials, and technical support to plan, evaluate, and manage the implementation of NFPA's Risk Watch curriculum in local communities. Each Champion Award is valued at more than \$15,000 in training, education materials and support. Currently we have 17 states and the Province of Ontario who received a Champion Award for the year 2000 or 2001. In New England, New Hampshire and Rhode Island are on board. She is hoping that Connecticut will become a 2002 Champion Award state. If you do elect to do that, some of the questions that you'll have to answer for yourself within your state would be:

- Who at the state level would be in a good position to oversee a Risk Watch program?
- Who might be interested from the Departments of Education and Health?

If agencies aren't coming to your mind she stated that she would be able to help identify partner agencies that are already involved with Risk Watch in the state. The advantage to you as a state is many and the advantage to us at NFPA having you in the state are also many. For you what you get is direct guidance from her and her staff about how to do public education in a way that can be measured. Nationally if you look at what is going on in the United States she stated that she sees lots of fire departments spending a lot of time doing public education programs but not always do they have the right support to be able to measure the outcome of those programs. As a result they are finding it more and more difficult to get time in the classroom because it's getting really challenging. What schools are saying is show me and prove to me that the time we're going to invest during this program is really going to mean something at the end. Tell me how will we measure that. A lot of time fire departments struggle to come up with a measurement techniques, come up with money, come up with all kinds of things that NFPA could provide guidance on. The Risk Watch Champion Award Program would be something to consider. The deadline for the application is November 15.

A discussion period followed.

Mr. Gary Keith stated as a follow up to Commissioner Vendetta's report on the sprinkler bill there's a couple things happening in the very near future that you might be interested in. The TV show Good Morning America has been spokesperson for the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition ever since we adopted Connecticut as the pilot state for this program. They want to shoot another burn in a house and Chief Thomason of North Branford has offered a 15-year-old ranch house that may be filmed during the next four to six weeks. We are also going to try to tie that in and do some filming in Avon where Chief DiPace has offered up a 40 unit retirement community with single-family homes equipped with

sprinklers that are under construction. This filming will be used nationally and will also help support the study going forth in Connecticut regarding sprinklers.

Ms. Appy stated that the new theme this year for fire prevention week is "Cover the bases & Strike out Fire. She then illustrated all the promotional materials for fire prevention week and explained how to obtain NFPA's complete open house kit.

A discussion period followed.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kowalski and SECONDED by Commissioner Vendetta requesting the Public Fire Education Chief Instructor review the Risk Watch Program and report to the Commission at the September 25, 2001 meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Lewandowski gave an update on the CFA Bookstore opening. He distributed a Sales Report for the period of May 20 through June 20, 2001. He stated that the Bookstore opened of May 20 and the Grand Opening took place during the Annual June Fire School. This has been a long process in getting the bookstore up and running but he thinks it will be a worthwhile effort.

Mr. Morrisette stated that while a lot of the focus is on sales, the primary goal is to provide a higher level of customer service. With part-time staffing in the past, orders were being left on voicemail. With regular scheduled store hours it provides more of a return in terms of service although we are also concerned with bottom line.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that from what he has observed so far the level of service has far exceeded the original level of expectation.

Mr. Morrisette stated that at some point in the future he would like the Commission to give special recognition to David Bowen and John Tsokalas who were the original individuals who coordinated the sales of books for the Academy.

Commissioner Maheu inquired about the availability of consignment space in the Bookstore for other fire service organizations.

Mr. Morrisette stated that if there is interest the Director of Training would be happy to have discussions with any association or organization.

A discussion period followed.

Moving item 5 e.) Mr. Morrisette stated that traditionally the Commission adjourns the June meeting and reconvenes in September. At present there doesn't appear to be a pressing need for any meeting scheduled so he asked for a resolution to be passed.

Chairman Carozza stated that there would not be any Commission meeting scheduled for July and August.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he received the guidance document from DAS last week to prepare the agency's annual report with a due date of August 1. As in the past the Commission passed a resolution permitting the staff to develop the annual report and submit a draft to the Chairman for review and submittal prior to the September meeting.

Chairman Carozza authorized the State Fire Administrator to proceed to develop the agency's annual report.

Commissioner Nicol asked for an update on the Thermal Imaging Camera project.

Mr. Morrissette stated that a fire service committee evaluated DAS's original RFP. There was a decision ultimately by DAS not to make an award from that original RFP. Just last week DAS put out another RFP with a due date of July 18 seeking new proposals from vendors. This RFP did not limit proposals from the top three vendors identified per a survey conducted by the Commission back in December. Ultimately the original Evaluation Team will reconvene to review the new proposals and make a decision if it will go to the low bid or the top three vendors or some other alternative. Some of it will be predicated upon the appropriation that's available. DAS in consultation with the Evaluation Team will make the decision on what vendor to go with.

A discussion period followed.

Mr. Lewandowski reported on the attendance at the June Fire School. During the June Fire School 47 programs were delivered with an enrollment of 773 students and 716 in attendance. We fared very well. Ron Keane who did a very good job coordinating the event. Some new programs were offered for the first time in Connecticut that were well received.

Mr. Lewandowski reported that at the CPAT Test Center during the month of May 69 candidates were tested with 46 passing. At a test conducted yesterday all candidates passed. A lot of what we are finding is that candidates are not preparing themselves for this test.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the Kids' Camp is in house currently. This program started on Saturday and a graduation ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. If interested, please feel free to attend. The graduation is just an opportunity for the kids to show their parents what they have learned.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.