

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

**Meeting of July 21, 2021**

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at the Surf City Volunteer Fire Department in Surf City, NJ.

**Commission Members Present:** Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman  
Sen. Sam Thompson  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. Armando Roman  
Mr. Kevin Bellew  
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary  
Mr. Steve O’Gorman  
Mr. Paul McGrath  
Mr. Karl Spinner

**Commission Members Excused:** Asm. Kevin Rooney  
Mr. Arthur Londensky  
Mr. Gerard Naylis  
Mr. Richard Blohm  
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo  
Mr. Fred Collender  
Mr. Arthur Hayducka  
Mr. Raymond Heck

**DCA Staff Members Present:** Richard Mikutsky, NJ State Fire Marshal  
Bruce Tynan, NJDFS  
Charles Lavin, NJDFS  
Kent Neiswender, NJDFS  
Frank Clark, NJDFS  
Tim Weiss, NJDFS  
Jason Spiecker, NJDFS  
Robert Tharp, NJDFS  
Justin Henry, Codes and Standards

**Guests:** David Kurasz, NJFSAB  
Rick Farletta, LRFC William Kramer, Burling Co. Fire Chiefs Assn.  
Joseph Hankins, NJFSA Ronald McGowan, Wildwood Crest FD  
Tony Correia, NJ State Fire Chiefs Bernie Cunningham, Millburn FD

**A. Call to Order**

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. He led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those recently lost in the line of duty: Firefighter Dennis Shennard, Captain Vincent Intiso, and Asst. Chief William Schaffer.

### **B. Approval of Minutes**

With no discussion requested or additional corrections, the minutes of the regular meeting of May 19, 2021 were approved.

### **C. Correspondence**

Chairman Krushinski noted that any and all correspondence for today's meeting was transmitted to the Commission members electronically prior to the meeting. In addition, hard copies of the March minutes and today's agenda are available at the meeting. Charles Lavin noted that the Codes Advisory Council minutes were submitted late and would be forwarded to all Commissioners this morning.

### **D. Public Comment I**

Chairman Krushinski opened up the meeting to any members of the public present wishing to address the Commission. Mike Kelley from HAL Extraction gave a brief presentation regarding the safety of the extraction industry stemming from the legalization of cannabis. Mr. Kelley spoke about this being a brand new market and rapidly-changing technology. HAL is recognized by UL and is leading the way in the industry in terms of safety. He requested time to present in detail at the September meeting when more Commission members are present. This request was granted by Chairman Krushinski and directed Mr. Kelley to coordinate with the Commission Secretary.

With no more members of the public wishing to address the Commission at this time, the meeting was moved to Division of Fire Safety Activities.

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

Director Richard Mikutsky began his report by passing along regrets from Chief Lou Kilmer who is unable to make today's meeting. Director Mikutsky spoke about the progress that is continuing to be made across the board by NJDFS staff despite the challenges presented. In addition, Director Mikutsky spoke about a number of new hires, promotions, and backfills of positions thanks to the tremendous support from Lt. Governor Oliver and the DCA administration.

Director Mikutsky reported that the NJDFS has finally entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Rutgers University Mental Health on the Fire & EMS Crisis Hotline. Hopefully by Labor Day the hotline will be up and running. Also, every Wednesday

morning the NJDFS continues to provide real-time information via the weekly FireStat meeting.

As of yesterday [July 20], Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 248 which authorizes NJOEM to update the processes and procedures related to the National Incident Management System. This rescinds Executive Order 50 that was issued in 2005, and will bring NJOEM's practices into alignment with updated FEMA guidance. Within 30 days of this Order, NJOEM shall issue a comprehensive emergency management directive that includes the establishment of minimum requirements and qualifications for NIMS-compliant trainings. This will include emergency responders and other personnel as is required by FEMA's NIMS training programs

Director Mikutsky reported that the Community Risk Reduction Unit has overseen the vast majority of the smoke alarms and CO alarms the NJDFS received via the Operation Save-a-Life program. In addition, the CRR Unit has spread fireworks safety information via social media and press releases throughout the summer.

Director Mikutsky reported that the Investigations Unit has conducted 207 investigations this year so far, which is up significantly from this time last year. The NJDFS is in the process of adding another inspector soon, as the unit is extremely busy and needs more support. There have been five line of duty deaths so far this year (all medical related). There have been a total of nine COVID-related line of duty deaths since the onset of the pandemic. Director Mikutsky reminded those present that COVID-related line of duty deaths/disabilities may be eligible for PSOB under federal 45-day presumptive eligibility law enacted last summer.

Unfortunately, in May, one of the K-9s – "Blaze" - from the Investigations Unit needed to be euthanized due to lymphoma.

The Investigations Unit successfully identified a multi-state arson ring involving a handful of young adults from Burlington County. They were part of a "Urban Explorer/Weird NJ"-type group that set several large fires at abandoned sites in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York. The NJDFS is working with ATF due to several states being involved, but it will likely be prosecuted locally in each state.

Director Mikutsky reported that the Office of Fire Department Preparedness continues to be extremely busy as well. They have had 200 notifications, 35 responses, attended 25 exercises, fielded 28 fire department complaints, and attended 373 meetings this year to date. In June, the NJDFS put on a four-day training on the Neptune System along with IMTT and FDNY. It was attended by 200 firefighters from throughout the UASI region.

The NJDFS's NFIRS Unit continues to be extremely busy, particularly concerning the Fire Incident Report Writing Training. A total of 16 in-person trainings and 23 virtual lead instructor training sessions utilizing the HSIN FireStat Platform were completed. This covered approximately 50 fire departments and 408 fire service staff members.

Also, two Kean University-sponsored NFIRS classes were completed via online training for a total of 156 participants.

So far this year, the NFIRS Unit has only reviewed three Fatal Fire Reports. This is something that departments really need to have the NJDFS review these prior to submission. The NFIRS Unit is also working on a QR scan code list, which has been completed by not distributed just yet. They have also completed and posted a Health Care Facility Fires Report.

Last week the OFDP conducted a review of the fire apparatus in the Atlantic City Fire Department. A report on this was issued to Local Government Services as well as to the City of Atlantic City. Also, the Governor recently extended the State's oversight of Atlantic City for another two years.

Director Mikutsky reported that the Training & Certifications Unit has all certifications and contractor licenses up-to-date and processed within 2-3 days from receipt. Certifications number between 800-1,000 monthly. Also, local rosters submitted to the NJDFS are credited into the OIT mainframe system upon receipt, totaling between 50-100 monthly. Kean University has recorded over 17,000 attendees for our online CEU programs since March of last year.

Kean University and the Training Office are approving additional CEU programs for next semester. We anticipate roughly 150 programs per semester. At the moment, program delivery will be online with a gradual transition back into the classrooms. The Kean University FY21 contract has been submitted to the Department for issuance of a State contract.

Director Mikutsky reported that the NJDFS and Kean University are working to submit a revised ProBoard Reaccreditation package to renew ten of our NJ certification titles: Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Hazmat Awareness, Hazmat Operations-PPE, Hazmat Operations-Product Control, Fire Instructor I, Fire Instructor II, Fire Officer I, and Fire Officer II. ProBoard will be sending a visiting team to New Jersey within the next few months to conduct a thorough review of our credentialing programs, security, and testing processes.

Director Mikutsky gave additional statistics, all of which are for 2021 so far: 230 civilian burns, 14 school fires, and 69 fatal fire reports. Also, 43 (67%) of all fatal fires have been in one- and two-family residential dwellings.

Director Mikutsky thanked New Jersey Career Deputy & Battalion Chief's Association President Charlie Lind for sponsoring the coffee and lunch for today's meeting. He also thanked Chief Kyle Costable for the use of the Surf City Fire Department today.

Charlie Lind asked about the spidering of the Scott SCBA masks. Director Mikutsky said the NJDFS met with representatives from the company, as well as conducted site visits to examine the masks and how they were being stored. The company is stating the

wear is the result of the way they are being stored, but later admitted that they are now made less flexibly as before. This is a work in progress, but the NJDFS is staying in close contact with the company to remedy the issue.

Commissioner Kevin Bellew asked about fireworks and if there were many injuries reported during the holiday season. Director Mikutsky said that as of July 3<sup>rd</sup> there had not been many reported, but has not gotten further numbers since. He has been in touch with the Lieutenant Governor on the fireworks issue, as it is something this administration is concerned with and needs to be revisited.

With no additional questions raised regarding Division of Fire Safety Activities at this time, the meeting was moved to Advisory Council reports.

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

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

In the absence of Commissioner Arthur Londensky and Chief Lou Kilmer, no formal report was given.

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

Commissioner Lawrence Wood reported that the Training and Education Advisory Council met on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The minutes of that meeting have been submitted to the Commission members electronically.

A large point of discussion relative to Training and Education was concerning junior firefighters. It had been requested by Commissioner Richard Blohm prior to the meeting that this matter be tabled until the September meeting. Chairman Krushinski granted this request, especially because there is not a quorum at today's meeting and no action is able to be taken.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for August 17<sup>th</sup> at the Burlington County Emergency Services Training Center in Westampton.

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

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

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

In the absence of Commissioner Raymond Heck, no formal report was given.

**5. Public Education Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner Daniel DeTrolio, no formal report was given.

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

In the absence of Commissioner Richard Blohm, no formal report was given. The minutes of the meeting were distributed prior by Commissioners Blohm.

**7. Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council**

Commissioner Kathleen O’Leary reported that the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council would be meeting virtually via Zoom on July 28<sup>th</sup> at 10AM.

Commissioner O’Leary asked Charles Lavin to give an update on youth firesetter programs that are coming up in the fall. He reported that the NJ Youth Firesetter Intervention Conference is currently being planned for December 2-3 at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Additionally, they are working on setting up Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Program Manager trainings for the week of November 15<sup>th</sup>.

**G. Committee Reports**

**1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that there was no formal report to be given at this time.

**2. Ad-Hoc Committee on Legislation**

Commissioner Kevin Bellew reported that there had not been any movement on the bills concerning sprinklers in one- and two-family dwellings or the townhouse bill. Commissioner Bellew will follow up on these items at the September meeting. Charles Lavin added that a legislative report was sent to all Commissioner prior to the meeting from Marylain Kemp at the NJDFS. Senator Thompson noted that the legislature would not be meeting again until after November’s election.

**H. Old Business**

Chairman Krushinski asked if anyone had any Old Business to bring before the Commission.

Director Mikutsky provided a follow-up from the previous meeting and reported that the NJDFS is researching the legalization of marijuana and how it relates to the volunteer fire service. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the ability for a volunteer firefighter to respond and their superiors being sure that they are not under the influence. Tony Correia added that this is a concern, but it is nothing that has not already be looked at

relative to alcohol, opiates, or any other substance that could affect someone's judgment and ability to perform. He said it's something that should be looked at by medical experts. Obviously this is a new challenge and needs to be looked at closely, especially when being able to determine who is under the influence.

With no other Old Business to discuss at this time, the meeting was moved to New Business.

**I. New Business**

Chairman Krushinski asked if anyone had any New Business to bring before the Commission.

Chairman Krushinski announced the newly-appointed Commission members – Karl Spinner and Paul McGrath. All Commission members welcomed them aboard. Chairman Krushinski also congratulated Frank Clark on this upcoming retirement and thanked him for his years of service to the citizens of New Jersey.

Commissioner Steve O’Gorman requested time at the September meeting to make a brief presentation on behalf of the NJ Utility Safety Team. Chairman Krushinski said he would add this to September’s agenda.

There being no further New Business to conduct at this time, the meeting was moved to Public Comment II.

**J. Public Comment II**

Chairman Krushinski asked if anyone from the public wished to comment at this time. There being none, the meeting was moved to Adjournment.

**K. Adjournment**

With no further discussion requested, Chairman Kevin Krushinski called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kevin Bellew made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Armando Roman and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:11 AM.

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