

May 30, 2000

Page 1

MINUTES OF THE MAY 30, 2000 MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Carozza with the following members present: Commissioners Brammer, Haber, Maheu, Munkenbeck, Nicol, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioners Gomeau, Johnson, Kowalski, Milewski, Mullen and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrissette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Mayor Robert Chatfield, Town of Prospect, Shawn LaJoie and Jay Brown from the Prospect Fire Department and Chief Paul Perrotti from the Middlebury Fire Department.

Commissioner Nicol welcomed everyone to Middlebury and asked Chief Perrotti to speak.

Chief Perrotti welcomed the Commissioners to Middlebury and added if he could be of service to call on him.

Chairman Carozza thanked Chief Perrotti for the hospitality

Mr. Morrissette stated that Commissioner Chatfield was invited to the meeting to recognize him for his commitment and active participation in the activities of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control representing the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. As we have done in the past, we would like to present a token of our appreciation to him. He presented Commissioner Chatfield with a brass engraved clock and a certificate of appreciation signed by Governor Rowland and Chairman Carozza.

Commissioner Chatfield thanked the Commission for the recognition and stated that he was honored to serve the Commission, adding he may be back some day.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2000 meeting. Motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Maheu and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2000 May 14, 2000. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave a legislative update. Copies of Public Acts enacted during the past session were distributed. He indicated he was still awaiting word on a few issues that were not yet clarified, including our own budget. We have a preliminary report from OPM that we did receive a modest increase that was requested in our other expense account as part of privatizing some of the facility management responsibilities at the Academy. Most of the legislation is self-explanatory. Some of the calls that we're receiving as a result of legislative deals with thermal imaging cameras. As you are all aware, language was added in the Bond Act which will permit the

purchase of thermal imaging technology with Local Community Improvement Program (loCIP) bond funds. There was no dedicated funding attached to aid this specific item. We have received some mixed reviews on that. We have also received a number of calls from Town Managers and First Selectmen looking for information on camera technology and different manufacturers. We developed a two-page fact sheet identifying all the manufacturers that we're aware of. It seems that some people are unhappy that dedicated funding was not appropriated as part of the Public Act. He then offered to entertain any questions.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Firefighters' Memorial fund drive. He spoke about plans for the upcoming Birthday Bash for Lt. Governor Rell scheduled for June 15 at the Tunxis Plantation Country Club in Farmington. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Connecticut State Firefighters' Memorial Fund. He asked Commissioners to bring this information to their respective organizations to try to get some participation from the fire service.

Chairman Carozza stated that he thinks this fund raiser event is a great idea. It would be nice if the fire service would support it. He encouraged the Commissioners to get back to their respective organizations and at least have the leadership of these organizations be in attendance.

Moving to item to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrissette reported on behalf of Commissioner Kowalski who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Fee Policy/Freelancing Subcommittee met to begin review and discussions on the issues. No decisions were made as of yet. Commissioner Kowalski indicated that he is trying to schedule another meeting soon and he truly hopes to have this wrapped up by the June meeting.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on efforts by the agency to acquire state surplus property to be utilized for storage of its mobile assets and other equipment requiring long-term storage. He stated that after the last Commission meeting it came to our attention that a very similar property to that discussed in Seymour was available in the City of Meriden. This property was already advertised for public bid. A request was sent to Commissioner Burns of DOT requesting the bid process be suspended to permit us to evaluate the feasibility of acquiring the site. Commissioner Burns agreed and the bid process has been suspended. Through the efforts of Commissioner Nicol, the staff was able to view the site. From a location standpoint, the staff found that the Meriden site is much better suited for our needs. There's also about 2.6 acres of land as compared to just 1 acre in Seymour. One concern with the Meriden property, similar to the Seymour property, is that there are underground fuel storage tanks on site. As part of an agreement between the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the recipient/purchaser of the property would have to make the required environmental code improvements or remove the tanks.

A meeting was held with DOT, DPW and our Budget Analyst. DPW recommended they take ownership of the property with the Commission being a tenant. That way DPW would be responsible for any of the environmental issues, and as a tenant, the Commission would only be responsible for usual expenses such as utilities. The legality of DPW taking ownership of a property located in Meriden was somehow in question. DPW's representative indicated that he would meet with their Attorney General to ascertain an opinion as to whether or not it was feasible for them to take the property on our behalf. DPW also related that they had infrastructure funding which would permit the removal of the underground storage tanks and restore the site as necessary. At this meeting we indicated to DOT that we had hoped to have all the information in place by June 1.

Unfortunately DPW was supposed to have a response to us by today regarding the feasibility of them taking ownership of the site or in lieu of that, providing funding to us for removal of the storage tanks. OPM indicated that they had no additional funding for FY01 that could be appropriated to us should we take ownership. However, they indicated if we could live with it for a year and support it

through current levels of funding, they would work with us to obtain additional funding in the future.

At this point, in lieu of any definitive action by DPW, the Commission needs to discuss and consider approving acquisition of the Meriden site contingent upon DPW funding the underground storage tanks' removal. We feel we can support the site for the 2001 fiscal year and work with OPM on future budget support.

A question and answer period followed.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Maheu and SECONDED by Commissioner Stankye authorizing the State Fire Administrator to pursue efforts for acquisition of the Meriden property contingent upon DPW providing funding for the tank removal.*

A discussion period followed.

*The MOTION was unanimously approved.*

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the Domestic Preparedness Equipment Program Grant Committee. He reported that a threat assessment would be mailed out to chief elected officials within the next few weeks. They will be asked to identify any potential local threats. In addition, a capability and needs assessment will be developed and mailed to municipalities within the next two to three months to determine what equipment is needed. Information gathered from these items will help determine where the equipment grant funding should be directed. It is hoped that FY00 funding will be received by the fall.

The state currently has no plan to address weapons of mass destruction incidents and OEM feels that they are open to exposure by not having a plan. Two weeks ago a request was received from OEM to identify a number of fire service representatives to serve on a committee to develop a temporary plan. A number of representatives were recommended from the Chiefs and Career Chiefs Associations along with Chief Massicotte who has been working with me on the equipment grant program. Chiefs' Sandford, Flaherty and Wall are also participating in that process.

A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Piskura gave a brief overview on the Academy's business and industry activity. He stated that the report shows a small reduction in state training that is a result of revisions to the CPR certifications being extended from one year to two or three years. The Academy is doing a lot of training for the Department of Environmental Protection both in hazardous materials and in CPR. Rather than being intimately involved with the delivery, Mr. Keane our Program Manager has been asked to be our representative to business and industry and develop new contacts. The next report will have a list of the new contacts.

Moving to item 5 b.) Mr. Piskura briefed the Commission on an identity issue pertaining to state fire instructor status. He related a few incidents of mistaken identity where certified state fire service instructors delivering local programs were incorrectly identified as CFA instructors. He stated that one of the Academy's Program Coordinators brought up, at a recent meeting, the fact that the Litchfield County Fire Chiefs were furious at the Academy because the price of programs had gone up and the quality had gone down. After some research into the matter we found out that the Academy had nothing to do with the delivery of the program in question. He shared two other examples of misrepresentations (most probably unintentional) by state certified instructors who are not working for the Academy. He stated he did not know how to fix the problem and he does not

think he can with references of what we hand out. All in all this creates a very confusing situation for our customers.

A discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza suggested that this issue be tabled until the next meeting. He asked the Commissioners to bring this matter back to their respective organizations and maybe offer some suggestions on how to address this issue.

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Haber and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to table item 5 b.) – State Instructor Status for the June 27, 2000 meeting. Motion carried.*

Moving to item 5 c.) Mr. Piechota reported on an issue brought up at the April 25 meeting regarding certification prerequisite. Mark Lewandowski speaking as Chief for the Kensington Fire Department asked the Commission to consider a change or clarification to policy to allow firefighters the ability to test for the level of FF-II certification without being previously certified as FF-I's as is currently required by regulation. He made the request because the current Commission policy for the levels of Pump Operator, Truck Operator, Fire Instructor I and Fire Office I allow an individual to test to be certified at those four levels without being FF-I if they had been a firefighter prior to July 1, 1977. Mr. Lewandowski asked that same exemption be allowed for FF-II. Mr. Piechota stated that his research indicates that back in the late seventies when the Commission created the process and those exemptions were made the reasoning for the policy was to allow an individual to be slotted at a level that was commensurate with position. The exception was designed to allow people to start at various levels but not in the middle of a level. Following a discussion with Mr. Piskura, Mr. Piechota indicated they did not see any reason why allowing the exemption to be expanded to allow people to become certified as FF-II without being FF-I, if they were a firefighter before July 1, 1977, would in any way hurt the Connecticut fire service. It would give the ability for a few more people to become certified.

Therefore it is the recommendation of Messrs. Piechota and Piskura to change the policy to permit the waiver of certain prerequisites for various levels of fire service certification (see enclosed).

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Munkenbeck and SECONDED by Commissioner Brammer to approve the Firefighter II Certification Prerequisite Waiver Policy. Motion carried*

Mr. Piechota stated about one year ago the Commission entered into an agreement with the Norwalk Community Technical College to deliver a FF-I training program for persons who were not members of a fire department. The intent of the agreement was to train them to the level of FF-I, test them to that level but not to certify them until the students became members of a fire department. The City of Norwalk has now taken it upon themselves to do a similar in-house training program without the community technical college. It is our opinion that they are going to expect the same testing process to be administered for this program and we have some legitimate concerns about that. As it turns out the complication has resolved itself when the applications the Certification Division received indicated that the students are members of a fire department.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the local certified fire service instructor, as a representative of the fire department signed off on the applications attesting that the information is true.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Munkenbeck commented about his daughter going through the certification process as FF-I in Suffolk County, New York. He stated that he had a chance to sit in that training program and

when he looks at the procedures that the we have, he is very proud to be part of the Connecticut fire service and the Commission.

Commissioner Nicol reminded the Commissioners that the Fire Apparatus Rodeo has been rescheduled for June 4 in Rocky Hill same time and same location.

Mr. Piechota stated that at the IFSAC Conference he attended a few weeks ago he was made aware that the US Military has begun to mandate certification to various levels of their officer ranks, including lieutenant, captain and fire chief. The way they are going to go about that in many cases is to contract with training entities to train and ultimately certify people at these various levels.

Mr. Piechota informed Director Piskura of this initiative so that he may investigate potential contract training opportunities. Should that occur, the Commission would then be able to certify to all levels required by the Military with the exception of fire inspector. Certification to that level is administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal per state regulation. Mr. Piechota stated that he has had discussions with Commissioner Maheu, who agrees in concept with establishing a process whereby the Commission would certify Military personnel to the level of fire inspector outside of the state, while the Office of the State Fire Marshal would continue in-state certification to that level.

Mr. Morrissette gave an update on the projected shortfall in funding of the Limited Access Highway Grant Program. He stated, as indicated in his past two staff reports, the agency was facing a deficit of about \$15,000 to \$20,000 in this account. The Fiscal Services Director has been able to remedy the situation through the Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

Mr. O'Neil stated that the request to remedy this deficit has been made through OPM. In speaking with our Budget Analyst, she indicated that she thought she could obtain a 10% of original appropriation pass through for us to clear up backlogged claims.

Mr. Morrissette stated that the audit report from the Auditors of Public Accounts. Was being finalized. They are offering an opportunity to Commissioners and staff to participate in an exit conference. If any Commissioners wish to participate in an exit conference, they are welcome to do so. Please let him know within the next few days as he anticipates the report to be printed and distributed within the next two weeks.

Mr. Morrissette distributed the Draft Guidance Document for Training Firefighter Candidates. This is in response to the Litchfield County request from last spring. He asked Commissioners to review the document and bring forth any questions or comments as soon as possible. He wishes to begin distributing this document beginning next month at some of the county meetings throughout the state.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if all issues pertaining to the recent audit report had been addressed.

Mr. Morrissette replied that some of the easy to remedy situations have been addressed. Others that deal with issues such as inventory will be addressed over the summer months.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the status of the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Morrissette indicated that this matter has been put on hold due to other issues that have taken priority.

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

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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

MOTIONS

Commission Meeting – May 30, 2000

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and SECONDED by Commissioner Haber to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2000 meeting. Motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Maheu and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2000 May 14, 2000. Motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Maheu and SECONDED by Commissioner Stankye authorizing the State Fire Administrator to pursue efforts for acquisition of the Meriden property contingent upon DPW providing funding for the tank removal. The MOTION was unanimously approved.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Haber and SECONDED by Commissioner Munkenbeck to table item 5 b.) – State Instructor Status for the June 27, 2000 meeting. Motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Commissioner Munkenbeck and SECONDED by Commissioner Brammer to approve the Firefighter II Certification Prerequisite Waiver Policy. Motion carried*

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

STAFF FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

**Fee Policy/Freelancing Subcommittee** - Mr. Morrisette reported on behalf of Commissioner Kowalski who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Fee Policy/Freelancing Subcommittee met to begin review and discussions on the issues. No decisions were made as of yet. Commissioner Kowalski indicated that he is trying to schedule another meeting soon and he truly hopes to have this wrapped up by the June meeting.

**State Fire Instructor Status** - Chairman Carozza suggested that this issue be tabled until the next meeting. He asked the Commissioners to bring this matter back to their respective organizations and maybe offer some suggestions on how to address this issue.