

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

Meeting of May 19, 2021

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at the Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold, NJ.

Commission Members Present: Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman
Sen. Sam Thompson
Asm. Kevin Rooney
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood
Mr. Armando Roman
Mr. Kevin Bellew
Mr. Gerard Naylis
Mr. John Wisniewski
Mr. Richard Blohm
Mr. Daniel DeTrolio
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary
Mr. Steve O’Gorman
Mr. Fred Collender
Mr. Arthur Hayducka
Mr. Raymond Heck

Commission Members Excused: Mr. Arthur Londensky

DCA Staff Members Present: Richard Mikutsky, NJ State Fire Marshal
Lou Kilmer, NJDFS
Charles Lavin, NJDFS
Kent Neiswender, NJDFS
Vincent Campagna, NJDFS
Jason Spiecker, NJDFS
Justin Henry, Codes and Standards

Guests: David Kurasz, NJFSAB
Ronald McGowan, Wildwood Crest FD
John Garton, NJDOL/PEOSH

A. Call to Order

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM. He led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

B. Approval of Minutes

With no discussion requested or additional corrections, the minutes of the regular meeting of March 17, 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.

D. Public Comment I

Chairman Krushinski opened the meeting up to any members of the public wishing to comment before the Fire Safety Commission. David Kurasz from the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board thanked the Commissioners for their leadership during this time and returning the meetings to in-person.

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 speaking about the passing of Jim Greshak and Jim Newbon, both of Mercer County. The Fire Safety Commission expressed their condolences and observed a moment of silence.

Director Mikutsky complimented the entire NJ Division of Fire Safety staff on their continued hard work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They are working their way back to normal and he thanked the DCA Administration for all their support throughout. The NJDFS has been able to backfill many positions to keep staffing levels up, but has reached the maximum number of full time employees. They will be requesting more for FY22.

The Operation-7 Save-a-Life smoke alarm program is ongoing, with over 5,000 smoke alarms and 250 carbon monoxide alarms being distributed throughout the ABC-7 viewing area. In South Jersey, the Operation-6 Save-a-Life program has made smoke alarms available to fire departments in the Philadelphia media market. Also relative to Community Risk Reduction, the Fire Focus Newsletter (quarterly) and State Fire Marshal Message (monthly) continue to be published and distributed statewide.

The Governor's Internship Program has been a success for the NJDFS for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. They are in the process of opening up internship opportunities for this coming summer. Also, Director Mikutsky noticed that resumes of prospective Commission members have been submitted to the Governor's Office and are currently being reviewed.

Director Mikutsky spoke about the Junior Firefighter Rules, which have been submitted to the Training and Education Advisory Council for review and discussion. Also related to training, the Spring Semester has seen over 11,000 students complete online training via Kean University's Fire Safety Training Program.

Chief Lou Kilmer reported that progress is being made on the 2018 International Fire Code – New Jersey Edition. As the reviews are completed, the chapters are forwarded to the Codes Advisory Council to avoid delays once the process is completed.

The Office of Fire Department Preparedness has been involved in several large-scale incidents in recent months – most notably the forest fires in Ocean County and a large structure fire in Manville. They continue to staff the ROIC and are increasing the presence of the NFIRS Unit statewide to boost participation in reporting. There have also been numerous meetings held in response to the closing of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Facility. These meetings have been held to gather information and address the hazards presented by the plant's closing.

Director Mikutsky offered some statewide fire statistics to date this year: 44 civilian fire fatalities (28 of which in 1-2 family homes), 145 civilian burn injuries, and 10 school fires. He concluded his report by commending his staff, who have exceeded expectations during extremely busy and trying times.

Commissioner John Wisniewski asked a question, referencing the use of funds collected by the NJ Division of Fire Safety. He asked if a portion of those monies went to the Treasury to fund other parts of state government. Both Director Mikutsky and Chief Kilmer confirmed that this is the case, but it is nothing new. This has been done for years over the course of several administrations. Commissioner Wisniewski asked the legislative member of the Fire Safety Commission present if they could look into keeping those funds earmarked for the operations of the NJDFS. They agreed to do so.

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, Chief Lou Kilmer reported that the Codes Advisory Council met on April 21, 2021. The minutes of that meeting were submitted electronically for the review of the Fire Safety Commission members.

The Codes Advisory Council continues to make progress on Subchapter 3 and Subchapter 4 reviews and discussed elements of each at the most recent meeting. Chief Kilmer also provided the Council with an update on the emergency rule modifications –

which should mostly return to normal with the exception of school inspections being extended.

The Codes Advisory Council also discussed a proposal in regards to Annual Reports. Under this proposal, LEAs would be penalized for submitting annual reports later than the required due date. The penalty would come from a deduction in their rebates and increase over the time the report is not submitted. The Codes Council also discussed proposals regarding fire escape contractors and maintenance, and clothes dryer exhaust systems.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for Wednesday, June 16th.

2. Training and Education Advisory Council

Commissioner Lawrence Wood reported that the Training and Education Advisory Council met on April 20, 2021 via Zoom. The minutes of that meeting were submitted to all Fire Safety Commission members prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Wood reported that many topics were covered at the meeting, but the bulk of the discussions were surrounding the rules and regulations concerning the governing, training, and deployment of Junior Firefighter Auxiliary members of fire departments. It was eventually determined that a committee on Junior Firefighters would be formed to more closely examine the issues surround it, as well as assist the Division of Fire Safety on the topic. All other topics were covered in the Training and Education Advisory Council minutes distributed and questions on them could be directed to Commissioner Wood.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for May 27, 2021 on Zoom.

3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council

Commissioner Gerard Naylis began his report by talking about the NFIRS training that has been offered by the NJDFS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed the need for accurate reporting and narratives for keeping data. Commissioner Naylis stressed that fire departments statewide should be focused on keeping and submitting data so that we can return to levels seen in past years as far as percentage of departments participating.

4. Master Planning and Research Advisory Council

Commissioner Raymond Heck reported that the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is looking to return to in-person meetings in the very near future. He echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Wood and reported that the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is focused on many of the same issues as Training and Education.

Commissioner Heck spoke in detail on the need to examine the newly-passed legalization of marijuana statewide, and how this relates to the state's fire service. He particularly focused on the volunteer fire service where firefighters need to respond at any time, so safeguards must be put in place to ensure that they are not responding and/or operating equipment under the influence. This is one of many issues that Master Planning will be looking at going forward, as they move towards holding in-person meetings.

5. Public Education Advisory Council

Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo reported that the Public Education Advisory Council is still working on a reorganization. However, programs like the NJ State Poster Contest and Operation-7 Save-a-Life smoke alarm program continue to be run by the NJDFS's Community Risk Reduction Unit. Charles Lavin gave a brief report on those ongoing initiatives.

6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported that the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council had met on May 6 at Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

Commissioner Blohm reported that New Jersey Forest Firefighters had reported they had 483 fires for a total of 598 acres which is a significant reduction in comparison to previous stats of this nature. They also followed up on the firefighter who had suffered a cardiac arrest during the Lakewood fires. They were happy to report that - as of April 23 - this individual is home after being released from rehabilitation.

The Council's subcommittee on revision of the Guidelines For The Emergency Management Of Firefighters ("Pink Book") reported that they had a draft for the members of the Council to review. However, that it is a work in progress and a few more components are necessary before having several other agencies review it before submitting to the Department of Health for approval.

The next meeting of the Firefighter Safety & Health Advisory Council will be July 8th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville at 10AM.

7. Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council

Commissioner Kathleen O'Leary reported that the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council met at Monmouth County Fire Academy on May 13th. Commissioner O'Leary reported that the Council beginning to move forward with planning Annual Conference, and it is now scheduled for December 2nd and 3rd at Middlesex County Fire Academy.

Commissioner O'Leary also spoke about the need for more continuity as far as having all counties report and participate in submitting data to the Advisory Council. They will be partnering with the NJ-IAAI to try and get some tractions in area were participation has been minimal. Commissioner O'Leary also spoke about the planning of upcoming

courses – both Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Program Manager – for Fall 2021. Details on these will be shared when available.

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council will be held virtually via Zoom on July 28th at 10AM

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 on Assembly Bill 5200 – the Townhouse Bill – and thanked the Commission members and legislators for their support of it. The Ad-Hoc Committee on Legislation will be reporting further on it at the next Commission meeting in July.

H. Old Business

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

Commissioner Richard Blohm made a motion that Chief Chris Uhlshaefer be appointed to the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gerard Naylis and passed unanimously.

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 Gerard Naylis made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner John Wisniewski and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:39 AM.

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