

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
NEW JERSEY FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Meeting of February 3, 2016**

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ.

**Commission Members Present:** Assemblyman John Wisniewski, Chairman  
Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Stanley Sickels  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. Roger Potts  
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary  
Mr. Arthur Londensky  
Mr. Daniel DeTrolio  
Mr. Gerard Naylis  
Mr. Kevin Bellew

**Commission Members Excused:** Assemblyman Anthony Bucco  
Mr. Richard Blohm  
Mr. John Lightbody  
Mr. Armando Roman  
Mr. Pasquale Intindola

**DCA Staff Members Present:** William Kramer, NJDFS Acting Director  
Lou Kilmer, NJDFS  
Rick Farletta, NJDFS  
Charles Lavin, NJDFS  
Jim McFadden, NJDFS  
Michael Scardino, NJDFS  
Jerry Clark, NJDFS  
Michael Whalen, Codes and Standards

**Guests:** Ronald McGowan Jr., Wildwood Crest Fire Co.  
David Kurasz, NJFSAB Rich Silvia, NJSFPPA President  
Dennis Lepore, Stockton University Lizette Strait, Portland Cement Association  
Philip Mancini, Local 696 John Garton, NJLWD/PEOSH  
Helge Nordtveit, Iselin Fire Prev. Michael Allora, Clifton FD  
Charles Sugg, Mercer Co. Fire Prev. Joseph Ehrhardt, Middlesex Co. Fire Watch

## **A. Call to Order**

Chairman John Wisniewski called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM and noted that there was not a quorum at today's meeting. While the regular reports and discussion of the Fire Safety Commission could certainly take place, there would be no official actions taken.

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

With no discussion requested or necessary corrections, the minutes of the regular meeting of November 18, 2015 were approved.

## **C. Correspondence**

Chairman Wisniewski noted that all correspondence for today's meeting is contained in the Fire Safety Commission packets. With no discussion requested on any of the items, the meeting was moved to Public Comment I.

## **D. Public Comment I**

Chairman Wisniewski opened up the meeting to any members of the public wishing to address the Fire Safety Commission.

Rich Silvia, President of the NJ Fire Prevention & Protection Association, spoke about a fire that took place in Mahwah the night before. Within ten minutes of the alarm coming in, a lightweight construction condominium building was completely destroyed. Twenty-four families had their homes destroyed, and a nine-year-old girl was forced to jump out of a third floor window to save her life. Mr. Silvia said this is yet another example illustrating the need for residential sprinklers, and the need for the state government to act on it. Chairman Wisniewski outlined the steps taken by the Fire Safety Commission, and subsequently himself, in regards to passing legislation for residential sprinklers. He is currently working forward on this in conjunction with Assembly Speaker Prieto heading into the next legislative session.

Chairman Wisniewski spoke about the possibility of a regulatory change through the Department of Community Affairs in regards to residential sprinklers and referred to Chief William Kramer on the topic. Chief Kramer said that he knew in one of the conditional vetoes in allowed for the DCA to address suppression in townhomes, but not one- and two-family residences. Michael Whalen from Codes & Standards said there is nothing to report on this at this time. Chief Kramer said he would speak to DCA Commissioner Richman prior to the March meeting and report back as to where we are at.

Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo asked if a cause of the Mahwah fire had been determined yet, and Mr. Richard Silvia answered that it had not yet. Mr. Silvia was there personally and described a very serious fire scene. Commissioner Stanley Sickels referenced the

report submitted by the Ad-Hoc Committee at the previous meeting, and said that the third recommendation had been mistakenly omitted. That was the recommendation concerning the recognition of pedestals involving use of Type III, IV, and V construction with unprotected combustible space above the pedestal should be abandoned.

Commissioner Sickels stressed the importance of including that third requirement, and that importance was illustrated by last night's incident. Chairman Wisniewski said that the Fire Safety Commission could vote on this item at the next meeting when there is a quorum.

Michael Allora from the Clifton Fire Department asked a couple questions regarding professional development. The first, in regards to ProBoard and IFSAC certifications, he described taking a written Firefighter II exam through the Division of Fire Safety and whether that would be recognized. Chief Kramer answered that, if it was for Firefighter II, there might be a requirement for a practical examination in addition to a challenge exam. Chief Kramer said he would refer the matter directly to the Supervisor of Training and Certifications and get him an answer. Mr. Allora asked about the Managing Officer program from the National Fire Academy and if there were any plans to have it offered in New Jersey. Chief Kramer answered that he would also have to defer to the Training Supervisor as he is not familiar with that program.

Mr. Allora also asked whether or not requiring a Mayday Class for Firefighter I in the state of New Jersey was being considered. He suggested that it is something that should be looked at. Commissioner Lawrence Wood stated that fire departments should be doing yearly training on that. He also said the Training and Education Advisory Council would be examining what requirements could be implemented in Firefighter I and other courses. Commissioner Gerard Naylis added that Firefighter I is geared towards preparing firefighters to operate under direct supervision, and urged that a step back be taken from adding too much to the Firefighter I program. Other requirements and more specialized trainings can be offered in subsequent courses. There was then a discussion about the specifics of the Mayday Class and how it is a fundamental element of keeping firefighters safe. Chief Kramer said there is a regulation that requires the use of Mayday and he will work with the Training Supervisor with respect to this issue. Helge Nordtveit added to the discussion that it is not mandated for a firefighter to be issued a radio to be in an interior structural fire. He said there is a disconnect between what is taught in the classroom and what they are prepared to handle in the field.

#### **E. Division of Fire Safety Activities**

Acting Director William Kramer began his report by apologizing to anyone who may have traveled to Middlesex County Fire Academy on January 20<sup>th</sup> expecting a Fire Safety Commission meeting to take place. Unfortunately there was a mix-up on the DFS website when announcing the meeting change, but it was changed because the ABC Operation 7 Save-a-Life breakfast event was on the same morning. Unfortunately no members of the Fire Safety Commission attended, but Chief Kramer stressed the importance of the relationship with this program and the hundreds of thousands of smoke alarms that have been distributed in New Jersey over its 18 year history. Charles Lavin

added that it should be late spring or early summer when the 2016 smoke alarm supply is ready for distribution. Five thousand 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms were received in 2015.

Chief Kramer reported that he has been on extended family leave and Chief Lou Kilmer has been picking up much of the slack in his absence. Chief Kramer thanked Chief Kilmer and the rest of the NJDFS personnel for holding down the fort as he attends to his wife who is in hospice. Chief Kramer is reachable through email and will return phone calls as best he can when needs be.

Chief Kramer reported that Chief Kilmer would be administering the oath of office this Saturday to all 21 County Fire Coordinators. This will occur at Middlesex County Fire Academy and the coordinators will serve two-year terms. All Commissioners are welcome to attend. Also, the Spring Semester Course Brochure is just about done and it will be rolled out in the very near future. New Jersey Weekend has also been announced and the brochure is out. It will take place in April, a little bit earlier than it has traditionally been held.

Chief Kramer reported that three Train-the-trainer courses have been held and the Division of Fire Safety has adopted the new Firefighter I training program from Jones & Bartlett. There are some significant changes with respect to strategy and tactics on initial attack, so recruits are going to be taught something new that existing firefighters and officers are not currently familiar with. The Division of Fire Safety will be working towards offerings that will get everyone up to speed, a process that will probably take years to get to all of New Jersey's fire service. Commissioner Wood added that Bergen County is offering a course on these new changes and encouraged other counties to try and do the same. The Division has also transitioned from ICC testing to their own testing for Fire Inspector Certification. The testing has been offered a couple times now.

There are a couple of things that will be happening legislatively. The windowless story amendments are expected to be adopted in the New Jersey Register next week. Also, the statute that requires the installation of carbon monoxide alarms in certain occupancies and snow removal around fire hydrants. The NJDFS and Codes & Standards have been working together on the regulations for these.

In terms of lightweight construction, Chief Kramer described the State of New Jersey as being more prepared than any other state to influence the construction code process. The ICC memberships for construction offices and fire officials are paid for through the Department of Community Affairs. So New Jersey has thousands of votes and the NJDFS is working on a document to send to all local enforcement agencies to walk them through participating in the process. The document will also provide guidance on specific items.

Chief Lou Kilmer gladly reported that 100 percent of the Code Enforcement Unit's inspections were completed for 2015. This would not have been possible without the support of Chief Kramer and DCA Commissioner Richman keeping the unit

appropriately staffed. Also, the Annual Reports were due on February 1<sup>st</sup> and well over 400 reports have been submitted. A few extensions have been granted for extenuating circumstances, but overall this process is way ahead of last year's Annual Report submissions.

Chief Kilmer said that the RIMS system continues to progress. The Division of Fire Safety has been able to add a Database Analyst, who is very good at creating business and object reports. Through their work, fire officials can now access many more types of information through the RIMS system. Division staff is continuing to work on and develop enhancements. Chief Kilmer also recognized the RIMS user group who has been instrumental in getting feedback to the Division in terms of the practical use of the system. Chairman Wisniewski asked who runs the RIMS system and Chief Kilmer answered that it is hosted by OIT. Chairman Wisniewski asked if there is a way to get the RIMS system out of the web of state computer management to try and remedy outages. Chief Kilmer said that the amount of outages is down significantly and it can happen for any number of reasons. If the system is affected, NJDFS staff tries to get word out to fire officials ahead of time or as soon as possible.

Commissioner Stanley Sickels asked if there was any movement on the Codes Council Log – which includes roughly 27 items that date back several years. Chief Kramer answered that there has not been any movement on those items, or the items submitted via the Training and Education Advisory Council (other than the three that were mentioned earlier).

## **F. Advisory Council Reports:**

### **1. Codes Advisory Council**

Commissioner Stanley Sickels gave the Codes Advisory Council report in Commissioner Pat Intindola's absence. The Council met on December 16, 2015, and the minutes of that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

Commissioner Sickels spoke about the Fire Protection Color Tag System. The Subcommittee is waiting for some industry feedback, but it would provide fire personnel a quick, visual assessment of the systems functionality (green, yellow, or red). Also, the Subchapter 3 Subcommittee is roughly three quarters done with their review and are still on scheduled for adoption sometime in mid-2016. The Subchapter 4 Subcommittee is also working diligently on some issues that are before them, and Commissioner Sickels hopes to have a full report from them at the upcoming meeting.

The CO Detector requirements that were signed into law by Governor Christie were discussed (A-4073) were discussed by the Codes Council. They will be working to help the Division of Fire Safety on developing the regulations. The Codes Council also discussed the issue of Emergency Responder Radio Communications and was referred to the Subchapter 4 Subcommittee for further review.

The Codes Advisory Council is also looking into Hot Work Permits, which would be requiring a permit under the fire code for anyone doing welding, cutting, or any other use of open flames. This has caused or contributed to many fires, including the most recent incident at Avalon Bay.

At the meeting Lizette Strait was recommended for membership on the Codes Advisory Council. Her resume has been submitted to Commission Secretary Charles Lavin and it will be distributed to the membership for review and approval at the following meeting. The Codes Council is in the process of updating its roster, determining who are still active members and who can be removed due to lack of participation.

Commissioner Sickels thanked Chief Kramer for the Division of Fire Safety's initiative on getting fire officials informed and involved with the ICC voting process.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for February 17, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ.

## **2. Training and Education Advisory Council**

Commissioner Lawrence Wood reported the Training and Education Advisory Council met on December 15, 2015 at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

Commissioner Wood reported that the 3-year requirement of experience for firefighters to attend New Jersey Weekend. It will now be on a case-by-case basis. Also, the Civil Service information in regards to using education rather than complete testing is still being worked on. There should be legislation coming out shortly. Chairman Wisniewski said he had gotten a draft earlier this week, which he will be reviewing and sharing with Commissioner Wood.

The Training and Education Advisory Council has put together a Subcommittee to examine firehouse security. Commissioner Wood has also been in touch with Homeland Security and they may have some useful information to share on the topic.

Commissioner Naylis asked whether challenge exams were going to come from the Division of Fire Safety or from ProBoard and IFSAC. Commissioner Wood answered that the exam has to comply ProBoard and IFSAC for a certification to be issued and they do have challenge exams. This applies to the eight accreditations that were originally applied for. Chief Kramer added that anyone, dating back five years, will be given new certifications of accreditation from IFSAC. For ProBoard, they do not go back at all.

Commissioner Stanley Sickels asked whether there has been any discussion about continuing education for fire officers. Commissioner Wood answered that, yes, the Training and Education Advisory Council is in the beginning stages of examining a whole host of requirements. Commissioner Wood acknowledged the need, especially in the volunteer service, to keep officers up to date on training. A discussion followed

regarding how to maintain top-level training in a given fire department, how to mandate it, and the dire consequences for not having it done.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for February 16, 2016 at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville.

### 3. **Statistics and Information Advisory Council**

Commissioner Gerard Naylis encouraged all fire departments to submit their NFIRS data for 2015 to the Division of Fire Safety as soon as possible. Other than that, Commissioner Naylis reported progress.

### 4. **Master Planning and Research Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner John Lightbody, no report was given. There was no meeting held since the last Fire Safety Commission meeting.

The next meeting of the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup> at the Toms River Fire Academy at 10 AM.

### 5. **Public Education Advisory Council**

Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo reported that the Public Education Advisory Council met on January 13, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. The minutes from that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

The “Fire Is” course has been/will be offered three times throughout the fall semester and that Andy Stratton would continue to be on board to deliver the training. The NJDFS training catalog for the semester can be referenced for exact dates and locations. Charles Lavin added that Andy Stratton would be doing a “Fire Is” presentation at the upcoming February Convention of the NJ State FMBA in Atlantic City.

The 2016 New Jersey FIRE Bowl (the 11<sup>th</sup> edition) will kick off on February 11<sup>th</sup> when the Source Materials are delivered to each of the participating schools. The NJDFS was able to add Hillsdale School District to the mix this season, the first ever to compete from Bergen County. Overall, there are about 25 schools competing in this year’s competition. For the 2016 program, the Field Trip to Middlesex County Fire Academy will be held on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The written tests will be held the week of April 18-22. The date for the Final Event at Kean University is May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner DeTrollo reported that the due dates for poster submissions are coming quickly, with the first being due at the local level on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The theme is: “Hear The Beep Where You Sleep”. All information and documents relative to the contest can be found on the NJDFS website. Nearly all 10,000 copies of the 2016 NJ Fire Safety Calendar have been distributed statewide.

The next meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council is scheduled for March 9, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy at 10 AM.

**6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner Richard Blohm, no report was given.

**7. Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council**

Commissioner Kathleen O’Leary reported that the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council met on January 14, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. The minutes from that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

Commissioner O’Leary reported that a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention 2 course was scheduled for April 28-29 at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Registration information will be available on the Kean University website ([www.keanfiresafety.com](http://www.keanfiresafety.com)) by the beginning of February. It will be run much in the same format/price as the prior offerings in October 2015 and May 2015.

Commissioner O’Leary reported that the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at Middlesex County Fire Academy. She described it as being successful, with 17 more attendees than 2014, so the numbers were moving in the right direction. The course offerings were extremely well received, especially the keynote address by Don Porth and the “After the Fire” presentation by Shawn Simons and Alvaro Llanos. The Conference ran relatively smoothly from a planning/logistics standpoint, and we are already looking for new ideas, themes, course offerings, etc. heading into the new year.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Firesetter Intervention Conference is already book at Middlesex County Fire Academy for December 1-2, 2016.

Helge Nordtveit from the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council spoke about the need for all counties throughout New Jersey to participate in reporting to the Council as is mandated. He asked Chief Kramer and the NJDFS for assistance in getting the word to each county and getting them represented. Chief Kramer said he would put out a memo as soon as possible.

The next meeting of the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for March 3, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy at 10 AM.

**G. Committee Reports**

**1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

No report.

## **H. Old Business**

Chief Bill Kramer spoke about the Division of Fire Safety's role in establishing a "fire terrorism task force" in conjunction with Homeland Security. It involves intelligence gathering in nine cities across New Jersey, FDNY, and the Philadelphia Fire Department. The groups meet on a regular basis and the NJDFS has a seat on the executive board of the Joint Terrorism Task Force out of the Newark office, soon to be in Philadelphia as well. This is important because, without getting into detail, there was a recent fire incident where suspicious terrorism-related activity was uncovered and that investigation is still ongoing. This is something that has been worked on since Director Larry Petrillo was at the Division of Fire Safety.

Chairman Wisniewski brought up an issue regards to the resale of fire department apparatus. It had been expressed that it could get into the wrong hands, and poses the question as to whether there should be monitoring or screening who buys these types of vehicles. Commissioner Roger Potts stated that there are rules governing how the apparatus are sold, but not who the buyer is. Chief Kramer said he would bring this up at the next meeting of the JTTF and see if this has been addressed before.

Commissioner Naylis reported that, regarding those receiving pensions being able to volunteer, Assembly Bill 536 has been introduced in the new session and addresses the issue. It states that, for the purposes of New Jersey pensions, a volunteer who is a member (and retires) would still be allowed to continue.

## **I. New Business**

Commissioner Lawrence Wood commented that the volunteer fire service needs to really take a hard look at how to recruit and retain its firefighters. There was a recent study that outlined the costs of changing over all of New York State to career departments and the costs were several billions. Commissioner Wood said its time to start taking a new look at how volunteer departments operate, otherwise the problem will only worsen with time. Chairman Wisniewski agreed that there needs to be a collaborative effort to take a look at filling the gaps and not having the excesses that exist in certain places.

Commissioner Roger Potts spoke about some a piece of legislation that was recently passed. It allows fire districts to consolidate across municipalities. There are already a couple examples of this happening in Burlington Township and Hamilton Township. Another bill proposes moving fire district elections to coincide with regular November elections.

Chairman Wisniewski asked the Fire Safety Commission members for their thoughts on allowing the legislative members of the Commission to send a designee to attend meetings in their place. This would have to be done by statute, but due to lack of attendance it would at least keep these legislative members in the loop. Commissioner Sickels said it was hard to believe that, out of all the State's Assemblymen and Senators, there are not three other members who would be willing to attend meetings.

Commissioner Naylis and Chief Kramer both agreed that this was a good idea, but suggested that it would have to be someone from that legislative member's staff.

## **J. Public Comment II**

Rich Silvia, President of the NJ Fire Prevention & Protection Association, took the opportunity to personally thank Chairman Wisniewski for sponsoring the residential fire sprinkler bill. It is his hope that the third time is the charm, and he expressed his appreciation for all the work the Chairman has done on the fire service's behalf.

Dennis Lepore from Stockton University spoke about the issue of colleges in the state dealing with hoverboards. These were identified as fire hazards to the campus and there wasn't any guidance coming from the State as to what to do about these items. Chief Kramer answered that the Division of Fire Safety does not have the statutory authority to ban products – and that message was relayed to the colleges that did reach out. As of right now there is no recall from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, so each college and university would have to do their due diligence in researching and deciding what policy is best for their campus.

David Kurasz from the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board spoke about Assembly Bill 1900 calls for sprinklers in townhomes, not necessarily one- and two-family homes. Also, if the DCA Commissioner did feel strongly about doing this, they do not need actual legislation. Mr. Kurasz also noted that it is his understanding that Senator Whalen does not seem inclined to sponsoring the bill in the new session, so we may need to find another sponsor from the Senate.

## **K. Adjournment**

Chairman Wisniewski asked if anyone had any additional business they would like to bring before the Commission. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 11:56 am.

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**\* The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 10am. It will be held at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ \***