

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

Meeting of July 17, 2019

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at the Surf City Vol. Fire Company in Surf City, NJ

Commission Members Present: Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman
Mr. Pasquale Intindola, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood
Mr. Charles Siedenburg
Mr. Raymond Heck
Mr. Kevin Bellew
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary

Commission Members Excused: Asm. Anthony Bucco
Mr. Gerard Naylis
Mr. Steve O’Gorman
Mr. Richard Blohm
Mr. Arthur Londensky
Mr. Fred Collender
Mr. Armando Roman

DCA Staff Members Present: Richard Mikutsky, Director, NJDFS
Lou Kilmer, NJDFS
Rick Farletta, NJDFS
Charles Lavin, NJDFS
Tim Weiss, NJDFS
Jason Spiecker, NJDFS
Robert Tharp, NJDFS
Jerry Clark, NJDFS
Leonard Inzerillo, NJDFS
Michael Whalen, Codes and Standards

Guests: Ronald McGowan Jr, Wildwood Crest Fire
David Kurasz, NJFSAB
Rich Heimbach, Master Planning Tony Correia, Burlington Twp.
Robert McFarland, Bordentown FD John M. Colucci, NJ Career Chiefs Assn.
Mike Achey, NJFFS

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, 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 meeting of May 15, 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. With no other members of the public wishing to address the Fire Safety 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 apologizing for missing the previous two Fire Safety Commission meetings, as they had conflicted with the Lt. Governor's meetings at the Department of Community Affairs. Director Mikutsky thanked the Surf City Volunteer Fire Department for hosting today's meeting, as well as the New Jersey State FMBA for providing lunch for everyone following the meeting.

Director Mikutsky spoke about the state government avoiding a shutdown on July 1st, as the budget was ultimately passed and signed by Governor Murphy. The Division of Fire Safety was ready with a contingency plan and designated essential employees if there was to be a shutdown. Director Mikutsky said the budget for the coming fiscal year includes seven new full time employees at the NJDFS and will be working to fill those slots, as well as those slots left by those retiring. Also, Director Mikutsky and Chief Kilmer will soon both have full time secretaries. Both are starting this month.

Director Mikutsky reported that the Arson Investigations Unit has done 125 investigations so far in 2019. Additionally, there have been 147 civilian burns, 45 school fires, and 42 fatalities around the state to date this year. Director Mikutsky also reported on New Jersey Weekend down at the National Fire Academy – which saw 190 attendees experience some great classes throughout the weekend. The Homeland Security Conference, held back on June 6th at Kean University, was a sell out and very successful event.

The New Jersey Division of Fire Safety has recently partnered with U.S. Veterans Affairs to provide smoke alarms to New Jersey's veterans in need. Through the Operation Save-a-Life program, the NJDFS was able to present the VA with roughly 150 smoke alarms at a ceremony in Lyons last month. The alarms will be distributed throughout the year.

The NJDFS's Office of Fire Department Preparedness, along with OHS&P, has started an Active Assailant workgroup in which they examine and prepare for response during these incidents. The Division of Fire Safety has also been working closely with the City of Atlantic City and working with their fire department. The NJDFS has also been working closely with the Newark Fire Prevention Bureau and getting them up to speed.

Director Mikutsky reported on the ongoing situation in Sea Isle City where there have been high-profile incidents and subsequent complaints regarding personnel. There were issues with incident command certifications for three members of the department there, including the chief. The NJDFS then asked those individuals to vacate those positions and is working to get firefighters and department personnel up to date on getting the proper certifications. The situation is ongoing and the Division of Fire Safety is staying heavily involved.

Director Mikutsky spoke about the imminent merger of Maplewood and South Orange Fire Departments. The Division of Fire Safety has been meeting with these departments monthly and working on the plans going forward. It looks as though the newly merged department will become civil service, and this is all set to take place as of January 1, 2020. Director Mikutsky also spoke about two bulletins issued recently by the NJDFS – one on the fake inspector in Union County, the other on a July 4th incident regarding a fire chief who was burned deploying a Fit5. Director Mikutsky also reported on two structure fires in Morris County were caused by fireworks recently. Chief Kilmer added that he has been told that these novelty fireworks are just the tip of the iceberg compared to what companies would like to sell here in the future. He, as well as Rick Farletta, added that it is important to track and report incidents regarding fireworks so we have the data.

Following up from the May meeting, Director Mikutsky reported that the letter the Commission requested be sent to Lt. Governor Oliver on legal marijuana was delivered to her. The Lt. Governor said the fire service would be part of the conversation should the issue of legalized marijuana, and how to regulate it, come up again in the future.

Bureau Chief Lou Kilmer began his report by talking about the Division of Fire Safety's Peer Review and the three hearings that were held recently. The main sticking point was falsification of reports, which will not be tolerated. In these particular cases, business owners were interviewed and stated they had not seen an inspector in years. Chief Kilmer also spoke about the ongoing situation in Sea Isle City, where numerous issues continue to arise during the NJDFS's monitoring. It is coming to light that many businesses have not been inspected in several years – some of which have since gone out

of business. This seems to be a long-term issue, as it will take time to go through everything that is going on there.

Chief Kilmer spoke about continuing to work with “Sparktacular”, which uses ‘cold spark machines’ to create a waterfall-of-fireworks effect at events. The NJDFS is working on developing a guidance document and Type 1 permit on these devices. The Division is continuing to work on the changes to the Fire Codes (about 50 or so), most of which are small technical changes regarding spelling, punctuation, etc.

Chief Kilmer talked about the new Compliance Unit that is now up and running under the leadership of George Beckett. They have made great progress already in cleaning up old files, appeals, and judgments. The Division of Fire Safety is continuing to do inspections at farm facilities and that process of working with the industry on getting the buildings they can inspect up to code. Chief Kilmer also spoke about the new computer system that will replace RIMS and serve as a more user-friendly and interactive platform.

Chief Kilmer finished his report by giving the statistics outlining all the hard work the ladies and gentlemen at the NJDFS have done so far this year: 10,276 inspections; 31,354 violations issued; 8,135 re-inspections; 777 event permits; 1,897 change-of-occupancy inspections. All this has been done with a number of vacancies in inspector positions.

F. Advisory Council Reports:

1. Codes Advisory Council

Vice-Chairman Pat Intindola reported that the Codes Advisory Council met on June 19th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the meeting packets. Vice-Chairman Intindola reported that the Codes Council now has a draft for an addition to Subchapter 4 regarding combustible crawl spaces. The Subchapter 4 committee will formulate a definitive proposal.

The Codes Council also discussed a Fire Code Analysis Subcommittee that would examine large loss fire investigations. This would be to assist the Division of Fire Safety on incidents that involved serious life and/or financial losses by looking at them from a codes perspective. Vice-Chairman also reported progress on Hot Work Permits and the Fire Protection Color Tag System.

Vice-Chairman Intindola spoke about a code proposal requiring smoke detection equipment within the individual bedrooms of one- and two-family residences. Chief Kilmer said that, while the proposal certainly has merit, it exceeds the current legislation on this and it would have to be changed for the proposal to be implemented. Vice-Chairman Intindola also spoke about a proposal regarding temporary membrane structures that are used in the yachting industry.

Chief Kilmer spoke about Kitchen Suppression Reports and outlined the reasons for changes to the form – basically that technology has advanced and the reports are now electronic and content-driven. Chief Kilmer said they are now working with the contractors to develop the new forms.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for August 14th 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 June 18th at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the meeting packets. Commissioner Wood highlighted a few things from the meeting, starting with the partnership between the Port Authority of NY/NJ and the Middlesex County Fire Academy. They are an approved Eligible Organization and Training Facility with the NJDFS and the partnership includes several of the new Division of Fire Safety certification titles.

Commissioner Wood spoke about the Division of Fire Safety's partnership with the National Guard to provide hazardous materials training, as well as a bid being put together for new Firefighter 1/Firefighter 2/Hazardous Materials: Awareness & Operations Courses.

Commissioner Wood also discussed junior firefighters and noted that the current Commissioner of Labor supports the Division of Fire Safety's position on this, and they are meeting to discuss how to proceed. There is legislation proposed regarding junior firefighters and Commissioner Wood stressed the importance of these programs being a breeding ground for the future of the fire service.

Commissioner Wood noted that he would be looking for approval to appoint new members to the Training and Education Advisory Council, and would be doing so under New Business.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled to take place on August 20th at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville.

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

Commissioner Raymond Heck reported the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is scheduled to meet on July 25th. At that time they will be covering several topics – including all of the fire service-related legislation that is proposed and just sits without benefitting the fire service or public safety in general. Commissioner Heck

spoke more specifically about the junior firefighter program and the inability to train on the firegrounds. A lengthy discussion followed regarding volunteer recruitment and retention. Also, Commissioner Heck urged the Fire Safety Commission to take a more active role in dealing with the legislature and look to educate them on the fire service's needs regarding bills.

Commissioner Heck also spoke about ICS training, and the lack thereof, because of the need to refresh and retrain for incident commanders. He urged the Fire Safety Commission and the NJDFS to take an active role in providing and requiring more training – and different ICS programs were discussed regarding what should be offered on the state level. Chief Kilmer added that, to this point, there has not been discussion on changing the current program and referred Commissioner Heck to the Training and Education Advisory Council to examine it further.

5. Public Education Advisory Council

Commission Daniel DeTrolgio reported that there had not been a formal meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council since the last Fire Safety Commission meeting, and called upon Charles Lavin to report on public education programs at the Division of Fire Safety. Charles began his report by talking about the Operation Save-a-Life program, which saw roughly 4,400 smoke alarms distributed to fire departments in North and Central Jersey earlier this summer. In all, 5,000 were received and distribution will continue as requested.

Mr. Lavin reported that he had attended the NFPA Conference in June and met with representatives throughout the region regarding the Mid-Atlantic Regional Fire Safety Summit. With the success of the inaugural event in November 2018, it was determined that New Jersey would once again host the event – this time on December 4, 2019 at Raritan Center in Edison. The full-day event will focus on public education and fire prevention in all forms, with a concentration this year on fire safety for seniors via the “Remembering When” program. The Summit is a partnership including New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Delaware, D.C., Pennsylvania – and registration will be free and open online on September 17, 2019.

Mr. Lavin also reported that, with the completion of the 2018-2019 NJ Fire Safety Poster Contest, he is currently designing the 2020 New Jersey Fire Safety Calendars. They will be printed compliments of Atlantic City Electric and Sprinkler Fitters Local 696 this year, and should be printed and ready for distribution at the next Fire Safety Commission meeting in Wildwood Crest.

6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council

In the absence of Commissioner Richard Blohm, no formal report was given. The minutes from the previous Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council were included in the meeting packets.

7. Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council

Commissioner Kathleen O’Leary reported that the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council did not hold a meeting in July, but the planning committee for the 17th Annual New Jersey Youth Firesetter Intervention Conference has been working to put the event together. The Conference is slated for December 5th and 6th at Middlesex County Fire Academy and registration will open online on September 24th.

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for September 11th at Wildwood Crest Fire Department.

G. Committee Reports

1. Residential Sprinkler Committee

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

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

Commissioner Wood made a motion that Robert Gregory and Walter Nugent III be appointed to the Training and Education Advisory Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heck and passed unanimously.

J. Public Comment II

Tony Correia from Burlington Twp. spoke about the Tom Canzanella bill that was signed for firefighter protection from cancer, and suggested doing some kind of analysis of how that bill has impacted/will impact the fire service in New Jersey. Mr. Correia also gave information on the 2nd Annual Fallen Firefighters Memorial - which will take place at 1pm on September 29th.

David Kurasz from the NJ Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board spoke about the bill to expand the NJ Fire Safety Commission – which is currently on the Governor’s desk waiting to be signed. The NJFSAB has sent a letter asking for the Governor’s support on this bill. Mr. Kurasz also spoke about the farm bills that went through recently, which he found to be pretty bad and restricts towns from doing anything beyond what is mandated by the state for fire protection.

Mr. Kurasz also suggested that the NJ Fire Safety Commission establish an Ad-Hoc Legislative Committee that could monitor and examine bills that are proposed by the legislature. After some discussion, it was determined that the Committee would be co-

chaired by Commissioners Heck, Bellew, and DeTrollo. Mr. Kurasz and Richard Heimbach also offered to serve on this Committee.

Michael Ackey from the NJ Forest Fire Service invited everyone to Smokey the Bear's 75th birthday celebration – which is set for August 10th at Liberty State Park. It is a free, family event that is open to the public. More information can be found at: www.njwildfire.org

Bill Gee from Ocean County Fire Prevention spoke about the inspectors train-the-train classes and urged the Division of Fire Safety to better publicize these to the eligible organizations and instructors alike. He stressed the importance of communicating these opportunities across the board so they don't get missed by those that need the training. Commissioner Wood answered that he would work with the Training and Education Advisory Council and the NJDFS's Kent Neiswender about getting the word out.

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 Wood and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:17 am.

*** The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 10am. It will be held at the Wildwood Crest Fire Dept. in Wildwood Crest, NJ ***