

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

Meeting of January 22, 2015

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Thursday, January 22, 2015 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. Kevin Bellew
Mr. Pasquale Intindola
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo
Mr. Arthur Londensky
Mr. Richard Blohm

Commission Members Excused: Senator Anthony R. Bucco
Assemblyman Anthony M. Bucco
Mr. John Lightbody
Mr. Fredrick Collender
Mr. Armando Roman

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

Guests: Ronald McGowan Jr., Wildwood Crest Fire Co.
Don Scher, Hillsborough F.S. Rich Heimbach, Master Planning Council
Cathy Chin, Alman Group Doris Flatley, Somerset Co. Fire Academy
Ray Lonabaugh, NFSA & NJFSAB Tom Pizzano, Millburn F.D.
John Garton, NJ PEOSH Lew Candura, Sprinkler Fitters Local 696

A. Call to Order

Chairman John Wisniewski called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM and began the meeting with the “Pledge of Allegiance” and pointed out the fire exits.

A moment of silence was observed in honor of the 15th anniversary of the Seton Hall University dormitory fire that took place on January 19, 2000.

B. Approval of Minutes

With no discussion requested or necessary corrections, the minutes of the regular meeting of November 19, 2014 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. There being none at this time, the meeting was moved to Division of Fire Safety Activities.

E. Division of Fire Safety Activities

Acting Director William Kramer began his report by talking about the large fire that took place in Edgewater the night prior to the meeting. Chief Kramer was called away to report on the fire to the DCA Commissioner during his report, so Bureau Chief Lou Kilmer moved his report up.

Chief Kilmer spoke about the Division of Fire Safety’s compiling the Annual Reports through RIMS, which are due on January 31st. The NJDFS is getting a decent return so far, and it has been made clear that extensions will not be granted to the extent they were last year. Staff is available throughout the state to work with local officials on keeping things moving.

Chief Kilmer mentioned that there is a Peer Review meeting scheduled for the end of the month. There are currently three fire officials scheduled to be called in. Two were enforcing the code without proper certification; the other had been grossly falsifying records. Also, the RIMS system is up and running and there are constant updates and modifications being done. While the system is certainly not perfect, it is continually getting better.

The Code Enforcement Unit completed all inspections for 2014, which is about 15,000-16,000 in total. This was done with a reduced workforce, unfortunately, and the NJDFS is hoping to replace many of the inspectors that have left. They are utilizing per diem inspectors in the meantime.

Chief Kilmer also mentioned that the WABC Operation 7 Save-a-Life kickoff was held yesterday in New York City. Charles Lavin reported that the number of smoke alarms to be received is unknown at this time, but the Division of Fire Safety will be receiving them in April. Commissioner Kevin Bellew, who attended the event, suggested partnering with one of the program sponsors – Toyota – on inserting fire safety information in each new vehicle sold. It could be as simple as hanging something from the rear-view mirror containing fire safety tips or something along those lines.

Commissioner Richard Blohm asked that the NJDFS submit data related to carbon monoxide with the thought that maybe they will donate them in the future. Chief Kramer added that, during Hurricane Sandy, Kidde did forward 500 CO detectors to the NJDFS completely unsolicited – so it's not an issue that they're unaware of.

Commissioner Wood asked about the NJDFS partnering with the American Red Cross on some upcoming programs. Chief Kramer said that the Red Cross is starting to make fire safety education more of a priority – the vast majority of what they do is responding in the aftermath of fires. They are starting to partner with local fire department on the distribution of smoke alarms, as well as helping install them for residents.

Chairman Wisniewski brought up the Security Alerts that have been sent to the Commission members, and particularly asked about what protocol is in place regarding firehouse security. Chief Kilmer said that fire departments have all types of policies in regards to visitors to the stations; there is not really a statewide standard. Chairman Wisniewski asked Commissioner Lawrence Wood to look into this issue from a training standpoint.

Vice-Chairman Kevin Krushinski asked about the possible 29% increase of LHU fees that had been discussed prior. Chief Kilmer answered that the Division of Fire Safety has submitted that proposal to the DCA Commissioner. In that proposal, there is not only a fee increase but some corrections in regards to life hazard use categories. The NJDFS is hopeful that those proposals will appear in the New Jersey Register in the near future. Vice-Chairman Krushinski commended NJDFS personnel Rick Farletta and Bruce Tynan for their help during a recent incident in Sayreville.

Chief Kramer resumed his report by speaking about last night's fire in Edgewater. The building is a large apartment/condo complex, residentially sprinklered, four-stories tall. They are estimating that around 200 units were affected in some way. Around half of Bergen County's fire departments and FDNY's 343 were called in for mutual aid. Around 250 firefighters were on scene at the height of the incident. Although the origin of the fire has not been determined at this time, it is apparent that the fire got up into the cockloft or other common areas and spread throughout the building. The NJDFS has

people on the scene looking at cause-and-origin, and there are others there examining how the fire spread. Chief Kramer had spoken with the Codes & Standards Director earlier this morning, and they will be looking at this incident from a building code standpoint as well.

Chairman Wisniewski asked if there was fire suppression in the building. Commissioner Kevin Bellew clarified that there was a 13-R system present, which is designed to slow the fire down enough to get the occupants out, not designed to put the fire out and save the building. Ray Lonabaugh from the NFSA added that Dave Kurasz is on the scene helping the news media to get the reports correct as related to the sprinkler system. Commissioner Stanley Sickels added that this incident speaks to the pattern of fires involving this type of lightweight construction. Lewis Candura from Sprinkler Fitters Local 696 also spoke on the issue, and he mentioned that sprinkler heads were not installed in bathrooms in these buildings and – according to current news reports – the fire may have started in a bathroom during plumbing work of some kind.

In regards to the Edgewater fire, Chief Kramer suggested that Chairman Wisniewski consider some possible legislation that requires the builder of such a building to provide residents/buyers detailed information regarding the construction, sprinkler system, etc. Chairman Wisniewski said this is a good idea and something worth examining.

Chief Kramer reported that the Paulsboro NTSB report has been added to the front page of the NJDFS website for anyone who wants to take a look at it. Also, Chief Kramer reported that the NJDFS has offered 17 On Scene Incident Commander courses to 320 students statewide. However, there have been 956 OSIC certifications issued by the NJDFS – which means people are getting certified somewhere other than the Division. Commissioner Stanley Sickels recommended that a yearly bulletin be sent out regarding this certification and its requirements. Commissioner Blohm added that there aren't any consequences to not having the certification. Chief Kramer said that there is a municipal liability issue when they are not in compliance. Commissioner Sickels talked about an incident where the Fire Chief ordered 17 firefighters go to the emergency room for nothing more than being exposed to bleach. The Department of Labor showed up subsequently to inquire about all the firefighters who were 'injured' in the incident. He spoke about this to illustrate how the municipalities and fire chiefs are ultimately accountable and need to have the proper certifications.

Chief Kramer reported that the log on pending regulations has been distributed. There has been a bit of movement on a few of them, so hopefully that is a positive sign. Commissioner Wood asked that Training and Education recommendations be added to it. Chief Kramer said that any that have been submitted to the Governor's Office, they will be on this list. He will look into the status of the regulations that Commissioner Wood is referring to. Commissioner Sickels said the Codes Council has not had a chance to examine a few of the items on the log. He asked that they be submitted to the Codes Council prior to the next meeting, and Chief Kramer said he would speak to Commissioner Sickels directly regarding them.

Chief Kramer said a Statewide Fire Coordinator meeting is going to be held next month at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. It will take place on a Saturday morning and run about three-quarters of the day. Also, the NJDFS participated in a survey by Iowa State University in regards to responses to fireworks. The report that came out of this survey showed New Jersey in a very positive light.

Chief Kramer spoke about the NJ Division of Fire Safety's involvement with the FBI. Several staff members have gone through (or are going through) the security clearance process and those individuals will be putting a "fire-eye" on intelligence that is coming in from a Homeland Security standpoint. The background checks are not cheap – about \$10K per person – so the FBI is making a significant investment in this initiative. This relationship will serve as a model for the rest of the nation.

Commissioner Kevin Bellew talked about the issue of motels housing people and how that relates to requirements for fire suppression. In many cases, the County is placing the people and should have the number of year-round residents are present. Vice-Chairman Krushinski spoke about the way they are getting around this classification is that the occupants change rooms within 30 days. Chief Kramer suggested that this type of issue would take a legislative remedy. Ultimately, it is the policies creating the issue.

F. Advisory Council Reports:

1. Codes Advisory Council

Commissioner Pat Intindola reported that the Codes Advisory Council met in December, but the minutes are still being reviewed and will be distributed when they are complete. In regards to the Fire Codes Council Log that was distributed to the Fire Safety Commission, Commissioner Intindola said that some progress has been made. However, some of the proposals go back as far as 2007 and there is a question as to whether they should be reviewed by the Codes Council again. Chief Kilmer said that there are a few errors on the log, but the items that Commissioner Intindola is mentioning should be moving towards an adoption shortly. They do not need to be reviewed again.

Commissioner Intindola also spoke about the Subchapter 4 Committee that will be reviewing the R1 hotels and motels. They should be reporting back soon with recommendations. Also, Commissioner Intindola asked about the fire extinguisher law, but Chief Kramer said that requires legislative movement.

In regards to the all hazards sign that Codes Council has been working with Firefighter Safety and Health Council on, there may be something coming out in the 2015 IFC Code. A motion was made to hold off on doing anything with that sign until that information comes out.

Commissioner Sickels spoke about putting language in the code regarding information on fire suppression systems being given to the local fire official. There was a request to

develop a proposed regulation to require reports be sent to the fire official within 30 days of the inspection. There would then be a color-coded tag applied to the system, this way the inspector will know if the system is compliant or not. The proponent of this addition to the code will be submitting language on this.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for February 18th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

2. Training and Education Advisory Council

Commissioner Lawrence Wood reported the Training and Education Advisory Council met on December 16th at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville. The minutes of that meeting are contained within the Commission packets.

Commissioner Wood said that Kent Neiswender has been working with OIT to complete the ProBoard/IFSAC project. They are currently working to match up NJDFS ID numbers with individual exam scores from Kean. There is a possibility of having 35,000 – 40,000 certifications to be distributed to students.

The Division of Fire Safety will be putting together a Fire Inspector SME Group that will be working on creating the NJ Fire Inspector Exam. They will also be looking to revise the Fire Inspector and Fire Official program and possibly integrating the NFPA Fire Marshal Standard into the programs as well.

Training and Education is going forward with the FESHE Symposium for colleges and it will be held on March 27th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. Commissioner Wood gave a detailed schedule for the day that centers on education for the fire service, and how the fire service and colleges/universities can help one another. Commissioner Wood thanked Kent Neiswender and Karen Haber (Kean) for working diligently on this program.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for February 17th at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville.

3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council

In the absence of Commissioner Gerard Naylis, no report was given.

4. Master Planning and Research Advisory Council

In the absence of Commissioner John Lightbody, no report was given. The minutes of the December 8th meeting are included in the Commission packets.

The next meeting of the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is scheduled for February 10th at the Toms River Fire Academy.

5. Public Education Advisory Council

Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo reported that the Public Education Advisory Council meeting scheduled for January 14th had been cancelled. Charles Lavin said that if anyone has a prospective school district or school looking to get involved with the FIRE Bowl, now is the time to contact him. This year marks the 10th installment of the program. The Operation 7: Save-a-Life program had been covered under NJDFS Activities.

The next meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council is scheduled for March 11th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported progress. There was a meeting held back in November in Atlantic City, but they did not have a quorum.

7. Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council

Commissioner Kathleen O’Leary reported that the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council met on January 15th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

Commissioner O’Leary reported that the “Fire Is” website has seen a big uptick of hits in recent months. There were over 50,000 hits throughout the fall, which is definitely encouraging. He said he is not sure why exactly that is happening, but it seems as though the program is being pushed out more in other states around the country. Also, there are three more courses on Fire Is offered for the fire service this spring.

Kathleen O’Leary reported that while she was unable to attend the Conference, she had heard all good things about its success. She also congratulated Tammy DeLucca on receiving the Paul E. Hartstein Lifetime Achievement Award. Charles Lavin is already looking towards the 13th Annual Conference, having taken various notes on what went right and wrong as far as this year. They are already exploring potential themes, centered on Juvenile Firesetter Intervention for a diversifying population.

The 2015 Conference is scheduled for December 3rd and 4th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

Chairman Wisniewski said that he had reviewed the Parents Legal Responsibility Pamphlet and thought it was well done. Commissioner O’Leary said the next step would be disseminating it using the proper channels.

The next meeting of the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for March 12th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

G. Committee Reports

1. Residential Sprinkler Committee

In the absence of Commissioner Gerard Naylis, no report was given.

2. Bi-Laws Committee

Commissioner Stanley Sickels said that the Committee received comments since the November meeting and have forwarded those to the Division of Fire Safety. A draft, reflecting those changes, will be put together and distributed to the Fire Safety Commission prior to the March meeting.

H. Old Business

Commissioner Richard Blohm spoke about the lack of appointments being made – both concerning the State Fire Marshal and several of the Fire Safety Commission members. Chairman Wisniewski said he has brought it to the appointing authorities attention – if it were up to him they would be appointed. Commissioner Blohm said he feels it is a slap in the face to the entire state's fire service that these appointments are not bothered to be made.

Commissioner Wood asked if it would be appropriate to invite someone from Civil Service to attend the upcoming FESHE Symposium. Chief Kramer said that they could certainly invite someone to represent them and provide information at the conference as needed.

Chief Kramer called upon Major Rick Farletta to speak about the Bakken Crude issue that had been coming up at several prior Fire Safety Commission meeting. Maj. Farletta distributed a fact sheet to the Commission members and spoke in detail about how the Department of Transportation is supposed to disseminate information regarding the movement of these materials. The Division of Fire Safety has added the Regional Fire Coordinators to the list of those who are kept informed and the process is working well on the Division's end. All notifications are sent via the Homeland Security Information Network and the Division is continually double-checking any possible communication breakdowns at the county levels. The New Jersey Counties that experience Bakken Rail Traffic are: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Union, Middlesex, Warren, Somerset, Hunterdon, Mercer, Camden, and Gloucester. Tabletop exercises are being done, starting in Jersey City this spring. Two others will be done – one in Central Jersey and another in Camden.

I. New Business

Commissioner Stanley Sickels called attention to a recent public decision in which the NJDFS ruling of a dormitory setting requiring fire sprinklers was upheld in appellate court. Commissioner Sickels felt it was a positive decision for local enforcement and he

suggested forwarding it to municipal attorneys. Chairman Wisniewski asked that he be provided a copy of the decision. Chief Kramer commended Chief Lou Kilmer and his staff who put in a lot of work in getting this done – and a good decision at that.

J. Public Comment II

Ronald McGowan Jr. from Wildwood Crest Fire Department asked about changes in regards to emergency lights for personal vehicles. Currently there are no provisions for fire coordinators and he was looking to the Fire Safety Commission to potentially put some wording together for getting those provisions. Chairman Wisniewski said that if the Fire Safety Commission could get some language from the NJDFS, he is certainly in favor of that and willing to review it. Chief Kramer said the Division will work on this.

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 11:50 am.

*** The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 10am. It will be held at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ ***