



## **FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL MEETING**

### **March 14, 2013 Minutes**

Chairman Hyland called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

#### **Members present:**

Fire Members James DiPace, Rev. Ed Hyland (Chair), Victor Mitchell, Jeff Morrissette, Robert Ross, Robert Upson

Office of Education and Data Management Craig Russell, Bonnie Becker, Doug Schanne  
Michael Gilbertie and Beth Potts

Also attending were Kevin Kowalski and John Yacovino from Connecticut Fire Marshals' Association, Terrence Tullock-Reid from Department of Administrative Services and Jenna Padula from Department of Construction Services

Introductions were provided. A quorum was present.

The meeting began with **Staff Reports**.

#### **OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT (OEDM)**

Bonnie Becker presented the revised Career Development schedule for the first semester FY 2013/14. The schedule was revised because the draft for the 2012 Codes won't be ready until January 2014. The Liquefied Petroleum Gas Properties and Potential Hazards (Pluta) class is ordered by the court and is approved for continuing education credits for building and fire officials, and, through the Connecticut Plumbing and Piping Board, is approved as alternate CE for P-2 Journeypersons. The training mandate follows an incident that almost leveled North Canaan after an unlicensed plumber failed to complete safety upgrades to a propane tank that ultimately leaked. Bonnie also reviewed the Fall 2013/Spring 2014 Curriculum Development handout.

Doug Schanne reported the Fire Investigation module will finish Friday, March 15. Thirty-one individuals will complete class and receive their certificates of eligibility. The two new trainers (Jim Quish & Sheila Taridona) are completing their six-month probationary period this month and both will go on to permanent status. OEDM has a total of four trainers.



## **FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL MEETING March 14, 2013**

Page 2

### **OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

Robert Ross began by congratulating Rev. Hyland on his upcoming induction to the Fire Fighter Hall of Fame.

Following up on propane gas, he explained that CST piping is now being sold in stores like Home Depot. He also described how one can become a certified installer simply by taking an online training class.

Rob also discussed a Residential Sprinkler program that is being funded through a grant from the National Association of State Fire Marshals. Jim Quish, OEDM trainer, will be conducting the training. There will be four presentations; one of the programs will be in the evening. The grant program must be completed by April 30, 2013 so we are on a tight timeline.

The meeting then moved to **New Business**.

Rev. Hyland introduced Kevin Kowalski and John Yacovino of The Connecticut Fire Marshals' Association, who presented the CFMA proposal to legislative changes to fire official certification.

Kevin began by thanking the council for this opportunity. He explained that after two years of working on this project CFMA feels it is important to have a unified front and to have input into the process. Last year DCS submitted a legislative proposal to change certification of fire officials by local communities to certification by the State Fire Marshal and the Codes and Standards Committee. CFMA was taken back because fire marshals had no input, and they were not in favor. CFMA requested discussions but nothing happened.

The proposal was raised again this year by DCS. Kevin expressed the concern that the current DCS proposal changes certification of fire officials by local communities to certification by the State Fire Marshal and the Codes and Standards Committee. When candidates finish class they become certified. CFMA understands that this will streamline OEDM record keeping.

In the process of looking at the proposal, CFMA has raised a couple of issues. They are looking at mirroring the process for building officials and feel there should be some pre-



## **FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL MEETING March 14, 2013**

Page 3

requisites for fire marshals. After much deliberation CFMA has come up with language for pre-requisites: Fire Fighter I Certification / Hazardous Materials Operational - OR - Three years of experience in the fire service - OR – Three years of experience within a Fire Marshal’s Office – OR – A certified police officer.

DAS/DCS suggested the pre-requisites would be better served in regulation. Kevin noted that the process to adopt regulations is very long, and that CFMA is not in favor of this option.

CFMA is also proposing to change certification of fire officials by the State Fire Marshal and the Codes and Standards Committee to certification by the State Fire Marshal and the Fire Marshal Training Council. According to Kevin, this item came from the rank and file. The request is to provide some leeway with continuing credit hours for those who have over ninety hours at the end of their training cycle. One suggestion was to track training hours on a spreadsheet that would give a rolling average of 90 hours over a three-year period. CFMA is open to suggestions on this issue.

Kevin reported that CFMA has met with the following agencies to get positive feedback: DAS, DCS, DESPP Chief of Staff and OPM. The Co-Chairs of the Public Safety Committee want to discuss the issue further. They will be contacting DAS legislative staff in the next couple of weeks.

Rev. Hyland was not sure carrying over of credit hours could be worked out easily and asked Bonnie to address this issue. Bonnie stated this would not be possible with the current database, and we do not have the staff to support tracking training hours on a spreadsheet. Administratively, this would not work right now. She said that if OEDM was able to get new software, the system might be configured to capture credits using alternate formulas. A lengthy discussion followed.

Kevin asked if OEDM is on board with the proposed changes. Bonnie stated she agrees with the idea of pre-requisites, but that she feels they should be established in a criterion-based way. There should be a skills assessment to really figure out what skills a fire marshal needs. Bob Upson also thinks there is merit in adding pre-requisites but has reservations about these choices. He agrees with Bonnie that a proper assessment is needed.



## **FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL MEETING March 14, 2013**

Page 4

Doug Schanne stated that the minimum requirements for our pre-certification programs are that a Candidate must be at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or its equivalent, and the Appointing Authority must provide a signed statement indicating that s/he will appoint the applicant upon successful completion of the program. It is up to the local authority to establish what their pre-requisites are prior to sending somebody to us.

Doug also explained the difference between the pre-licensure and pre-certification programs. The pre-certification program teaches duties, responsibilities and knowledge of fire investigation, hazmat and code safety. The pre-licensure program does not teach any fundamental construction, plumbing, electrical or other building techniques. We teach code associated with the duties and functions of the licensure being given. The fire programs are set up to bring somebody from little or no knowledge.

Rev. Hyland then introduced Jenna Padula, DCS Staff Attorney and Terrence Tulloch-Reid, DAS/DCS Legislative Assistant.

Jenna handed out the actual bill. The bill was raised by the Public Safety Committee and heard at public hearing. The only changes to the existing statute are to take away the list of eligible to be certified and to add training programs by institutions.

Terrence explained that he was assigned to handle the DCS legislative package in Fall 2011. Being so late with the 2012 legislative package and working with Bonnie on the administrative burden, it made sense as a technical correction to go forward with 2012 legislative session. Terrence apologized that due to timeframes; he didn't get an opportunity to vet the concept with CFMA which caused 2012 opposition to the proposal.

Terrence said that the issues presented today by CFMA are new, with the exception of the pre-requisites. He and Jenna became aware of the pre-requisites around the holidays, after the submission had already been turned in. After researching the pre-requisite language, Terrence thought that including the pre-requisites in regulation would be the best way to approach this. For one reason, it would allow some flexibility for folks who are already in positions at state and local levels who would be effected by these new criteria if put in statute.

Terrence discussed the certification issue. From DCS's perspective, the local authority doesn't certify, it appoints. The local body can still bring anyone forward. The intent was simply to prevent Bonnie from having to maintain two lists. If you meet the criteria



## **FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL MEETING March 14, 2013**

Page 5

established by Codes and Standards and the State Fire Marshal, you're certified (like Building Officials).

With regards to the new issues in the 2013 testimony: Terrence thought the pre-requisites were best addressed in regulations, but CFMA was not comfortable with this. At that point, they had to go forward with that they had. If the amendment gets filed, they will be happy to elaborate on our concerns. From preliminary look they thought they should be dealing with training & certification aspects and shouldn't be prescribing to municipalities what the standards and qualifications for their folks should be. There could be potential conflict with municipal contracts and bylaws. In addition, if the amendment gets filed there will be state fiscal impact – job classifications that would have to be re-written as result.

Terrence thought the continuing credit hours issue could be discussed, but after hearing Bonnie, doubts there is an accurate way to track the rotating/rolling 90 hours. He explained this is a very technical bill and it's very difficult to react in such a short amount of time.

He referenced the 2011 merger and functions that left DESPP and came to DCS as the underlying driving force in dissatisfaction with this technical bill. There is continuing dissatisfaction and concerns regarding functions that aren't scheduled to go back to DESPP.

Rob Ross brought up a concern that the pre-requisites will be an issue for OSFM staff. The concern is when someone retires from OSFM; they won't meet the requirements to be a certified fire marshal. Kevin explained the language was written to include OSFM staff. Terrence added that State Fire Marshal would be one of the job classifications that would need to be re-written. After a lengthy discussion around certification language (eligible, certified & appointed), Rev. Hyland stated the language is confusing, and this has been an ongoing issue. He believes certification should come from a body like this and feels the town should either hire or appoint. Terrence does not believe there is enough time to do due diligence to add the certification language to the bill before the end of the session.

There was a motion from the floor by Bob Upson to vote whether the council would be willing to take on the responsibility of certifying fire officials -- not to vote to take the responsibility away from Codes and Standards, but if the council feels like this is something they should be involved in. The council voted unanimously in favor of the motion.



**FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL MEETING March 14, 2013**

Page 6

**Next Steps:**

CFMA will meet with DAS/DCS.

Kevin will provide feedback to the council after meeting with DAS/DCS.

Look at revising the certification policy – last revision 2008.

The next Fire Marshal Training Council meeting will be held:

May 1, 2013 - following the Joint Training Council meeting

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

**Confirmation of next meeting:** Wednesday, May 1, 2013

---

Rev. Edward Hyland, Chair

Fire Marshal Training Council March 14, 2013 Minutes