

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

Meeting of March 21, 2007

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The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, March 21, 2007, at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ.

Commission Members Present: Assemblyman John Wisniewski, Chairman
Mr. Charles W. Schilling
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood
Mr. Frederick Collender
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary
Mr. C. Kenneth Anderson
Mr. Arthur Londensky
Mr. Steve O’Gorman
Mr. Richard Blohm
Mr. Arthur Mercurio
Mr. Paul Hartstein
Mr. Lewis Candura
Mr. Kenneth Swider

Commission Members Excused: Mr. Daniel DeTrolio
Mr. Pasquale Intindola
Mr. Frederick Collender
Mr. John Lightbody

DCA Staff Members Present: Lawrence Petrillo, State Fire Marshal
Don Huber, NJDFS
Charles Luxton, NJDFS
Craig Augustoni, NJDFS
Charles Lavin, NJDFS
Carmine Giangeruso, Codes and Standards
Michael Whalen, Codes and Standards

Guests: Nicholas Kikis – NJ Apartment Assn.
Daniel P. Mulligan – Ocean Co. Fire Marshal
Rich Heimbach – Master Planning Council
Thomas P. Gerity – Middlesex County Fire Prevention
Evan Piscitelli – Assemblyman Wisniewski’s Office
Greg Collier – Everyone Goes Home

Frank Lafferty – Haddon Heights F.D.
William Henn – Clifton F.D.
Michael R. Dowd – NJ Dep. Fire Chiefs Assn.
Kenneth Byrnes – Jackson Dist. 3
Bernie Cohan – NJSFCA
John Hund – Health & Safety Advisory Council
Mike Daley – M.T.F.D. #3
Pasquale Sarnella – H.F.D.
Irwin Kreisberg – NJ DOL, PEOSH

A. Call to Order

Chairman John Wisniewski brought the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and pointed out the fire exits.

B. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Arthur Mercurio noted that his name was left off the attendees list from the previous meeting when he was, in fact, at the meeting. This error would be corrected.

With no additional corrections necessary, the minutes of the regular meeting of January 17, 2007, were approved.

C. Correspondence

Chairman Wisniewski noted that each member of the Commission had received correspondence in their packets. With no discussion requested on any of the correspondence, the meeting moved to public comment.

D. Public Comment

Commissioner Wisniewski took a minute to introduce and welcome two new Commissioners to the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission – Kenneth Swider and Lewis Candura.

Chief Frank Lafferty from the Haddon Heights Fire Department spoke about a recent study that he had done in his community regarding fire extinguishers. This study was done in response to the recently passed law that requires people to keep fire extinguishers in their home. The study consisted of a survey to determine the average civilian's ability to effectively and safely use fire extinguishers in their homes. The results showed that the civilian's understanding of how and when to use a fire extinguisher was minimal. That fact will create a dangerous situation when people with fire extinguishers in their homes have a fire emergency.

Chief Lafferty's report included recommendations on how to combat the problem that this fire extinguisher law has presented. His first recommendation is to pass some kind of legislation mandating training and education for new property owners – those who would be required to have a fire extinguisher. His second recommendation is that fire departments identify and work closely with new property owners on how and when to operate the fire extinguishers. Chief Lafferty's final recommendation was to include some type of data in the NFIRS system that will track statistics on civilian injuries and deaths while using fire extinguishers.

Chairman Wisniewski thanked Chief Lafferty for his report and spoke further about the fire extinguisher law. Chief Lafferty feels that, while the law is in place, it is best to train and educate people on how to use a fire extinguisher. Chairman Wisniewski added that, to encourage people to immediately evacuate the scene of a fire, the law itself should be repealed or counteracted with additional legislation. State Fire Marshal Petrillo added that the Division of Fire Safety has proposed doing an educational DVD for new property owners on how to properly use a fire extinguisher.

Lieutenant William Henn from the Clifton Fire Department spoke about formulating a building-marking system to effectively identify vacant or abandoned buildings that are left in disrepair, and therefore presenting a potentially life-threatening situation for firefighters responding to the building. Lieutenant Henn contends that identifying these buildings will save firefighter lives by making them more aware of the potential hazards that a building might present. Carmine Giangeruso, from DCA's Codes and Standards, said that a system of this type is in place in the new 2006 International Fire Code. Mr. Giangeruso said that this part of the International Fire Code has not been modified. As it exists, the marking system is three-tiered. The first tier is an abandoned building with no structural problems. The second tier is an abandoned building with minor structural problems. The third tier is an abandoned building that is structurally unsound, and only exterior firefighting operations should be used.

Chief Don Huber spoke about how several cities have their own system for marking and identifying buildings within their own municipalities. Chief Huber said that having these systems are very advantageous to the firefighter, because knowing what is (or is not) present inside a given building changes the variables concerning fighting the fire. Commissioner Richard Blohm and Chairman Wisniewski spoke about developing a standardized, and more specific, marking system than what currently exists in the International Fire Code. Commissioner Charles Schilling said that this would be looked at within the Codes Council.

E. Division of Fire Safety Activities

State Fire Marshal Petrillo reported that the regulations for the Firefighter II training requirements and the fire evacuation signal are in the Governor's office for review. They are expected to be released shortly, and as soon as they are will be published in the *Register*. Also, State Fire Marshal Petrillo reported that the high-rise survey is about

94% completed, and that Commissioner Schilling has been working with Chief Paul Allen to get the rest of the data from some of the State's larger cities.

State Fire Marshal Petrillo spoke about a meeting that was held at the Governor's office to discuss the issue of sprinklers in high-rise buildings. Director Petrillo felt it was a very productive meeting, and a possible plan that was proposed would be equipping commercial high-rises with sprinklers first – then moving on to retro-fitting the residential high-rises.

The Division of Fire Safety is currently working with FDNY on a terrorist awareness program for firefighters. FDNY has put together this 8-hour terrorism awareness training and it has been given to all 13,000 members of their department. The training program would need to be tweaked a bit before being done in New Jersey, but the Division is working on implementing this. The training is done to give responding firefighters a heads-up on what tell-tale signs of terrorism to look for.

State Fire Marshal Petrillo spoke about a recent shipboard fire in Jersey City. The details of this particular incident were still coming in, but Director Petrillo feels as though this reinforces the need for maritime fire training for land-based units in New Jersey. The Division is currently working with Homeland Security to develop this training, and the Director believes we have the funding for it. The training would be implemented in three phases. Phase one of this training would be awareness training for firefighters. Phase two would be for chief officers, and then phase three would be actual hands-on training for firefighters. Director Petrillo also talked about building in-state facilities for this type of training, because currently going out-of-state is the only option for this training and that is very costly.

State Fire Marshal Petrillo talked about the recent problem with fires in condominium and town-house complexes. The Director has spoken with Commissioner Schilling and Bill Connelly from Codes and Standards to see if a possible code change could help alleviate this problem. The problem lies mainly with fires starting on the exterior of these homes, specifically with vinyl siding.

Charles Luxton, NJDFS, reported that the Division of Fire Safety has received its 2007 allotment of smoke detectors (15,000) from Kidde through the WABC-7 Operation Save-a-Life program. These smoke detectors will be distributed first in the WABC viewing area, which is north of Burlington County. Distribution of the smoke detectors will begin April 3rd. There was a discussion about getting Kidde to donate carbon monoxide detectors in the future. Director Petrillo and Mr. Luxton said they had both spoken to Kidde about this very topic, but currently the issue is still cost.

Commissioner Arthur Mercurio spoke about the mutual-aid agreement that New Jersey fire departments would be potentially entering with FDNY. He urged that all departments should be sure they are covered when working out of state, because this became an issue during the tragedy of September 11th. Commissioner Mercurio also asked about the progress that has been made with the Division of Fire Safety working

inside the Regional Operations Intelligence Center. Director Petrillo said that relationship is working out extremely well, and the Division currently has a seat inside the ROIC. Currently, Division employs are going through background checks to be permitted to work inside the ROIC.

Commissioner Richard Blohm asked about the issue of coverage for fire instructors that would be asked to deploy emergency response vehicles that are being housed at the Bergen County Fire Academy. Director Petrillo expressed his frustration on this issue, and has sought answers from the Attorney General's office. There is currently not a specific answer as to who is providing the coverage for these instructors, and whether or not they will be covered as instructors or as firefighters (which there is a large disparity in salary). Commissioner Blohm stated that these instructors will not be transporting these vehicles until there is a definite answer on their coverage while operating them. Also, Commissioner Blohm brought to light that the people who the equipment is being brought to are not always trained in how to use it. This requires them to stay and spend significant amounts of time operating the equipment – because they can't leave untrained people to use it. Director Petrillo agreed that this is a problem and needs to be discussed as soon as possible. Director Petrillo also suggested the possibility of housing the equipment at a fire department rather than an academy.

Commissioner Arthur Londensky spoke briefly about the issue of exterior fires. Commissioner Londensky said they had a commitment from Bill Connelly in Codes and Standards, that once the logistics are figured out – there will be a code change in the New Jersey edition of the International Residential Code requiring sprinklers on decks and patios. Commissioner Londensky also spoke a possible change in 13R in 2008 to include patios, decks, attics, and concealed spaces.

Commissioner C. Kenneth Anderson referred back to the Director Petrillo's mentioning of a training program for terrorism awareness and training for shipboard firefighting. Commissioner Anderson suggested that these training programs be reviewed by the Training and Education Advisory Council before the Division of Fire Safety moves forward with them.

Commissioner Blohm inquired as to why the Division of Fire Safety has been promoting its Gang Awareness program for firefighters. Commissioner Blohm feels as those this is a program that will best serve its purpose, and the safety of firefighters, if it were not promoted to the public at all. Director Petrillo and Chief Huber agreed. This was not something that has been promoted by the Division of Fire Safety – the story was somehow picked up by The Bergen Record and resulted in them printing an article on it. There will be no more press on this particular program.

F. Advisory Council Reports:

1. Codes Advisory Council

Commissioner Charles Schilling reported that the Codes Advisory Council has included a log in the Commission packets of the items that the Council has accomplished.

Commissioner Schilling talked about the progress that has been made as far as the high-rise survey. There are still about four cities in the State (including Newark and Atlantic City) that have not cooperated as well as we would've liked. Commissioner Schilling has been in touch with Chief Paul Allen to get this survey done, and the vast majority of it has been completed. Commissioner Schilling said that, with the information we have now, we can go ahead with discussing costs, regulations, and what direction we're going as far as high-rise sprinklers. Commissioner Schilling feels that costs will certainly be the biggest obstacle.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council will be in April, and the discussions on the high-rise survey and the issue of a building marking system will be the highlights of the meeting.

2. Training and Education Advisory Council

Commissioner C. Kenneth Anderson gave the following report of the Training and Education Advisory Council:

The Training and Education Advisory Council met on February 20th at the Dempster Training Center at 10:00 am. The highlights of the meeting were, as follows:

The Firefighter II Proposal was signed by Director Petrillo the week before our meeting and it is now going through the internal approval process. The challenge provision had a five-year experience clause added to it – we had one year when it was endorsed. The implementation date has changed to June 1, 2007 because of the time it has taken to get it signed. No time frame for publication in the *Register* is known.

The new Delmar FF-I/II Split Curriculum Instructors Kits are being distributed to the EO's that offer the Firefighter-I and II programs.

The final recommendations from the Pilot offerings of the Fire Officer curriculum were received. The T&E Committee will review all of the information and make recommendations for amendments to the Standard, if required.

The Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Committee is meeting and preparing modules for Awareness (FF-I), Operations (FF-II), and How the IC uses the RIT (Fire Officer). The feeling at the moment is that these can be integrated into those curricula without further Proposals in the *Register*.

Amendments as endorsed by the Commission for amendments to the Instructor Standards have not been signed and submitted to the *Register*. I have spoken to the Director. There is no existing curriculum for Drill Ground Instructor suitable for New Jersey. There may not be funds to support the development of the course. Our Committee is reconvening to see if it can prepare the course outline and maybe details. Notwithstanding, the draft Proposal calls for a “course promulgated by the Office of Training and Certification.” I believe the adoption process should proceed while the details of the course are being completed; as has been done previously with other programs.

Regional Fire Coordinators are working with the NJSP for the Gang Awareness training course offerings.

At the Eligible Organizations meeting in January, there was a discussion about the Fire Officer and Firefighter II Certification programs. The Fire Officer standard was adopted several years ago, but the implementation is just now starting. The pilot offerings were conducted but the evaluation is not fully completed. The Firefighter II proposal has not yet been printed in the *Register* for comment.

Emails have started circulating. I prepared a report dated February 8th, addressing the points raised in what I considered the most complete list of concerns. It was sent by E-mail to the Fire Safety Commission, the T&E Council, and the Eligible Organizations.

The next meeting of the T&E Council will be on April 18th at 10:00 am at the Dempster Training Center. This is a week earlier than normal since many of our members will be at the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) during the week of the 21st. The date has also been posted on the Division website.

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.

5. Public Education Advisory Council

In the absence of Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo, Charles Lavin from the Division of Fire Safety gave a quick report on the Public Education Advisory Council.

The FIRE Bowl Academic Challenge is about to start competition for its 2nd year. Charles listed some key dates for upcoming events of the program:

- April 4th – Teams take field trip to Middlesex County Fire Academy
- April 10th – Written competition at Toms River Intermediate South, Toms River.

April 18th – Written competition at Midtown Community School, Bayonne.
May 8th – Final competition at Midtown Community School, Bayonne.

Charles reported that all Commission members would be receiving invitations to the final event, which will be hosted by MY9 News anchorman Harry Martin.

The next meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council will be May 9, 2007, at 10:00 am at the Middlesex County Fire Academy.

6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council

Commissioner Richard Blohm spoke about a letter from the Department of Labor concerning “firefighter safety-belt escape, last-chance bailout”. The Department of Labor has found that there have been occasions where certain types of SCBAs have had belts attached to them that are not offered as an option or an upgrade from the manufacturer for the particular type of SCBA. This, in turn, voids the NIOSH certification. This does not mean these are not safer, but they have not been tested in the third-party process and the Department of Labor can not allow them to be implemented in fire departments. The Department of Labor is sending a letter to the Division of Fire Safety and fire service organizations on this matter.

Commissioner Blohm reported the Department of Health is working on a “pink book”, which is a guideline for medical personnel to know what to look for with burn injuries. The book will serve as an aid to getting firefighters with injuries the best, and quickest, possible care. This will include urging that those with burn injuries be transported to a certified burn center as soon as possible.

Chief Huber reported about a notice that will be going out to all fire departments that received the AED units this past year. There could be a minor problem with the unit’s software, where the unit does not accurately report a low battery. This can be remedied with a software upgrade, and the manufacturer is planning on going to the fire departments to take care of the problem. Director Petrillo added that he felt it was a very minor problem, but the manufacturer is taking extra precautions.

G. Committee Reports

1. Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Committee

Commissioner Paul Hartstein reported that the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Committee met on March 8th at the Regional Operations Intelligence Center in West Trenton.

There was a lengthy discussion on the two upcoming programs, Juvenile Firesetter Specialist I and II. The Juvenile Firesetter Specialist I program will be held on March 30-31 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. Also, the Juvenile Firesetter Specialist II program will be held May 11-12 at Middlesex as well. Both are NFA programs.

There was also a presentation from the New Jersey Fire Service on a public education program. The group received a tour of the ROIC following the meeting.

The next meeting of the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Committee will be May 10th.

2. Residential Sprinkler Committee

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

H. Old Business

Commissioner Arthur Mercurio brought it to the Commission's attention that next year the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission will be 25 years old.

Commissioner Lawrence Wood spoke about the boosting of communication signals in high-rise buildings. A report entitled, "Signal Booster Codes and Ordinances" was included in the Commission packets, and Commissioner Wood suggested that everyone read the report so that we can work towards bettering firefighter safety and communications in high-rise buildings. Chairman Wisniewski asked that a report by Commissioner Wood on this report be added to the May meeting agenda.

Commissioner Steve O'Gorman gave an update on the issue of the Task Force's funding being taken away. Commissioner O'Gorman was happy to report that the funding was fully restored and thanked all members of the Division of Fire Safety and Commission that had advocated for this funding.

Commissioner Arthur Londensky reported that, in the past week, the Fire-Safe Cigarette bill has gone through both the Assembly and Senate. Also, the Assembly has passed the fire-safe mattress bill. Commissioner Wood asked that the Commission do a log to highlight accomplishments such as these – similar to the log done by the Codes Council. Chairman Wisniewski agreed that this log should be done.

Chairman Wisniewski turned the meeting over to Commissioner Schilling.

I. New Business

Commissioner Anderson spoke about some concerns with some pending pieces of legislation. The first, A-4058, would establish an autism awareness program for EMTs, police officers, and firefighters. Commissioner Anderson expressed concerns about how this would lead to the complication of the Firefighter I program, and also open the gates for more legislation that will require awareness programs for additional disabilities and special circumstances. (All concerns outlined in March 12 memo in Commission packet).

Commissioner Anderson also spoke about another bill, A-3773, that would create a local police officer and paid firefighter emergency registry. Commissioner Anderson strongly feels that there is no need for firefighters to be included in this bill.

A presentation was made by Greg Collier, the New Jersey Advocate of the Everyone Goes Home Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives program. Mr. Collier gave a presentation to advocate for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's national initiative to bring the prevention of firefighter deaths and injuries to the forefront. Mr. Collier spoke about the need for everyone involved with the fire service to embrace and implement firefighter safety initiatives.

Mr. Collier urged any and all Commission members to contact him for assistance with individuals, organizations, and fire departments with the programs initiatives and concepts. He can be reached at everyonegoeshome@comcast.net.

J. Adjournment

Commissioner Schilling asked if anyone had any additional business they would like to bring before the Commission. There being none, the meeting was adjourned at 12:19 PM.

****** The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on May 16, 2007 at 10am. It will be held at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ. ******