

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

**Meeting of September 12, 2024**

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Thursday, September 12, 2024 at the Wildwood Crest Volunteer Fire Department in Wildwood Crest, New Jersey.

**Commission Members Present:** Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. Steve O’Gorman  
Mr. Arthur Hayducka  
Mr. Gerard Naylis  
Mr. Charles Siedenburg  
Mr. Charles Maria  
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary  
Mr. Frederick Collender  
Mr. Nelson Wiest

**Commission Members Excused:** Mr. Arthur Londensky, Vice-Chairman  
Sen. Anthony M. Bucco  
Mr. Kevin Bellew  
Mr. Richard Blohm  
Mr. John Wisniewski  
Mr. Raymond Heck  
Mr. Armando Roman  
Mr. George Aleu

**DCA Staff Members Present:** Richard J. Mikutsky, State Fire Marshal  
Louis Kilmer, NJDFS  
Bruce Tynan, NJDFS  
Timothy Weiss, NJDFS  
Charles Lavin, NJDFS  
Lenny Inzerillo, NJDFS  
Greg Kirkham, NJDFS  
Rodman Meyer, NJDFS  
Tim Paar, NJDFS  
Isaiah Goldsby, NJDFS  
Scott Royle, NJDFS  
Steve Dyl, NJDFS  
Joseph Jackson, NJDFS

<b><u>Guests:</u></b>	Matthew Janora	Chad DiGiorgio
Ronald McGowan Jr.	Robert Hill	Tom Simpson

Richard Heimbach  
Anthony Correia  
David Speigel  
Stuart Blank  
Jim Yates  
Ron Martinelli  
Brian Wahler  
Michael Weill  
Jacob Spiegel  
Tracy Kilmer  
Kirby Stilter  
Michael Whalen  
Mike Corbo  
Robert Reed  
Matt Levine  
Jim Potts  
Vincent Corsaro  
Robert Feltell  
Lewis Ostrander

William Kramer  
William Belles  
Rich Herron  
Joseph Berchtold  
Jim Burleigh  
Nick Lombardi  
Peter O'Connor  
William Bates  
John Garton  
Thomas Scalera  
Kathy Elwell  
Robert Griffith  
Douglas Greenberry  
Richard Foster  
Steven P. Inrato  
Kevin P. Kelly  
Ernie Troiano III  
Mark A. Cifaluglio

Paul T. Dansbach  
RayQuan Walker  
Edward McDermott  
Alan Querec  
Joe Babore  
John Mochanski  
Gary Bonacci  
Ralph Occhipinto  
Robert McClure Jr.  
Helen M. Graham  
Dan DiSimone  
David Marx  
Kyle Lindholm  
John D. O'Leary  
Daniel P. Mulligan  
Dennis O'Rourke  
Bernard Walker  
Anthony Caine

#### **A. Call to Order**

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. He led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those recently lost in the line of duty and the men and women serving our nation overseas.

#### **B. Approval of Minutes**

Without a quorum, the Fire Safety Commission was unable to formally approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 18, 2024. Chairman Krushinski noted that the minutes were in today's meeting packets for all to review.

#### **C. Correspondence**

Chairman Krushinski noted that any and all correspondence for today's meeting was contained in the Commission packets.

#### **D. Public Comment I**

Chairman Krushinski opened up the meeting to any members of the public present wishing to address the Commission at this time. There being none, the meeting was moved to Division of Fire Safety Activities.

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

Director Richard Mikutsky reported that the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety remains busy on all fronts. With the support of the DCA Administration, they continue to move towards filling vacancies.

As the NJDFS moves forward to fill its organizational structure and continue the important work for the benefit of all people of New Jersey, Director Mikutsky proudly reported that Bruce Tynan has been promoted to the position of Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Fire Department Services. This position has been vacant for several years and, with the support of the DCA Administration, the NJDFS has been able to fill this very important vacancy. All Commission members and those in attendance congratulated Chief Tynan.

Director Mikutsky sadly reported that the fire service had suffered a tremendous loss on August 21<sup>st</sup> with the passing of Congressman Bill Pascrell. Congressman Pascrell was responsible for bringing tens of millions of dollars to New Jersey's fire service through the Fire Act of 2000, which gave birth to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program in 2001 and the SAFER Grant programs, which he authored in 2003.

Director Mikutsky reported that, so far in 2024, the Investigations Unit conducted 200 fire investigations, had 40 K9 deployments, and 360 other dispatch notification calls. He also reminded anyone calling our hotline into Mercer for DFS notification to please be sure to specify if you need an investigator or K9, an inspector, or a coordinator to ensure that calls are routed to the proper unit for follow-up.

The NJDFS K9 Teams will be assisting with security sweeps throughout the Wildwood Convention Center prior to the meeting sessions on Friday and Saturday of the Convention. Unfortunately, K9 Remi was recently hospitalized at an emergency vet for severe gastro issues. Thankfully, they were able to provide treatment and avoid surgery. She recovered within a few days and is now back in service.

Director Mikutsky reported the Investigations Unit has been fielding questions about lithium battery fire cause evidence. There needs to be a balance between hazard mitigation and evidence preservation so that departments do not find themselves in an evidence spoliation situation. As such, the NJDFS has been in contact with ATF staff, and they are developing a recommended evidence procedure. It will be distributed by the NJDFS and NJ-IAAI as soon as it's available. In the meantime, contact Supervisor Jason Spiecker or your regional ATF investigator to discuss this further if needed. The Investigations Unit will also be assisting with instructing modules and practical evolutions for the upcoming DCJ and NJIAAI Basic Fire Investigator courses.

The NJDFS Investigations Unit is working with the New Jersey State Police Marine Unit staff to update procedures to ensure that marine vessel fires are being properly investigated. Previously, these marine investigations were handled by the State Police Arson/Bomb Unit, but these incident notifications have become sporadic in recent years.

The Investigations Unit also wants to remind all fire departments that their notification form for firefighter injuries is on the NJDFS website. Online and phone notification is required upon a firefighter being admitted into a hospital for treatment, or for any injury that occurs at a training facility. Also, newly created “NFPA 1321 Standard for Fire Investigation Units” just became available for purchase. The Investigations Unit is currently evaluating and updating their policies and procedures for compliance.

Director Mikutsky reported that the Office of Training & Certification has issued approximately 14,000 certifications to date for calendar year 2024. Also, the Basic Fire Police Officer credentialing program is being finalized by Chief Martinelli and the Fire Police SME Group. Train-the-Trainer sessions will start being scheduled in October. The Office of Training & Certification reported that the RIC SME Group met on August 22, 2024, at the Gloucester County Fire Academy to discuss the program delivery, the train-the-trainer delivery, locations, and instructor and safety requirements. They are looking to deliver the train-the-trainers in Morris County, Burlington County, and Gloucester County this fall.

The New Jersey ARFF credentialing program has been requested to present the program and its accomplishments to the ARFF Working Group at the 34th Annual International Educational Symposium in Myrtle Beach, SC, during the week of September 9 to 12, 2024. The NJ ARFF program will be run exclusively at Middlesex County Fire Academy, and the Newark and Atlantic City International Airports. All instructors must have gone through the train-the-trainer course. The sponsoring agency will have to provide the needed jet fuel, Purple K extinguishers, crash trucks, and Instructors.

Director Mikutsky reported that the 2025 New Jersey Weekend at the National Fire Academy will be Friday, May 30th, Saturday, May 31st, and Sunday, June 1, 2024. The Real ID Act will be in effect, and a Real ID/Passport/Passport Card/federal ID will be needed to enter the NFA facility. Attendees will be able to choose from the following 7 courses:

- Residential Sprinkler Plan Review
- New Fire Chief: Administrative Issues
- Command and Control for Company-Level Operations
- Introduction to Unified Command for All-Hazard Incidents
- Building Resilience in Leadership: Strategies for Growth and Confidence
- Safety for Hazardous Materials Incidents
- Fire Investigation: Fire as a Weapon

The Office of Training & Certification reported that the Code Enforcement SME will reconvene soon to update the Fire Inspector and Fire Official courses to the new International Fire Code – 2018 NJ Edition. 2018 IFC of NJ – Subchapters 2 and 4 went into effect April 15, 2024 – Subchapter 3 is effective October 15, 2024. Director Mikutsky noted that Subchapter 2 contains new Life Hazard Uses and a new permit, along with clarifying language and corrections. Also, Subchapter 4 contains amended provisions allowing Carbon Monoxide detection systems installed in accordance with UCC to be an additional alternative to the requirements. The combustible landscaping

materials provision will not become operative until April 15, 2025. Bureau Chief Kilmer added that the NJDFS is working on the printing of all the code changes as we speak. Chief Kilmer added that NJDFS staff has been working diligently on reviewing the 2021 Code and they are already on Chapter 87, which is nearly through the entire book. They will be presenting this to the Codes Advisory Council once the review is completed. Chief Kilmer also highlight the importance of getting the changes regarding mulch into the Code, as New Jersey has had an unfortunate and tragic history of these types of fires.

Director Mikutsky reported that N.J.A.C. 5:71 regulation revisions are in the process up being reviewed and updated. Proposed amendments include the following:

- \*Testing and course hour requirements for Fire Official.
- \*Experience requirements for Fire Inspector and Fire Official certifications to be moved to the front end, which will be in-line with other DCA licensure requirements.
- \*Mandating the code update requirement for all fire code officials, not just fire code officials working for an LEA.
- \*Enhancing the code update requirement to a core and elective continuing education model, which will allow more courses to meet the core requirement, than just the code update course.

Director Mikutsky reported that the Fire Inspector credentialing program is currently being revised. The NJDFS has received the revised program and are reviewing the content. After this review has been completed, the Fire Inspector SME Group will meet regarding the program, the exam questions, and the practical skill sheets. Train-the-trainers will be scheduled, and instructors will be required to take it if they would like to teach this course. The Fire Official credentialing program will be worked on after the Fire Inspector program has been completed.

N.J.A.C. 5:73 regulation revisions are currently being worked on and will be sent for review. These regulations are set to expire on June 27, 2025. Changes will include the Incident Management 2 requirements for chief level officers, the Incident Management 1 requirement for the Hazardous Materials: Incident Commander certification, and the establishment of the Junior Firefighter training regulations.

Director Mikutsky reported that the courses have been selected for the 2024 Fall CEU Semester brochure. Online registration began on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

Transcripts, Renewal Notices, and Final Renewal Notices were printed on Tuesday, September 10, 2024. They should be delivered by this weekend. Dates are as follows:

- Final Renewal Notices went out for: April 30, 2024 expiration
- Renewal Notices went out for: October 31, 2024 expiration
- Transcripts (3-year cycle): April 30, and October 31, 2025  
April 30, and October 31, 2026  
April 30, and October 31, 2027

The NJDFS and Kean will start providing Fire Officer courses during this fall semester, similar to how we do Fire Instructor courses. This is due to the lack of Fire Officer 1-4 courses being offered at the county fire academies.

Director Mikutsky reported that a memo was released by the NJDFS Office of Training & Certification detailing the Hazardous Materials: Operations Mission Specific PPE and Product Control credentialing programs for those individuals who previously were not offered these courses before 2018. This course should take approximately 1 day to accomplish. It will include the following:

- \*3-hours of classroom lecture
- \*1-hour lunch
- \*3.5-hours of practical skills
- \*0.5-hours for the written exam

The NJDFS/Kean will schedule train-the-trainer sessions for Hazardous Materials: Awareness and Operations. This will be a complete HazMat train-the-trainer for Instructors that would like to be Awareness and Operations Instructors. The NJDFS is looking to have these in Morris County, Middlesex County, and Burlington County soon. Instructors will need to possess the following state certifications:

- \*Firefighter 2
- \*Hazardous Materials: Awareness
- \*Hazardous Materials: Operations
- \*Hazardous Materials: Operations Mission Specific PPE
- \*Hazardous Materials: Operations Mission Specific Product Control
- \*Instructor Level 2
- \*Drill Ground Instructor

The NJDFS has received questions on the recently released Minimum Mandatory Qualifications memo from the Division. Many have been asking about the Minimum Recommended Qualifications section. Specifically, “Does this mean that Firefighter 1 and Hazardous Materials certifications aren’t required?” This means the minimum qualifications your members need to ride the apparatus is Firefighter 1, Hazardous Materials: Awareness, and Hazardous Materials: Operations.

The NJDFS has been meeting with representatives from NJ PEOSH Labor and Health and the NJ Forest Fire Service to discuss OSHA’s new proposed rule, 29 CFR 1910.156: Emergency Response. The comment period closed on June 22, 2024. New Jersey partnered with several other state for comments.

Director Mikutsky reported that NJDFS staff, the Fire Safety Commission, and the Training & Education Advisory Council discussed the formation of a Fire Training Commission (FTC) very similar to the Police Training Commission (PTC). They are looking to adopt the CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test) Program or equivalent for recruit firefighters only. All future meetings regarding the Fire Training Commission/Firefighter Physical Agility testing will include the following:

- \*Representatives from the NJ Division of Fire Safety

- \*Kean University Fire Safety Training Program
- \*Various Fire Safety Commission members
- \*The Training & Education Advisory Council Chair
- \*The Training & Education Advisory Council Vice-Chair
- \*Two Training & Education Advisory Council members
- \*The Firefighter Health & Safety Advisory Council Chair
- \*A Firefighter Health & Safety Advisory Council member
- \*A representative from the NJ FMBA
- \*A representative from the PFANJ

Director Mikutsky noted that all academies should be contacting the Office of Training & Certification when it comes to NFA train-the-trainer courses. The NFA will not come to your department/academy to run a train-the-trainer courses for just your staff. All NFA train-the-trainer courses must come through the Office of Training & Certification.

Director Mikutsky gave a report from the Office of Fire Department Preparedness (OFDP). OFDP staff attended and assisted at a multi-county, multi-regional water supply training class and exercise. The final exercise was held on August 31<sup>st</sup> in Ocean County. OFDP staff also assisted with fire coverage coordination and attended the funeral of Congressman William Pascrell in Paterson.

OFDP staff attended PSE&G exercises in Willingboro and Lawrence Twp. PSE&G continues to hold emergency exercises around the state. OFDP staff also assisted in resource coverage at a recent water emergency in Hudson County. The incident lasted approximately 36 hours. Local plans were established for response into the affected area. Various UASI counties provided stand-by task forces for coverage. Luckily, there were no major fire incidents during this water emergency.

Director Mikutsky reported that OFDP staff participated in the weeklong exercise “Vigilant Guard” with members participating at Joint Base and the State Emergency Operations Center. OFDP staff continues to review the twenty-one county fire mutual aid plans. This review/update is required every other year.

OFDP staff reported that the NFL is requiring all personnel to be credentialed for all games and stadiums this season. The Bureau of Fire Department Services is working with MetLife Stadium security to accomplish the credentials. Also, the Bureau of Fire Department Services has personnel in 2 FIFA Working groups relative to the 2026 World Cup events being held in New Jersey. These are the “Information and Intelligence Group” and the “Emergency Preparedness Group”. Meetings are scheduled throughout the end of the calendar year and will extend throughout 2025 and 2026.

Director Mikutsky reported that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection’s foam takeback program provided for an approved contractor to collect the foam. NJDEP legal personnel are in the process of accommodating the requirements of the new legislation. Also, the SAVER working group ASIM (Active Shooter Incident Management) Class as of this date is at 121. DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn Saurez attended a class and a

subsequent NJ Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force meeting and is in full support of the project.

Director Mikutsky reported that the OFDP currently has 31 ongoing fire department complaint investigations/dual investigations or referrals with NJDOL/PEOSH/NJDOH. There are also two referrals to AG Office of Professional Integrity Unit.

With the lineup complete, promotion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Anthony R. Braig Conference on Youth Firesetting has officially begun. The NJDFS has instructors coming from New Jersey, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, as well as NJ State Police's Bomb Unit. Registration is set to open online on October 1<sup>st</sup> through the Kean Fire Safety website. Cost will be \$110/person for both days – which includes all courses, and a sumptuous breakfast and lunch each day. 1.0 CEU's will be awarded upon completion. There is also a NFA Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist class scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> at Union County Fire Academy in Linden.

Director Mikutsky reported that Community Risk Reduction Unit staff is working on the 2025 NJ Fire Safety Calendar and expects to get them printed by November to debut at the League of Municipalities Conference. CRR staff also continues to assist fire departments statewide in both the NYC and Philadelphia viewing areas.

Director Mikutsky gave the following statistics, courtesy of the Division of Fire Safety's NFIRS Unit:

- \*Civilian Burn Reports: 349
- \*Total Fatal Fire Reports: 41
- \*Residential Fatal Fires: 30
- \*School Fire Reports: 47
- \*Electric Vehicle Fires : 3
- \*Lithium-Ion Battery : 78

Only 543 fire departments out of 705 ( 77%) fire departments have reported NFIRS for 2024 to date. A Monthly Participation Report was sent September 6, 2024 to Fire Chiefs statewide indicating this information. There are 980 active USFA eNFIRS user accounts (Free NFIRS Software). There has been an increase of 200 users since March of 2024.

Director Mikutsky reported that there are three upcoming NFIRS/Fire Incident Report Writing Training Classes:

- \*October 6, 2024 at Passaic County Fire Academy
- \*November 15, 2024 at Mercer County Fire Academy
- \*November 16, 2024 at Toms River Fire Academy

Director Mikutsky reported that FireStat will resume at 9:15am on Wednesday October 30, 2024. The agenda will include: Statewide Fire Stats including Forest Fires, NERIS and NFIRS Updates, and ROIC/ODMA Updates. FireStat will continue to be held on the last Wednesday of each month on the HISN Network.



Commissioner Gerard Naylis asked Director Mikutsky why it was necessary to establish a new body to examine firefighter training and physical fitness standards when there is already a Training and Education Advisory Council and Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council. Director Mikutsky answered that it is being done in conjunction with both Advisory Councils and the Fire Safety Commission. Commissioner Naylis asked that all the information from the meetings and discussions be shared with the entire Fire Safety Commission, and Director Mikutsky answered that once meetings are held, and information is available to share, it will be.

Bureau Chief Louis Kilmer began his report by talking about the Dynamics computer system, which is being worked on and enhanced on a daily basis. Quite a bit of time has been spent working with IBM on the system and Chief Kilmer said the results have been outstanding, especially in terms of collecting outstanding fees. Chief Kilmer specifically mentioned the contractors service portal and fire department access to records as extremely important enhancements to the system.

Chief Kilmer spoke about the legislation, passed last December, regarding the inspection of smoke dampers. This requirement was actually already in the Fire Code, the only change was the addition of another permit/certification for contractors to do the work. This would be similar to the way fire sprinkler or fire alarm contractor would be certified.

Chief Kilmer reported that he and Director Mikutsky are involved in ongoing discussions regarding legislation updating the Fire Safety Act. Chief Kilmer directed the Fire Safety Commission to take a look at the bill (A3094) on this issue, which is currently moving slowly through the legislative process. One of the key changes is requiring all inspections be done by a licensed fire inspector. At the current time that is not a requirement.

Chief Kilmer reported that the NJDFS is working with the Attorney General's Office on a bulletin regarding Food Truck inspections. Also, the NJDFS is looking into the labeling of power systems on buildings, so that firefighters know what type of energy they are dealing with when they arrive at a fire.

The NJDFS continues to work with the Department of Transportation and New Jersey Turnpike Authority on the standpipes and connections on major highways. Many are inoperable and in various states of disrepairs, so the NJDFS is working with the Attorney General's Office to determine who is responsible for this equipment and get it inspected.

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

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

In the absence of both Commissioners Arthur Londensky and George Aleu, no report on the Codes Advisory Council was available at this time.

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

Commissioner Nelson Wiest reported that the Training and Education Advisory Council met on August 20<sup>th</sup> at the Burlington County Emergency Services Training Center. The minutes of that meeting are contained in today's meeting packet for all to review.

Commissioner Wiest reported that, as directed by Chairman Krushinski in July, subcommittee members from the Training and Education Advisory Council and Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council met this past Friday for an exploratory meeting on the physical agility standards for recruit firefighters. Commissioner Naylis asked for more detail on this meeting. Commissioner Wiest answered that they are in the fact-finding phase at this point and will be giving comprehensive reports to the Fire Safety Commission when information is available.

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

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that, currently, New Jersey is on pace to have a relatively low amount of fire fatalities in 2024. Residential fires continue to have the most fire fatalities compared to fires in other types of occupancies. Commissioner Naylis urged all fire departments to continue to submit data as completely and accurately as possible. Director Mikutsky echoed Commissioner Naylis's thoughts on the low fatality rate and stated that many factors (code enforcement, smoke alarm program, etc.) contribute to New Jersey being among the most fire-safe states each year.

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

In the absence of Commissioner Raymond Heck, no formal report from the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council was available at this time. Chairman Krushinski noted that Commissioner Heck is unavailable today because he is testifying in favor of a bill that strengthens penalties against those who assault on-duty first responders.

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

In the absence of Commissioner Paul McGrath, no formal report from the Public Education Advisory Council was available at this time.

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

In the absence of Commissioner Richard Blohm, no formal report from the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council was available at this time.

## **7. Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council**

Commissioner Kathleen O'Leary reported that the Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council met yesterday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, at the Wildwood Crest Volunteer Department.

Once those minutes have been completed, they will be sent to all Commissioners for review.

Commissioner O'Leary spoke about the Operation-6 and -7 Save-a-Life programs, which now have much more stringent reporting requirements due to the extremely low supply of alarms available. Commissioner O'Leary also noted that the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Anthony R. Braig Conference on Youth Firesetting is set for December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Registration will be open at the Kean Fire Safety website by the end of September.

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup> at Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold at 10 am.

## **G. Committee Reports**

### **1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that the legislature has continued to delay the implementation of the new residential sprinkler requirements, thanks mostly to the lobbyists from the builders' organizations who are pushing back against it.

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

There was no report available from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Legislation available at this time.

### **3. NJ Statewide Utility Safety Team**

Commissioner Steve O'Gorman reported that the NJ Statewide Utility Safety Team would be participating in the upcoming EMS Conference. There will also be a meeting on November 22nd at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Commissioner O'Gorman urged all fire departments to reach out to their local gas companies regarding training at their facilities. If assistance is needed they can reach out to Commissioner O'Gorman directly.

### **4. Electric Vehicles Working Group**

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that, so far, they have identified a number of reports the group is examining on the issues of electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging stations. The group is conducting a review of these reports and will be sharing all of their findings with the Fire Safety Commission as soon as possible.

## **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 took the opportunity to thank Ron McGowan and the folks at the Wildwood Crest Volunteer Fire Department for hosting today's meeting. Chairman Krushinski also thanked the Cape May County Fire Prevention Association for sponsoring the coffee and refreshments.

Chairman Krushinski announced that the annual holiday burn demonstration was scheduled for November 25<sup>th</sup> at Monmouth County Fire Academy at 11am. All Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Commissioner Naylis asked Chief Kilmer when fire departments would be able to access the new Dynamics computer system. Commissioner Naylis also asked if this access would be limited to only certain personnel (Chief of Department, etc.). Chief Kilmer answered that there are already 50-100 fire chiefs on the system, but a letter will be sent out soon providing guidance on how to authenticate users of the system. Commissioner Naylis asked why we are not already examining the 2024 Fire Code. Chief Kilmer answered that he doesn't disagree with wanting to get as current as possible, but they can not jump over the 2021 Fire Code. It needs to be adopted the same as the 2018 one before moving forward, but it would be helpful to have legislation where the codes would automatically roll over. This would save a lot of time and energy and keep everything current. Chief Kilmer did agree to discuss the matter with the Codes Council to see what could possibly be done.

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 began the Public Comment II portion of the meeting by recognizing Erik Gabliks, Superintendent of the National Fire Academy. Superintendent Gabliks thanked the New Jersey fire service members present for welcoming him home and urged them to come down to the National Fire Academy more frequently and in greater numbers. Superintendent Gabliks gave an update from the National Fire Academy on numerous topics including: the USFA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, addressing fire department needs and resources, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's initiatives, the OSHA fire brigade standards, the new NERIS data reporting system, and the new initiative to get the fire service advocating together with "One Voice" – which will initially be focused on addressing mental health and cancer. Superintendent Gabliks concluded his remarks by thanking the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission for their continued hard work and dedication.

Anthony Correia commended the great work that Superintendent Eriks Gabliks has done for the fire service in New Jersey and the country as a whole. Mr. Correia asked that everyone in the room support him in his efforts. Mr. Correia also spoke about the

National Fallen Firefighters Summit where they are looking at all the elements of bettering the lives of firefighters – through cardiac health, mental health, cancer, etc.

Tony Cahill from the Eagleswood Fire Company expressed concerns specific to the volunteer fire service when it comes to the physical agility standards that are currently being looked at. He suggested that proper training from a fire academy be the prerequisite for the job, rather than a generalized physical agility standard. He urged the Fire Safety Commission to keep the volunteer fire service in mind when examining this issue.

Michael Corbo spoke about the process in Atlantic County where they have had physical agility standards for recruit firefighters for two years now. This is a very simple test and was implemented in response to the number of recruits they were getting that were incapable of handling the training. The test consists of a series of simple tasks that must be done in five minutes, fifteen seconds. Since this test was implemented, no one has failed and everyone in the county knows what is required. It also has nothing to do with anyone that is currently a firefighter.

Gary Bonacci from the Ridgefield Fire Department asked if the findings of the committee examining the physical agility standards could be covered in the minutes for the meetings and distributed. Chairman Krushinski answered that this would be done as a matter of course, as the minutes are always posted to the NJDFS website once approved by the Fire Safety Commission.

Roy DeYoung from Bergen County asked if there was a possibility of making a couple meetings of the Fire Safety Commission on the weekend each year. Chairman Krushinski answered that this could be reviewed when the new yearly schedule is made. Mr. DeYoung also asked about the health screenings offered to firefighters could include volunteers. Chairman Krushinski and Michael Corbo referred him to the Captain Buscio program. Mark Regan from Senator Bucco's office added that there are a couple bills in the pipeline in the legislature concerning cancer screenings for firefighters. Mr. DeYoung asked about the physical agility standards and how they will be determined. He expressed concern about the impact this would have on the volunteer fire service. Chairman Krushinski responded that it is certainly not the position of the Commission to take volunteers off the job, and the volunteer fire service will be well-represented on the committee that is examining the issue.

Steve Bailey from the Milltown Fire Department asked what exactly was being looked into in terms of the physical agility standards and if it would be removing longtime fire service members. Commissioner Wiest responded that what is being looked at specifically is standards for recruit firefighters. This does not concern anyone currently on the job. Director Mikutsky added that, currently, there is nothing stopping any municipality from implementing physical agility standards on their own.

Jim Yates reported that the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation would be holding a fundraiser tomorrow night here in Wildwood. Anyone interested in attending is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Michael Whalen asked if the 2018 International Fire Code would be posted on the NJDFS website. Chief Kilmer answered that, yes, it would be made available. Mr. Whalen also asked about the Training & Education minutes where part of it is unclear about the definition of recruit firefighter. Chief Kilmer clarified the definition of "recruit firefighter" regardless of how it was written in the meeting minutes. Steve Taylor, who is the NJDFS liaison to the Training & Education Advisory Council, answered that he wrote the meeting minutes and what is contained in them is accurate as it pertains to the definition of recruit firefighter. Mr. Whalen suggested that the definition be reworked because it is too broad as it is now. Michael Whalen also took issue with the cancellation of classes who were looking to become inspectors, and asked if there was a timeframe on when they could be run. Chief Kilmer asked that this was done because of the code changes that were upcoming. Mr. Whalen disagreed with this because the vast majority of the code will be remaining the same and any changes could be done during the code update module. Greg Kirkham answered that they were looking to start around October 15<sup>th</sup>. Michael Whalen asked how Bergen County is able to run the class when no one else can. Steve Taylor answered that it was determined, since Paul Dansbach (a Subject Matter Expert) is running that class, he is well versed on the upcoming changes and was allowed to proceed since he had asked. Mr. Dansbach added that his course goes well beyond the required hours and training, so his testing would not take place until well after it is finished and available.

#### **K. Adjournment**

With no further discussion requested, Chairman Kevin Krushinski called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelson Wiest made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Gerard Naylis and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:47 AM.

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