



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

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Page 1

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 27, 2001 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. by Vice Chairman Kowalski with the following members present: Commissioners' Gomeau, Haber, Johnson, McDonald, Nicol, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioner Vendetta arrived at 10:22 a.m. Commissioners' Brammer, Carozza, Maheu, Milewski, and Mullen were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell, Marcia Wellman, CT Conference of Municipalities, New Haven, John Tsokalas, CFA Instructor, Mary Ellen Tsokalas, Chris Tsokalas, Mary Tsokalas, Rita Tsokalas, Leo Tsokalas, Peter Susca, Chief Robert Ross, Middletown Fire Department and David Bowen, CFA Instructor.

Vice Chairman Kowalski introduced and welcomed Dr. William McDonald as a new Commissioner representing the Chancellor of the Connecticut Community College System.

Vice Chairman Kowalski introduced and welcomed Lieutenant Governor Jodi Rell.

Lieutenant Governor Rell stated that she just stopped by to say hello and obtain an update on the Fallen Firefighters Memorial project.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated in the interest of time that he would like to move to agenda item 4 a.) for an update on the Fallen Firefighters Memorial project.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he was pleased to provide an update in terms of progress as it relates to the Firefighters Memorial project. A group from the Committee traveled to Vermont two weeks ago to visit the stone company where the etching is taking place. The stone is complete and after speaking with Paul Walsh, Mr. Walsh indicated the stone was stunning. The stone company indicated that this was their best piece of artwork to date and they've been in business for decades. Mr. Morrissette stated that the Committee has elected to store the stone with the stone company over the winter "An

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months. Upon first thaw, site work will begin at the Academy. We continue to receive donations and seem to be in line with the budget projections. At this time we intend to continue fundraising to insure perpetual care as well as funding for an annual ceremony.

Lieutenant Governor Rell inquired whether adequate funding is already in place to pay for the completion of this project.

Mr. Morrissette replied affirmatively.

Vice Chairman Kowalski thanked the Lieutenant Governor for her help on this project.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the engraving of the bricks purchased by donations had begun.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he did not know as to whether or not that part of the project has commenced. A local stone company, Volpe Monuments, will do that work. At last month's Commission meeting it was reported that only 100 bricks had been purchased. To date the number of bricks that have actually been purchased is well in excess of 300.

Vice Chairman Kowalski moved to agenda item 1 b.), Staff Recognition.

Mr. Morrissette gave an overview of events leading to the Commission embarking on the opening and operation of a formal bookstore this past year at the Connecticut Fire Academy. He indicated the agency has always been in the publications business; however, with no store front.. He spoke about the two individuals, David Bowen and John Tsokalas, who managed the publication business on a part-time basis for the agency over the years and of the significant improvements and contributions they made to this effort. He stated that at this time the Commission would like to recognize David Bowen and John Tsokalas for their support over the past 14 years which has allowed the agency to reach a point where we are today with the opening of a formal bookstore.

Mr. Morrissette asked David Bowen and John Tsokalas to come forward for the presentation. He stated that it gives the Commission great honor to present the certificates of appreciation to Messrs. Bowen and Tsokalas. These plaques are presented in grateful appreciation of the outstanding service to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and the Connecticut Fire Service.

Mr. Bowen thanked the Commission and staff for the recognition.

Mr. Tsokalas thanked the Commission and staff for the recognition and the opportunity.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2001 meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Stankye to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2001 meeting. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the period of October 15, 2001 - November 14, 2001

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Nicol and SECONDED by Commissioner Stankye to approve the Staff Report for the period of October 15, 2001 - November 14, 2001. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 b.) Commissioner Wilkinson reported on activities of the CSFA Education Committee (see report attached).

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrissette stated that to his knowledge the sub-committee has not re-engaged as part of the Connecticut Career Chiefs' Association. He stated that yesterday he spoke with Chief LaVecchia, President of that organization, who reported that he was having the Committee Chairperson re-engage that committee. He stated that he would expect in the very near future we will have some more information to provide as part of that committee's activities.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Piskura gave an update on the NFPA-Risk Watch Champion Program. He stated that they were still looking for two additional sponsors to get on board this program.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired if this program effort had been posted on the List Serv to facilitate the search for additional sponsors.

Mr. Piskura stated that he did not believe so.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired if that was something the agency could do.

Mr. Piskura replied affirmatively.

Mr. Morrissette stated that to add to that it's his understanding that the NFPA has granted a 30-day extension for the application submittal.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that he would be facilitating notification to the CFMA also.

Commissioner Nicol inquired what three communities were on already on board and what is the consequence if we don't get five communities?

Mr. Piskura stated that Manchester and Simsbury were on board but he was not sure who is the third community. He stated that the consequences as related to him do not appear to be as rigid as stated on the application and that he is confident that we can get five communities on board this program.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update of the Domestic Preparedness Senior Steering Task Force. He stated that he would like to provide a two-part update with the first part being the final development of a three-year Statewide Domestic Preparedness Strategy. Last week there was a briefing done for the Senior Steering Task Force. In addition to that, there was a briefing as to the direction as to how to disseminate the equipment grant funding for weapons of mass destruction preparedness. We've also been working closely with both the Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association and Connecticut Career Chiefs' Association to disseminate that information to the fire service as a whole. In cooperation with those groups, we sponsored a meeting two weeks ago of all active fire

chiefs in state. Approximately 120 people were in attendance at that meeting which was somewhat historical. There has been briefings that have been conducted at other regional and statewide meetings.

At the last Commission meeting he indicated that the Governor had asked that Connecticut's domestic preparedness strategy be finalized by December 1 for transmittal to the Department of Justice. This will allow us to expedite the acquisition of equipment for those communities that are deemed the primary recipients of the grants. Those communities know who they are, they have been met with directly and it comprises the five major cities with the greatest population within the state. Also the communities of Groton and New London have also been looked at as well as one of the tribal governments. In addition to that, another tier of funding will go toward regional teams that have hazardous materials capabilities. We are pleased from information obtained in the briefing last week, that the fire service is recognized as first responders and will be the primary recipient or beneficiary of a significant portion of the grant funding. In addition, funding will also be provided to some state agencies to beef up their capabilities. This includes the Department of Public Safety's Emergency Services Unit, the Department of Environmental Protection, Bradley International Airport and the University of Connecticut in Farmington. There's not a lot of money that is currently available, only about \$2.6 million. However, we expect through the Department of Justice and through other grant opportunities additional dollars will be made available to the fire service as well as our partners in the public safety arena.

Mr. Morrissette stated that since the last Commission meeting he and staff met with representatives from the Department of Public Safety who have been tasked with scoping the establishment of a Connecticut Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR). We provided information to that group. We have not received a copy of their report, however; he was informed that the report has been forwarded up the chain of command for consideration. A group of fire service representatives plan to meet with Deputy Commissioner DeRosa to review the status of the USAR plan.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the \$2.6 million grant whether a match would be involved and whether the funds would be turned over to the communities.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the funds would not be turned over directly to the communities, the state would serve as an agent to purchase the equipment identified as needed by these localities and then the equipment would be granted to those communities. The state would actually serve as the purchasing agent and would disseminate the equipment to the recipients.

Commissioner Nicol stated there wouldn't be any match required by the local community.

Mr. Morrissette stated that that was his understanding and that he would further check this matter. The other point is that the state wants to insure that there is standardization of equipment. Some of the funding will be going to hospitals within the state as well as to law enforcement.

Commissioner Nicol inquired whether USAR teams would be state funded or privately funded.

Mr. Morrissette stated that it would be looked at as a state initiative. As it evolves many of these teams do rely on different contributions from both equipment vendors and elsewhere. But he thinks that the primary purpose would be the establishment of a state team that is state supported.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5 a.) Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to approve the CFPC – 2002 Meeting Schedule.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the CFPC – 2002 Meeting Schedule.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about scheduling a night meeting

Mr. Morrissette stated that we generally schedule a night meeting, however we have not as yet determined an appropriate region that may benefit by the Commission's appearance in that area.

Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Piskura shared some instructional changes that are being made to the haz-mat curriculum as a result of the increased demands for terrorism and haz-mat training. Historically the Training Division was utilizing a 96-hour Haz-Mat Technician Program that had problems and was not well received. To meet current demands the Training Division would like to utilize the EPA Haz-Mat Emergency Response Technician Program that is a 40-hour program that produces a nationally recognized technician level person. That has been confused in some cases with Certification. That is not an NPA type certification course. It does allow a person to operate at a technician level in the State of Connecticut or any other states. According to either federal or state OSHA, the certification course would be something that would certify someone to NFPA 472. We are currently working on that revision and we are using as a model the International Association of Firefighters federally subsidized Technician Program. That particular program is over 200 hours. In order to be proactive and answer the needs of these departments and municipalities we elected to go with the 40-hour program in the interim

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that he had heard a lot of feedback about the service the Academy is providing to meet the customer needs.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the point he wanted to make is that in some areas this could be a controversial issue. Again there's a lot of confusion in terms of the issue of competency and certification. We've heard so many differences of opinions and we're trying to make the best decisions we can with the information we have and the availability of specialists in the various components of these programs. Again, in some areas of the state this could be a controversial move, but again what we need to do is provide a level of competency that meets OSHA requirements to those departments that are demanding it today. He asked Commissioners as they travel about if they hear some comments he would welcome feedback from those comments. Hopefully, again as we move forward with reviewing our options and make the best decisions that we can.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the Academy had a need for more instructors in that area.

Mr. Piskura stated we have not turned anyone away yet, but we are delaying some deliveries that are specific to some departments. Over the past year we have utilized individuals on a personal services agreement to fill in the gaps and a lot of this has to do with the fact that we are overloaded.

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Piechota gave an overview of a Certification Delivery Fee Schedule proposal. He stated that the purpose of this proposal was to establish a certification examination delivery fee schedule that would be utilized by the Commission in the administration of its statewide fire service certification system. The proposal essentially states that the Commission will make available a system of fire service certification to any eligible Connecticut fire service person, irrespective of where that person received training to prepare them for certification. For example, a person could have trained at a regional school, college or even a for-profit corporation. Appropriate fees will be charged for that certification process. The fee charged for certification examinations shall reflect the actual costs incurred to conduct said examination. The fee may be derived as an independent charge or may be part of an overall tuition cost. If the Commission is in favor of this procedure, then during the next couple of months the Certification Division will come up with a fee schedule that can be published for each level of certification. This will avoid any misconception should we be requested to provide this service.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that he and Commissioner Stankye met with Mr. Piechota on this issue. He stated that Mr. Piechota made an excellent presentation on this matter and it left no doubt in his mind that this is something the Commission really needs to address and develop the proper fee schedule.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Stankye to approve a procedure proposal to establish a certification examination delivery and fee schedule. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 d.) Mr. Morrissette referenced the Draft Statewide Disaster Response Plan distributed to Commissioners at the beginning of the meeting. This draft plan is the work of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association, Technical Advisory Committee. The plan will entail the Commission taking a more active role as it relates to statewide mobilization in the event of a disaster. The important components of the plan are that it does not take away from any mutual aid plan that's currently on the books on a local or regional level. Essentially the plan looks to work within the framework of what is already in place. It will probably require communities to have formal written agreements through the state for participating in the statewide fire rescue disaster response plan. The most compelling point of this plan is that it dovetails directly with the federal response plan. This is something that was recognized as needed and expedited after September 11. What we are looking to do is move forward with this plan. It's always open to review and change on a regular basis. Local fire services in the state have always provided a high level of response. Many of the mutual aid plans on a county level have been operational for decades; this just formalizes it one step further dovetailing with both the state and federal response plan.

Commissioner Nicol asked Mr. Morrissette if he could elaborate about an item on page 11 that shows the Commission as having a function in search and rescue.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the Commission would only be responsible for coordination of those activities. The Commission would not deliver those services. We would just be responsible for the management of those agencies providing the support. Essentially it recognizes the Commission's role in the Emergency Operation Center and places the responsibility for that specific function to the Commission.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if there would be a need for additional staff.

Mr. Morrissette stated that at present it doesn't appear that there would be a need for additional staff. However it would require some of the current staff to be formally trained to be able to manage the system from the state level.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired if there would be a need to change staff position descriptions.

Mr. Morrissette stated that this is covered by state statute.

Mr. Morrissette gave an informational update on the following:

The Thermal Imaging Camera Program initiative is moving forward. Applications and information was sent to fire departments about one week ago. The Commission is serving as the collector of the information. Once a fire department completes their application and identifies which camera they are interested in we will compile that information for the Office of Policy and Management who will then move forward and purchase the cameras. We expect to use the full \$2.6 million dollars which was appropriated. The deadline for applications is December 15.

Commissioner Stankye inquired if applications had been sent out to regional fire schools.

Mr. Morrissette stated that he would be sending out applications to regional fire schools this week.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the regional fire schools were eligible.

Mr. Morrissette replied affirmatively.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the Connecticut State Firefighters Association would hold a legislative meeting this Thursday, November 29 at 7:00 p.m. in Wethersfield. Letters have gone out from CSFA Legislative Chairperson, John McAuliffe to all of the organizations within the state.

Mr. Morrissette stated that a new date has been selected for re-bid on the training tower modification project. The re-bid will take place on December 7 at 2:00 p.m. at the Department of Public Works in Hartford.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that December 26 has been set aside for an optional meeting in December and he asked Commissioners what was their pleasure.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Nicol and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilkinson that the staff evaluates and discusses with the Chairman whether there is a need to hold a meeting in December. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on January 29, 2002 at the Connecticut Fire Academy.

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

Vice Chairman Kowalski adjourned the meeting at 10:41 a.m.