

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

**Meeting of January 15, 2020**

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ.

**Commission Members Present:** Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. Charles Siedenburg  
Mr. Kevin Bellew  
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary  
Mr. Gerard Naylis  
Mr. Steve O’Gorman  
Mr. Fred Collender  
Mr. Arthur Hayducka  
Mr. Richard Blohm  
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo  
Mr. Raymond Heck  
Mr. Arthur Londensky

**Commission Members Excused:** Sen. Sam Thompson  
Mr. Armando Roman

**DCA Staff Members Present:** Lou Kilmer, NJDFS  
Rick Farletta, NJDFS  
Charles Lavin, NJDFS  
Frank Clark, NJDFS  
Vincent Campagna, NJDFS  
Jerry Clark, NJDFS  
Kent Neiswender, NJDFS  
Michael Whalen, Codes and Standards

**Guests:** Ronald McGowan Jr, Wildwood Crest Fire  
John Garton, PEOSH Rich Silvia, NJ State FPPA  
David Kurasz, NJFSAB Wayne Wolk, Trenton Fire  
Tony Correia, NJ State Fire Chiefs Pasquale Sarnella, HFD  
Phil Seelinger, Newark FD Alden Blackwell, Tenafly FD

**A. Call to Order**

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. He 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 additional corrections, the minutes of the regular meetings of November 20, 2019 were approved.

## **C. Correspondence**

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 submitted, the meeting was moved to Public Comment I.

## **D. Public Comment I**

Chairman Krushinski opened the meeting up to any members of the public wishing to comment before the Fire Safety Commission. There being none, the meeting was moved to Division of Fire Safety Activities.

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

With Director Richard Mikutsky called into a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Louis Kilmer gave the report for the NJ Division of Fire Safety. Chief Kilmer began his report by passing along some 2019 end-of-year numbers that Director Mikutsky asked him to share with the Fire Safety Commission. Chief Kilmer commended the NJDFS staff on continuing to do more with less.

In 2019, the NJDFS handled 245 fire investigations, and had 71 fatal fire reports (41 of which were in residences). There were 312 civilian burns reported and 68 school fires. NFIRS reporting is currently at 82% for the year. The NJDFS's Bureau of Fire Code Enforcement did 21,620 initial inspections and 18,123 re-inspections. They also cited 61,882 violations, issued 1,873 permits, issued 3,680 smoke alarm certificates on changes of occupancy, and investigated 392 complaints. The NJDFS also completed all of the inspections in the towns they are responsible for. Chief Kilmer pointed out that these numbers are extremely large (up from last year) and a testament to the hard work being done by NJDFS personnel.

Chief Kilmer spoke about the recent passing of a bill mandating a Fire and EMS mental health hotline, similar to the one that law enforcement has. The hotline will be paid for by the Division of Fire Safety and will be run in conjunction with Rutgers University. Chief Kilmer also reported that a meeting of the County Coordinators is scheduled for January 25<sup>th</sup>, where the coordinators will be sworn in for their two-year terms.

Chief Kilmer reported that the foam take-back program has been moved back to March 2020. Rick Farletta and his staff are working in conjunction with the NJDEP on this, and will put out the word to fire departments when all details are set. It will take place at Morris and Gloucester County Fire Academy's.

Chief Kilmer spoke about the positions at the Division of Fire Safety that they are currently looking to get filled. While it is a long process, they are fortunate to have the support of the DCA Commissioner and State Fire Marshal on this. Chief Kilmer spoke about the various units that need added staffing.

Chief Kilmer spoke about the Annual Reports season going on currently and pointed out that Frank Clark and his staff are working closely with the local enforcing agencies on this. Chief Kilmer also reported that unfortunately the Junior Firefighter Bill did not make it through the legislative process in the last session and would have to be re-introduced.

Regarding the collecting of the foam that the Department of Environmental Protection is recalling, Commissioner Richard Blohm asked whether this would include County Academies. Rick Farletta from the NJDFS answered that, yes, as long as the entity filled out the survey and is not a private business, they will be included.

Commissioner Dan DeTrollo asked about the monies being collected by the Division of Fire Safety, now that the year has ended, and it is budget time. Chief Kilmer answered that the receipts from the past year has kept with the trend in maintaining a steady increase. This has been augmented by the newly-assembled Compliance Unit, but that unit did recently lose one of its three staff members that now needs to be replaced. Chief Kilmer stressed that the lack in staffing isn't due to lack of funds or administrative support, but it's just a product of the lengthy – but necessary – process.

Chief Kilmer spoke about an issue raised at the previous meeting by Commissioner Heck about the Incident Commander training program. Chief Kilmer called upon Kent Neiswender, NJDFS Training and Certifications Supervisor, to clarify the issue raised by Commissioner Heck. Mr. Neiswender explained in great detail the history and reasoning behind the duality of the trainings being done by both OEM and the Fire Safety Training Program. Ultimately, the authority having jurisdiction over this is EMI and the State Training Director equally. A discussion was held on this, primarily between Commission Heck and Mr. Neiswender, resulting in an understanding of the current dual-track process concerning these courses.

Commissioner Richard Blohm inquired about the status of junior firefighter training given the failure of the Junior Firefighter Bill to be passed this legislative session. He asked if academies had been notified of this and how they should proceed in regard to the training of junior firefighters until a bill is passed. Chief Kilmer answered that they will be working with the Department of Labor on a joint letter to provide some more guidance on this. In the meantime, the academies should do what they are comfortable with in terms of training junior firefighters as far as what they have from the Department of Labor.

With no further questions asked regarding Division of Fire Safety Activities, the meeting was moved to Advisory Council reports.

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

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

Commissioner Arthur Londensky reported that the Codes Advisory Council met on October 16<sup>th</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup>. The minutes of both meetings have been included in the Commission meeting packets for review.

Commissioner Londensky reported that progress has been made regarding the Hot Work Permits, as the Codes Council has been working closely with the Division of Fire Safety on this. Commissioner Gerard Naylis commented that it has now been five full years since the Avalon fire and stressed the need to make this a top priority. Commissioner Londensky commented that it is up to the State how they want to handle the training and/or certification of those doing hot work. A robust discussion on how to issue these permits and how to make a determination on when someone is competent enough to be licensed. Chief Lou Kilmer commented that establishing a licensing program would be extensive and most likely require some kind of legislation. Chief Kilmer agreed that those doing hot work need to be trained and spoke about outlining those qualifications in the Code. Commissioner Naylis added that the bottom line is that people need to know what they are doing – whatever they decide to call the license/certification/permit/etc. Chairman Krushinski asked Commissioner Bellew if he had contacts that could help look into this issue. Commissioner Bellew answered that, yes, he did in the plumbing trades but added that this is a roofing issue as well.

Commissioner Londensky also cited progress by the Codes Advisory Council regarding the Fire Protection Color Tag System and the Fire Protection System Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance Forms. Chairman Krushinski also commented on the issue in the Codes Council minutes regarding the installation of standby power generators at single family dwellings.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

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

Commissioner Lawrence Wood reported that the Training and Education Advisory Council met on December 17<sup>th</sup> at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville. The minutes of that meeting with include in the packets distributed at the meeting. Commissioner Wood reported that it was an extensive meeting and if anyone has any questions regarding the minutes they can refer them to him.

Commissioner Wood spoke about the ongoing bidding process that the NJ Division of Fire Safety is working on with the Treasury Department for the Firefighter1/Firefighter2 and Hazardous Materials programs. He called upon Kent Neiswender to once again report on behalf of the NJDFS. Mr. Neiswender reported that, unfortunately, the bid was delayed and now behind schedule. Fortunately, there are plenty of materials for the

existing program to last at least until the end of the year. Mr. Neiswender also spoke about the ongoing accreditation process with ProBoard and IFSAC, and the four new accreditations that are a part of the process this time around.

Commissioner Richard Blohm asked Kent Neiswender about a topic in the Training and Education Advisory Council minutes that had to do with combining Firefighter 1 and 2 classes. Mr. Neiswender clarified that it would be an integrated course, not just stacking the same elements of the existing classes one after another. Commissioner Blohm spoke about some potential issues with that, particularly when it comes to performing certain elements of Firefighter 2 training before someone who has not done Firefighter 1 in its entirety. Mr. Neiswender said that there are still discussions going on about this, with the goal being a good professional development plan for all firefighters. Commissioner Wood also asked Mr. Neiswender to elaborate on the expansion of online trainings for the Learning Management System. Mr. Neiswender went into detail about the elements in the current fire safety training contract for the development of integrating more online-based parts of the training courses. This would include an online lecture series, as well as online exams and homework assignments – all of which would be compatible across operating systems.

Commissioner Gerard Naylis brought up a recently-based bill that would mandate that four-year college accept certain fire academy courses for college credit. Commissioner Naylis noted this as being a great recruitment tool and suggested the Training and Education Advisory Council look into identifying specifically what these courses are so the crediting process would be seamless. Commissioner Wood said they would be looking at this and providing guidance on how to best use this opportunity to promote the available trainings for those looking to get the college credit. Kent Neiswender also agreed to take a closer look at the specifics of this legislation – as far as what/how much credit will be given for which classes at which schools. From past experience, it is difficult to get various schools to agree on a set number of credits for a given course.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for February 18, 2020 at 10 AM and will be held via teleconference. If anyone would like to call in and participate, please contact Commission Wood for the details.

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

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that the NFIRS reporting for 2019 is currently around 82-83% and he expressed some disappointment that those numbers have been lagging behind numbers that had been in the high 90s in recent years. Chairman Krushinski clarified that the responsibility of NFIRS reporting lies with the fire department, not the local enforcing agency – this is actually a common misconception around the state. Commission Naylis agreed and also stressed that departments need to be reporting and submitting their NFIRS data to be eligible for certain grants that they depend on.

Chief Lou Kilmer added that the NJDFS has been taking a close look and brainstorming about how to make NFIRS reporting mandatory. It is a slippery slope to mandate this, but they have been working on some ideas and Vincent Campagna will be taking this back to the Statistics and Information Advisory Council to look at in the near future. In the past, distributing certain items/equipment served as an incentive and they will be looking at something similar going forward.

There was also discussion about how to get better (and more accurate and complete) narratives in the NFIRS reports that are being submitted. Kent Neiswender spoke about this being added to the Firefighter I curriculum but stressed that firefighter recruit training can not be a substitute for high school English class skills.

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

Commissioner Raymond Heck spoke about the Traffic Incident Management System program and the elements of it that are being added to the Firefighter 1 program. He wondered if that were something that was too complex for that and should it be added to Firefighter 2 instead. Commissioner Heck gave specifics about the TIMS program and how it relates to firefighters and law enforcement working together at the scene of an incident. Commissioner Heck and Kent Neiswender had a discussion about this, with Mr. Neiswender stressing that the elements of TIMS being introduced in the initial Firefighter 1 training and then reinforcement going forward. Anthony Correia added to the discussion by stressing that this is a serious issue with serious consequences and should be introduced as early as possible.

#### **5. Public Education Advisory Council**

Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo reported that no meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council had been held since the last Commission meeting. He referred to Charles Lavin from the NJDFS to report on any ongoing public education initiatives. Mr. Lavin reported that the Mid-Atlantic Regional Fire Safety Summit was successfully held on December 4, 2019. There were 206 attendees who saw 11 presentations from speakers from all over the country. Mr. Lavin will be discussing the future of the event here in New Jersey with NFPA in the coming weeks.

Charles Lavin also reported that ABC's Operation-7 Save-Life program will kickoff with its annual Kickoff Breakfast in New York City on January 29<sup>th</sup>. From there, the NJDFS will coordinate with Kidde on receipt of the physical smoke alarms and distribution will be planned from there. The NJDFS anticipates 5,000 ten-year sealed-battery smoke alarms in Spring 2020.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville at 10 AM.

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

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported progress and the next meeting will be today – here at Middlesex County Fire Academy – following the Commission meeting. All are welcome to attend.

**7. Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council**

Commissioner Kathleen O’Leary reported that the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council had met on January 9<sup>th</sup> at the Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold. The minutes of the meeting are contained in the Commission meeting packets.

Commissioner O’Leary reported that Charles Lavin is working with Joe Ehrhardt, Helge Nordtveit, and Kean University on planning two courses for the Spring 2020 semester. They are tentatively planning to have the Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist on April 7-8 at Monmouth County Fire Academy. Subsequently, the Youth Firesetter Program Manager class would be held May 11-12 at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Vineland.

Additionally, the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual New Jersey Youth Firesetter Intervention Conference was held on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. Charles Lavin described the Conference as running extremely smoothly and receiving a lot of positive feedback throughout. The two days saw approximately 106 attendees experience 9 training classes from instructors from all around the nation.

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup> at the Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold.

**G. Committee Reports**

**1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that, while he would love to give the Commission some positive news on residential sprinkler legislation, unfortunately it may be pocket-vetoed by the Governor. There is still time for him to sign the bill, but it is not looking good at this point. Commissioner DeTrolio asked what the sticking points would be with the bill at this point, by neither Commissioner Naylis or Chairman Krushinski knew what the specific issue is at this point.

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

Commissioner Kevin Bellew reported on behalf of the Committee. They are currently working on a report and will be providing it to the Commission Secretary as soon as it is ready. The Committee will be meeting following today’s Commission meeting here at Middlesex County Fire Academy.

## **H. Old Business**

Chairman Krushinski asked if anyone had any Old Business to bring before the Commission. There being none, 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 Gerard Naylis asked if the Division of Fire Safety currently had a mechanism to track 10-year smoke alarm performance issues. Commissioner Naylis cited several instances where people are reporting malfunctions with their devices, and he wondered if these reports and complaints were being compiled or tracked. Chief Lou Kilmer said he was only aware of one major recall related to 10-year sealed-battery smoke alarms, but the short answer is no, the NJDFS has not been tracking or aware of any ongoing issue with any certain kind of smoke alarm. Chairman Krushinski asked if it would be possible to have a field added to the NFIRS reporting system that could possibly monitor these types of instances. Vince Campagna from the NJDFS NFRIS Unit said he would check this out.

## **J. Public Comment II**

Chairman Krushinski once again opened up the meeting to any members of the public wishing to address the Fire Safety Commission. Chairman Krushinski revisited the issue of report-writing and added the possibility of adding it to the curriculum of the I-100 or I-200 to put the writing responsibilities on the managerial side.

Chairman Krushinski thanked Dave Kurasz (NJ Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board) and Commissioner Kevin Bellew (Sprinkler Fitters Local 696) for providing the coffee and refreshments for today's meeting.

## **K. Adjournment**

With no further discussion requested, Chairman Krushinski called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Naylis made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Heck and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM.

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**\* The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 10am. It will be held at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ \***