

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

**Meeting of March 16, 2016**

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ.

**Commission Members Present:** Assemblyman John Wisniewski, Chairman  
Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Vice-Chairman  
Senator Linda Greenstein  
Mr. Stanley Sickels  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. Roger Potts  
Mr. Arthur Londensky  
Mr. Daniel DeTrolio  
Mr. Gerard Naylis  
Mr. Kevin Bellew  
Mr. Richard Blohm  
Mr. Pasquale Intindola

**Commission Members Excused:** Assemblyman Anthony Bucco  
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary  
Mr. Armando Roman

**DCA Staff Members Present:** William Kramer, NJDFS Acting Director  
Lou Kilmer, 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.  
John Garton, NJLWD/PEOSH Rich Silvia, NJSFPPA President  
Alden B. Blackwell, Tenafly FD Michelle Chambers, NJLWD/PEOSH  
Mark Ciarlariello, NJDCA Gerard Duffy, NJESH

**A. Call to Order**

Vice-Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Vice-Chairman Krushinski led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, and pointed out the fire exits.

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

With no discussion requested or necessary corrections, the minutes of the regular meeting of February 3, 2016 were approved.

## **C. Correspondence**

Vice-Chairman Krushinski 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**

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

With no members of the public wishing to comment at this time, the meeting was moved to NJ Division of Fire Safety Activities. Vice-Chairman Krushinski noted that the public would have a second opportunity to address the Fire Safety Commission at the end of the meeting.

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

Acting Director William Kramer began his report by following up on the status of suppressing townhomes – which was part of the Governor's conditional veto of the one- and two-family sprinkler legislation. DCA Commissioner Chuck Richman said there would be no movement on this unless the legislature concurs with the condition veto. Chairman Wisniewski said the Assembly concurred, and would follow up with Commissioner Richman. Also, Commissioner Kramer responded to a question from the previous meeting and reported that mayday training IS incorporated in recruit firefighter training. Commissioner Kramer also reported that the NJDFS followed through on a request to ask county representatives to attend/respond to the need for representation on the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council.

Chief Kramer spoke about the NJDFS's Office of Fire Department Preparedness and the battle they went through with civil service over their titles, whether they were eligible for overtime, etc. This was based on them working 17 straight days in response to Hurricane Sandy (including weekends, holidays, etc.) and receiving zero compensation. They filed a federal complaint with the Department of Labor which resulted in DCA having to pay them two years back pay. Shortly thereafter, the Civil Service Commission re-evaluated their titles and decided that, after 11 years, they were in the wrong ones. This resulted in all six of them getting demoted and taking \$11,000 pay-cuts. This was in January, and since then the NJDFS has lost an extremely valuable member in Michael Gallagher. This is a definite hit to the fire coordination system in New Jersey.

Chief Kramer reported that April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> will be New Jersey Weekend at the National Fire Academy. It is booked with 240 people attending. This year the group will be holding a memorial service for fallen New Jersey firefighters at some point in the weekend. Also, the NJDFS will soon be holding an invite-only Firefighter Safety and Health Summit to examine the stresses that firefighters undergo and what strategies could be developed to reduce firefighter fatalities/injuries. This will be on May 25<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy and all NJ Fire Safety Commissioners are welcome. The NJDFS was also lucky enough to land a training grant for Regional Rail Response and they will be held at Middlesex County Fire Academy on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Chief Kramer was asked to sit on an NFPA committee that is dealing with the efficiency of fire code enforcement. Chief Kramer has accepted this position and will be reporting on the committee's work as it moves forward. Also, there was a meeting of the NJFPPA County Presidents last month, much of which was focused on moving forward and working with the RIMS system. The R2 windowless basement exception provisions have been adopted in the New Jersey Register, so they are now enforced.

Chief Kramer also asked the Codes Advisory Council and Firefighter Health and Safety Advisory Council to work together on providing guidance on complying with the Solar Signage regulations. The NJDFS is running out of time to propose regulations, so Chairman Wisniewski asked if the two Councils could work together on this issue and report back at the May meeting on this issue. Commissioner Stanley Sickels explained that the Codes Council had developed a draft of a sign that would prevent future confusion or the need for more than one sign on a building. Commissioner Richard Blohm said the sign, as designed, was not practical or useful for a working firefighter going into a burning building and is too much to decipher. The two Councils agreed to work on coming to a consensus for the May meeting.

Charles Lavin reported on his attendance at the 2016 Vision 20/20 Model Performance in Fire Safety Symposium in Fairfax, Virginia. The program was packed with presentations from all over the country and beyond, and a theme throughout seemed to be data collection and analytics. Many fire prevention bureaus now have sophisticated ways of examining their operations and using that information to find areas with the greatest need. The focus has become trying to use data to predict where fires may occur, where resources should be concentrated, and how well existing programs are working. For example, for a smoke alarm distribution program, people are using a GIS program to know the ages and locations of each alarm that is distributed. All of the Model Programs presented were given to each attendee via a flash drive, and the DFS will be looking to distribute those for New Jersey's bureaus to look at. Commissioner Naylis spoke about using data to determine how to allocate code enforcement resources, and Charles Lavin answered that there is a "next level" program being introduced called NFORS. It is designed to be a predictor of what may happen (fire-wise) in the future based on a number of factors, instead of simply reporting on what happened in the past.

Chief Lou Kilmer spoke about the adoption of the regulations for windowless basements in R2 buildings. The NJDFS is now in the process of posting the notice and some

guidance on general issues that will come up. Chief Kilmer took a minute to thank all the staff in his Local Assistance Unit for their hard work on getting Annual Reports completed statewide.

This past week, there was a situation in Sussex County where the Fire Official had let their certification lapse, so the NJDFS has assumed jurisdiction in a couple municipalities there. Commissioner Naylis asked if there were sanctions, if any, imposed upon the towns that allowed an uncertified fire official to work. Chief Kilmer said there were none, other than for the NJDFS to assume jurisdiction. Chief Kramer added that there really aren't sanctions the Division can take in such a situation other than to withhold rebates. Commissioner Blohm asked how the Division of Fire Safety is notified when a fire official's certification lapses. Chief Kramer and Chief Kilmer explained that it can be determined any number of ways, but usually through the Annual Reports process.

Chief Kilmer was pleased to report that, with the help of Commissioner Richman and Chief Kramer, the Code Enforcement Unit has been able to maintain staffing levels and get all inspections completed on schedule on a consistent basis. The Unit also continues to work with the RIMS developers on a regular basis to improve and streamline the system.

Commissioner Stanley Sickels asked Chief Kramer about an issue that was raised at the County Presidents meeting regarding the licensing vs. certification of inspectors. Chief Kramer said that, subsequent to that meeting, there was a meeting with the Attorney General's Office that determined it would take a legislative change if licensing were to be required.

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

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

Commissioner Pat Intindola gave the Codes Advisory Council report. The Council met on February 17, 2016 and the minutes of that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

Commissioner Intindola thanked Michael Scardino for putting out the word to all fire officials about upcoming code changes and how to vote on them. Commissioner Sickels began his report on the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting by talking about the Codes Council's log of outstanding proposals and asked the NJDFS to follow up with DCA whenever possible.

The Codes Council is also examining a Fire Protection Color Tag System that would make fire officials aware as to the levels of fire protection a given building has. The Council is currently awaiting some feedback from industry representatives on the issue. The Codes Council is also looking into a code change that would require the test reports on protective systems be reported to the fire official within five days.

The Subchapter 3 and Subchapter 4 committees are still hard at work in conducting their chapter reviews and the Codes Council anticipates their reports. The Codes Council is also in the process of streamlining the roster to potentially eliminate members that have been inactive for an extended period of time. Letters have been sent out to gauge the interest and commitment of those members to encourage their participation and/or determine their future intentions.

Commissioner Sickels spoke about the need for some entity at the State level to conduct its own investigations when these large-loss fires are occurring. It would behoove the fire service to gather its own findings from a fire service perspective. Chairman Wisniewski said this had been discussed in the immediate aftermath of these types of fires (most recently in North Brunswick and Somerset County), but it is difficult to do this when cause-and-origin investigations are still active. While this doesn't preclude us from examining the incidents further, Chief Kramer said it is worthwhile to have a look at code-wise moving towards the future. Commissioner Sickels stressed the need for official state reports on these incidents and suggested a change be made to give the Division of Fire Safety the access and ability to do so. Chief Kramer said that a legislative change may be necessary to achieve this.

Commissioner Sickels reported that the Codes Council voted to classify underground buildings and parking garages as Life Hazard Uses. Commissioner Sickels also made a motion that the Fire Safety Commission adopt the draft regulations for Carbon Monoxide Detection in All Uses – as distributed in the meeting packets. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Naylis and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pat Intindola made a motion that Lizette Strait be added to the Code Advisory Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sickels and passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for April 20, 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 February 16, 2016 at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

Commissioner Wood reported that Training and Education is looking locate the representative from the Civil Service Commission who attended the FESHE Conference that was held last year. Chief Kramer said he would get that information to Commissioner Wood as soon as possible.

There was a meeting held with the Bergen County Counter-Terrorism unit regarding fire station safety. Commissioner Wood said they were going to conduct a survey to see what measures are being taken now, and Homeland Security does have a computerize packet

that can be utilized for a more in-depth overview of the situation. Chairman Wisniewski thanked Commissioner Wood for following up on this. Commissioner Wood also spoke in detail about re-certifications to keep the fire service on the same page with what is being taught to firefighter recruits at the academies statewide. The Council is beginning to look into compiling a list of what specific areas in particular most need to be kept current.

Commissioner Wood had electronically distributed the resumes of three nominees to be added to the Training and Certification Advisory. Commissioner Wood made a motion that all three be approved by the Fire Safety Commission. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Kevin Krushinski and passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for April 19, 2016 at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville.

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

Commissioner Gerard Naylis stated that the majority of fire departments have submitted their NFIRS data for 2015 to the Division of Fire Safety. The NFIRS Unit is now in the process of chasing down those who have not reported in a timely manner. Commissioner Naylis gave an overview of the NFIRS system and the data collection efforts in New Jersey for Senator Greenstein.

### **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 May 16<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 March 9, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. The minutes from that meeting are contained in the Commission packets.

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>.

Chief Kramer urged any and all members of the Fire Safety Commission who are available to attend the FIRE Bowl Final event, as it is a great program with some really remarkable students.

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.

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

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported progress. There will be a meeting of the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council this afternoon at Middlesex County Fire Academy.

#### **7. Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council**

Vice-Chairman Kevin Krushinski reported that the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council met on March 3, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. The minutes from that meeting are contained in the Commission packets. There was a bit of an uptick in attendance due to Chief Kramer’s bulletin, and Vice-Chairman Krushinski thanked him for his efforts on this.

Vice-Chairman Krushinski reported that the “Fire Is” course has been/will be offered three times throughout the spring semester – and that the entire NJDFS spring brochure is now available online. It will be offered March 18<sup>th</sup> (Gloucester), March 22<sup>nd</sup> (Morris), and March 30<sup>th</sup> (Burlington). Registration can be completed via Kean’s website.

Commissioner Kathleen O’Leary has done work on the retooling of the Parents Legal Responsibility Pamphlet based on the input and instruction given by the Attorney General’s Office. Also, Charles Lavin reported that a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention 2 course was scheduled for April 28-29 at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Registration information is now available on the Kean University website ([www.keanfiresafety.com](http://www.keanfiresafety.com)) as of March 1st. The cost will be \$60 per student and that includes breakfast and lunch on both days.

Vice-Chairman Krushinski reported that the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Firesetter Intervention Conference is already book at Middlesex County Fire Academy for December 1-2, 2016.

The next meeting of the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for May 12, 2016 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy at 10 AM.

### **G. Committee Reports**

#### **1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

Chairman John Wisniewski spoke about the withdrawal and refiling of A1900, the residential sprinkler legislation. It is now in the process of being refiled and will be issued a new number that has yet to be assigned. Chief Kramer spoke again about the DCA's position regarding the Governor's conditional veto of the previous bill – which was concurred on in the Assembly, but not in the Senate.

#### **H. Old Business**

Commissioner Stanley Sickels spoke about the report from the Ad-Hoc Committee that submitted three recommendations regarding lightweight construction at the November meeting of the Fire Safety Commission. At that meeting, the recommendations were adopted except for #3. Commissioner Sickels stated that this recommendation, the one concerning pedestals (usually parking garages) is absolutely necessary and an essential part of the report. Commissioner Sickels made a motion that the recommendation be adopted by the Fire Safety Commission along with the others. Commissioner Pat Intindola seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Intindola brought up the issue of reappointments of the Fire Safety Commissioners. Many have not been reappointed for several years and it is important for the Commission to be kept current. Assemblyman Wisniewski and Senator Greenstein said they would follow up on the Joint Senate/Assembly appointments, as well as encourage the Governor's Office to follow up on their half as well.

#### **I. New Business**

Commissioner Naylis made a motion that both Chairman John Wisniewski and Vice-Chairman Kevin Krushinski be re-appointed to two-year terms in their current positions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo and passed unanimously.

#### **J. Public Comment II**

Alexi Assmus spoke on behalf of residents who are advocating regarding lightweight construction in large housing complexes. These residents have been active in response to the Edgewater fire and have been examining how to prevent such disasters from happening in the future. Commissioner Stanley Sickels and Ms. Assmus had a spirited debate as to how fire sprinklers might have helped fight that fire, what effect they can have going forward, and the particulars of how the Edgewater fire started and spread. Commissioner Sickels even used a drawn diagram to demonstrate how fire sprinklers could have served to contain a fire such as the one that occurred in Edgewater.

#### **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 12:08 pm.

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**\* The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at 10am. It will be held at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ \***