

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

Meeting of September 12, 2019

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Thursday, September 12, 2019 at the Wildwood Crest Fire Department in Wildwood Crest, NJ.

Commission Members Present: Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood
Mr. Charles Siedenburg
Mr. Raymond Heck
Mr. Kevin Bellew
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary
Mr. Gerard Naylis
Mr. Steve O’Gorman
Mr. Fred Collender

Commission Members Excused: Mr. Pasquale Intindola, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo
Asm. Anthony Bucco
Mr. Richard Blohm
Mr. Arthur Londensky
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
Frank Clark, NJDFS
Rod Meyer, NJDFS
Kent Neiswender, NJDFS
Michael Whalen, Codes and Standards

Guests: Ronald McGowan Jr, Wildwood Crest Fire
Tony Correia, Burlington Twp.
Tom Simpson, Harrington Park
Edward Frey Jr., Ramsey
Peggy Brookes, Princeton
Daniel Dunn, Wildwood FD
Jerome Inderwies, Cape May
Mark Hopkins, Mt. Laurel
Richard E. Dean, Avalon
Lisa Sardelli, Avalon

Joshua Lazarus, NJDFS (ret.)	Matt Levine
Bryant Curry, Mt. Laurel	James Zacone, Washington Twp. (Bergen)
Elizabeth Sweeney, Union Beach	Stanley O'Brien, Jackson
Steven Porth, Jackson	Robert A. Brenneck, ECFPPA
Michael Neill, Wildwood Crest	Robert Elwell Jr., CMFD
Dominick McClain, NWFD	Robert Griffith, TCFD
Helen M. Graham, MTFD #2	Kirk Stillwell, MTFD #2
William J. Cripps, Wildwood	Artie Hayducka, Piscataway
Connie Johnson, Cape May Co.	John Lewis, PSE&G
Nick Lombardi, Piscataway	John Buchek, Piscataway
Vinny Corsaro, Jefferson Twp.	Alden B. Blackwell, Tenafly FD
Wes Suckey, T&E Advisory Council	John Garton NJDOL/PEOSH
Edward McDermott, Piscataway	John H. Rieth, NJFFS
Daniel Spiegel, Wildwood	Mark C. Barham, Monroe
Mark Allen, WFD	Ronald Harwood, WCFD
Steve Dyl, Kearny FD	

A. Call to Order

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:04 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 July 17, 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.

Vincent Corsaro from Jefferson Township thanked the NJDFS for their assistance at last week's 8-County meeting in East Hanover. The meeting was very well attended and successful. Mr. Corsaro also spoke about the possibility of re-configuring the way that CEU's are assigned for attending various meetings and events.

At the request of Commissioner Steve O'Gorman, John Lewis from PSE&G gave a brief presentation on the New Jersey Statewide Utility Safety Team. They offer free standardized training for firefighters throughout the state regarding gas emergencies. It is

for all types of firefighters and departments – urban, rural, career, volunteer, etc. The goal is to increase public and firefighter safety while allowing the fire service and utilities statewide to work together. Mr. Lewis distributed information to the Fire Safety Commission with further specifics on the incidents they train for. Commissioner O’Gorman added that if anything further is needed on this, the Commission members can contact him for assistance. There will also be representatives present for the duration of the Wildwood Convention to answer questions on this.

Tom Simpson from Harrington Park spoke about a problem with foreclosures, where people are moving in and not getting smoke alarm/fire extinguisher inspections. Chairman Krushinski answered that it is his understanding when there is a Sheriff’s sale, we get beat on the inspection. When it is a transfer via the bank, an inspection is required. Chief Kilmer recognized that there is a problem in these cases of public sales, and his suggestion in the meantime is to reach out and work directly with the occupants once the situation is identified. This would seem to be the safest course of action until the law is changed at some point. A discussion followed with examples of what is done in various municipalities statewide.

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 talking about the staffing at the Division of Fire Safety. They are continuing to backfill positions, as well as adding personnel to bolster their ranks. Director Mikutsky also spoke about some pending pieces of legislation, particularly concerning junior firefighters. There are currently two bills in each house on this, and the NJDFS is doing its due diligence in reviewing all of the bills to ensure that they are positive for the state’s fire service.

Director Mikutsky gave an update on the Fit5 devices, which are a form of explosive used in fire suppression. One of these had malfunctioned and injured a Fire Chief in Sussex County. The NJDFS subsequently put out a memo on these suggesting the devices be put out of service. Since then, the NJDFS has taken more than a dozen from around the state and disposed of them.

On July 19th, a bill increasing the NJ Fire Safety Commission to 27 members was passed by both houses and signed into law. This was an idea that originated with past Chairman John Wisniewski.

Director Mikutsky spoke about a training run by the OFDP on active shooter response management, which took place in early September. There were over 100 emergency responders involved in the initial training, and there will be a lot more of this type of training to come. Director Mikutsky elaborated on the work of the NJDFS’s Office of Fire Department Preparedness, whom he commended full pulling double-duty due to the loss of a couple Senior Planners.

Director Mikutsky spoke about the Division of Fire Safety's requirement to do a school fire suppression survey, which was signed into law back in 2017. That is currently being implemented statewide and concerns all schools – both public and non-public – and it is a sizeable undertaking to say the least. Director Mikutsky offered some statistics from the NJDFS so far this year – including 209 civilian burns, 50 school fires, 165 arson investigations, and 49 fatalities. The NJDFS is still very active in Atlantic City concerning their fire department and is currently working on hiring and promotions.

Director Mikutsky reminded everyone that the Fall training semester opened up registration yesterday (September 11th) and classes are already filling up. Registrations can be done at www.keanfiresafety.com. Also, Fire Prevention Week is coming up from October 6-12 and the national theme is “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape – Plan and Practice Your Escape”.

Director Mikutsky also spoke about the incident on Route 280 in West Orange back in July. There were severe injuries to firefighters and state troopers on scene. Director Mikutsky expressed his pride in the NJDFS's response to the incident, and noted that it was swift and went well beyond the call of duty. The fire service, after all, is a family and all emergency responders on the scene treated the matter as such.

Chief Louis Kilmer began his report by expressing his encouragement with the filling of inspector positions at the NJDFS – and the Civil Service Commission is about to announce an open competitive exam for openings at the Division. Chief Kilmer asked that anyone who knew of good, quality candidates to encourage them to apply. Chief Kilmer also spoke about the NJDFS's involvement in the American Dream project up at the Meadowlands. The Code Enforcement Unit has been heavily involved in the permitting process and will continue to work alongside the Meadowlands Fire Department. The NJDFS is starting to get a lot of press inquiries on this as the opening approaches this fall.

Chief Kilmer reported that the Peer Review Committee met to review three individual cases, in each of which it was recommended that certifications be revoked. Chief Kilmer reiterated that these were not for minor infractions, these were serious issues like falsification of records, etc. Those types of major offenses will not be tolerated. Chief Kilmer thanked the Peer Review Committee for their work on these matters. Chief Kilmer also gave an update on the continuing farm inspections throughout the state and reported that there have been relatively few problems lately, but is still a significant undertaking.

Chief Kilmer spoke about the inspections of food trucks, which is becoming more and more prevalent statewide. There is now a new training class on food truck inspections and it will be offered three or four times during this fall's semester. Chief Kilmer also reported that the NJDFS has been getting a lot of OPRA requests lately, particularly pertaining to the farm inspections. He stressed that all files that fire officials use for inspections are OPRA-able (emails, reports, forms, etc.) – so be mindful that everything in those documents should be appropriate.

The NJDFS is continuing with its State inspections, along with the usual load of inspections done in the municipalities in which the NJDFS is the enforcing agency. They are currently around 2,000 inspections ahead of schedule as compared to last year at this time. There will wind up being approximately 18,000-19,000 initial inspections, which is a huge number considering staffing has been down. The Compliance Unit also continues to do great work in recouping outstanding fees.

Chief Kilmer spoke about questions the NJDFS are getting about the 10-year sealed-battery smoke alarms. He stressed that there is no longer a phase-in period and the regular battery-in smoke alarms need to be replaced. That said, he urged fire officials to work with business owners in getting them updated in a reasonable amount of time.

In regards to the American Dream project, Commission Lawrence Wood inquired about the fire hydrants on sight possibly facing the wrong direction. Chief Kilmer answered that this is the first he had heard about this, but they will look into it.

Commissioner Steve O’Gorman asked about any additional TIMS trainings in the wake of the incident that occurred in July on Route 280. Director Mikutsky answered that there are six TIMS trainings coming up (five in West Orange), including one in conjunction with the FMBA’s February convention in Atlantic City.

F. Advisory Council Reports:

1. Codes Advisory Council

The Codes Advisory Council that was scheduled to take place back in August was cancelled, so no formal report was given.

2. Training and Education Advisory Council

Commissioner Lawrence Wood reported that the Training and Education Advisory Council met on August 20th at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the Commission packets. Commissioner Wood spoke about the dissemination of the Training and Education meeting reports, and said if anyone is interested in having their organization receive them to let him know and provide an email address.

Commissioner Wood spoke about the Microsoft Dynamics computer system that DCA had picked had been discontinued and the platform does not work as promised. The NJDFS is currently looking into exploring different options, possibly the Kean University website.

Commissioner Wood spoke about the data the state’s fire service has on how many active firefighters there are, how many are trained in Firefighter I and II, etc. He said those statistics are not exactly realistic and spoke about the possibility of getting these numbers to be more accurate, and proposed a two-year process where they can determine who is

an active firefighter and who is not. Commissioner Wood said this is something that legislators, as well as the fire service in other states are looking at closely. Commissioner Gerard Naylis added that there is already a mechanism in place for this, and said what we should be doing is encouraging fire departments statewide to update their records and maintain a more accurate and updated database.

Commissioner Naylis inquired about the renewal of ProBoard certifications. Kent Neiswender, NJDFS Supervisor of Training, said they are working with ProBoard now and has been granted an extension. Commissioner Raymond Heck asked about the reasoning behind the state paying for getting the ProBoard certification. Mr. Neiswender responded that this is a way to get New Jersey's firefighters the best accreditation in a uniform way... putting the onus on the firefighter to pay for it would create inconsistencies of accreditation with firefighters that have had the same amount of training. Getting this accreditation is the best route and best investment in the state's fire service. This also lends itself to uniformity with the textbooks used as training material.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled to take place on October 15th at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville.

3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council

Commissioner Gerard Naylis spoke about the importance of capturing accurate data from fire and emergency incidents throughout the state. It is critical to have good, quality data when going to legislators and asking them to make good policy decisions for our fire service. Also, Commissioner Naylis spoke about expanding training opportunities in regards to writing narratives on NFIRS reports. Doing more detailed and expansive narratives will not only help the accuracy of the data, but also covering the emergency responders should the incident be re-examined at some point down the road. Chairman Krushinski asked Director Mikutsky if perhaps the NJDFS could put a memo out in regards to fire departments provide better reporting and better narratives. His thought is that many departments feel that it is not required when, in fact, it is. Director Mikutsky agreed and also stressed the importance of documenting everything you possibly can in writing.

4. Master Planning and Research Advisory Council

Commissioner Raymond Heck reported the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is currently looking at various regulations and determining which are mandatory and which are voluntary. The Council is taking a hard look at this and will provide a comprehensive report at the November meeting.

5. Public Education Advisory Council

In the absence of Commission Daniel DeTrollo, Charles Lavin gave the report on Public Education initiatives that are ongoing at the NJ Division of Fire Safety. Mr. Lavin spoke about the 2020 New Jersey Fire Safety Calendars that were designed using the artwork

from the 2018-2019 poster contest. Mr. Lavin thanked all the sponsors, whose logos are all displayed on the back cover of the calendar and throughout it. He especially thanked Atlantic City Electric and Sprinkler Fitters Local 696 for stepping up significantly in the sponsorship of printing the calendars – ensuring that they could maintain the same quality and quantity as in past years. Mr. Lavin recognized Commissioner Kevin Bellew and David Kurasz for their dedication to public safety education and this program in particular.

Charles Lavin reported that a 2nd Annual Mid-Atlantic Regional Fire Safety Summit was being planned for December 4th at the Sheraton Edison Hotel @ Raritan Center. The event is a collaboration between New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and DC – led by NFPA. Registration for this event will be available on www.keanfiresafety.com and begin on September 17th.

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 met on September 11th at the Wildwood Crest Vol. Fire Department. The minutes of that meeting will be distributed when they are available.

Commissioner O’Leary reported that an all-county youth firesetter program presentation had been planned for September 26th in Princeton. The goal is to get representatives from all 21 counties in the same room to see the Mercer County program’s presentation – led by Peggy Brookes and Robert Taylor – as well as connecting everyone and discussing best practices from throughout the state. Charles Lavin added that if anyone present could assist in locating representatives from Bergen, Sussex, or Passaic Counties, to please speak with him following today’s meeting.

Commissioner O’Leary also reported that the 17th Annual New Jersey Youth Firesetter Intervention Conference was scheduled for December 5th and 6th at Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. Registration would be opened and the full program released on or around September 24th. All materials and registration links will be available at www.keanfiresafety.com

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetter Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for November 7th at the Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold.

G. Committee Reports

1. Residential Sprinkler Committee

No report.

H. Old Business

Chairman Krushinski asked if anyone had any Old Business to bring before the Commission. With none to discuss at this time, the meeting was moved to New Business.

I. New Business

Director Rich Mikutsky reported that fire sprinkler classes will be leaving Chubb and moved to Millburn at the facilities of Sprinkler Fitters Local 696. Director Mikutsky thanked Commissioner Kevin Bellew for his help on setting this up and hosting the trainings going forward.

Chairman Kevin Krushinski thanked the Wildwood Crest Fire Department for hosting today's meeting, as well as the Cape May County Fire Officials for supplying the refreshments for the morning.

J. Public Comment II

Tony Correia from Burlington Township spoke about the New Jersey State Fire Museum having its annual Open House event on September 29th. They will also be having a New Jersey Fallen Firefighters Memorial. The event is at the NJ Fire Museum's headquarters in Upper Freehold. Mr. Correia also announced that the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial would be on October 5th and 6th. He suggested going to www.firehero.org for more details on this. Mr. Correia also expressed the need for everyone to get trained on traffic incident management safety, and the events of the past few months only serves to highlight this. New Jersey is one of the best places anywhere to get this training, and Mr. Correia recommend anyone who can to take advantage of that.

Vincent Corsaro from Jefferson Township spoke about the possibility of using RIMS (or the new computer system that is coming) in conjunction with a fire department census to glean more accurate information on the current numbers out there in the fire service statewide. Chief Kilmer agreed and said this is something that the Division of Fire Safety would have to work with OIT on.

Michael Whalen from DCA's Division of Codes & Standards spoke about the 2018 Code's 6-month grace period is ongoing and asked that everyone be mindful of that. Mr. Whalen also called attention to an article on the Construction Code Communicator that covers the issues with rehab projects with smoke alarms. The article also specifies the dates of when certain requirements on smoke alarms went into effect.

Mr. Whalen also gave a full and comprehensive overview of new items from the new 2018 Code. This included items pertaining to thresholds in educational buildings, new construction of over 55 feet (and where that is being measured from), mass notification

system requirements for active-shooter situations at colleges/universities, locking mechanisms in educational and office buildings, and FireWatch during construction. Mr. Whalen urged fire departments to work alongside fire officials and inspectors on preparing for these changes being put in place.

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 Bellew and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 am.

*** The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 10am. It will be held at the Atlantic City Convention Center in Atlantic City, NJ ***