



State of Connecticut  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
Division of Fire, Emergency and Building Services  
Office of Education and Data Management

## **Fire Marshal Training Council** **Minutes for Thursday, March 10, 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. by Chairman Hyland.

Council members attending: Lenell Kittlitz, Barry Rickert, Don Harwood, Rev. Edward F. Hyland, Victor Mitchell and Jeff Morrissette. Absent: Stephanie Cummings, Richard Palmer, Mayor Stewart and Bob Upson. MaryAnn Basile attended from the Building Code Training Council.

Attending from the Office of Education and Data Management were Assistant Directors Bonnie Becker, Doug Schanne and Recording Secretary Helen Stocker.

There were no public comments or communications.

**Approval of October 28, 2010 Minutes:** A motion was made by Don Harwood to approve the minutes and was seconded by Lenell Kittlitz. Motion carried.

### **Staff Reports**

**OSFM:** Deputy State Fire Marshal Barry Rickert announced the addition of two sworn personnel to his staff, Sgt. Mark Grasso and Det. Patrick Dragon to the Investigations & Enforcement Unit. Both are certified at the fire marshal level. OSFM has been very busy with modifications in Engineering and multiple fires, due to people using alternate methods of heat, such as space heaters, because of the high price of home heating oil.

Barry will also be doing a presentation at the Design & Trades Conference March 15. He announced that proposed changes are anticipated due to the formation of a new agency, the Department of Construction Services. It will be comprised of OSFM, OEDM and OSBI as well as part of DPW. This is pending approval by the Legislature. For now, it is a wait and see situation which could impact the FMTC.

**OEDM:** Asst. Director Bonnie Becker reported the total registered for the Spring, 2011 Career Development classes was 5,118. Fifty-seven classes covering twelve topics are being offered of which fifteen are currently full. Currently there are 270 registered to attend the annual Design & Trades Conference on March 15 at Naugatuck Community College.

As a result of Dennis Mitchell being transferred to Human Resources, the CAVU licensing component for OSFM is now on pause.



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Doug Schanne reported applications for the Advanced Fire Investigation School are now coming in. It will take place April 26-29 and May 3-5 at the Fire Academy. The pre-certification program is currently about half way through the fire investigation module. The fire inspector module will begin in April. It is anticipated the fall pre-certification schedule will go out in April. Jack VanNess will be retiring effective June 1, which will leave OEDM without a building trainer.

Discussion then centered on training and how the economic climate has directly affected attendance. Jeff Morrissette pointed out that book sales at the Fire Academy have increased over last year, and due to an opening in the City of Bridgeport, they have received between 1,200 and 1,500 applications for fire training. He noted that some communities are now charging a fee just to apply for a job opening. With shrinking resources, personnel and ever changing technology, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain training within the parameters required. On-line training will become paramount as long as fuel prices spike higher, making driving cost prohibitive for many. Another item that is being proposed is the coordination of fire and police training under one umbrella into an 'emergency responder' unit.

Jeff continued about 'blended training' (the combination of classroom and on-line training). He felt it isn't as cost effective and may actually cost more because you still need a staff to process paperwork associated with it. Lenell and Victor have both seen a shift in the audiences at the community college level. They noted that some classes are now beginning at 6:00 a.m. and others at midnight to accommodate an employee's work schedule.

Discussion then focused on the future direction of the Council and the challenges OEDM is facing to continue to provide training. The Fire Marshal Training Council is acutely aware of the challenges OEDM and OSFM are currently facing, and does not want to see what has been built up over the years to go down the drain. Splitting up units could have a dramatic affect that could prompt communication with the Council should mandated training need to be addressed at the legislative level.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

A motion was made to adjourn by Jeff Morrissette, and was seconded by Barry Rickert. Motion was carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.