



SCHOOL SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: [9/26/2013](#)

Meeting Location: [Macdonough School](#)

Approval: [10/10/2013](#)

Recorded By: [Jason Crisco](#)

1 ATTENDANCE

Name	Title	Department/Location	Present
Donald J. DeFronzo	Commissioner	DAS	Y
Stefan Pryor	Commissioner	SDE	Y
Pasquale J. Salemi	Deputy Commissioner	DCS	N
William Shea	Deputy Commissioner	DESPP	Y
John Woodmansee	Education Consultant		Y
Richard E. Morris	Dir. Public Safety & Emergency		Y
Frank J. Costello	Structural Engineer		Y
Ronald Jakubowski	Former Asst. Superintendent of Schools for Operations and Facilities		Y
Steven Waznia	Firefighter		N
Adam Byington	Police Officer		N
Irene Roman	Public School teacher		Y

2 MEETING LOCATION

Building: Macdonough School, Middletown CT

Room: Gymnasium

3 MEETING START

Meeting Schedule Start: 6:00pm

Meeting Actual Start: 6:11pm

4 AGENDA

- Opening Remarks by Chair
 - Chairman DeFronzo welcomed everyone to the School Safety Infrastructure Council (SSIC) special meeting. He mentioned that this would be the final meeting where the Council would accept public comments. The chairman gave a brief overview of the agenda and then handed the floor over to Commissioner Shea for additional comments.
 - Commissioner Shea gave a brief overview of Public Act 13-3 and the School Security Grant Program. He mentioned that the Middletown School District was recently chosen to receive \$72,000 from the grant program. In total, DESPP received 111 applications for proposed infrastructure projects in 604 school buildings. \$5 million has already been placed into the grant program, with an additional \$16 million to be added soon, for a total of \$21 million.
 - Chairman DeFronzo took a brief moment to recognize a few guests from the audience. He thanked CTN for recording the event. He also thanked Rep. Lesser for his attendance.
- Approval of August 8th Minutes

- Chairman DeFronzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ron Jakubowski and seconded by Commissioner Shea. No corrections were made.
- **Testimony**
 - **Police Chief James Rovella, Hartford CT**
 1. Chief Rovella thanked the Council for allowing him to speak this evening. He gave a brief overview of the Hartford Police Department and of his 32 year career as a police officer. Chief Rovella explained how a lot of things have changed since the tragic events that took place in Newtown. He spoke to how important time is when dealing with active shooter events. Minutes and even seconds can help to prevent the loss of life. He also gave a brief overview of Hartford Police Department's involvement with Mutualink and their interoperable system.
 2. Ron Jakubowski asked if officers in vehicles are able to access school cameras via the Mutualink system. Chief Rovella replied that they could.
 3. Commissioner Shea asked if Chief Rovella could recommend any other infrastructure standards besides video. Chief Rovella replied that the hardening of entrances and the identification of everyone entering or exiting a school are great first steps
 4. Chairman DeFronzo asked if the Hartford Police Department conducts response time drills. Chief Rovella replied that they do periodically conduct response time drills. He commented that Hartford is very fortunate in that all schools are close proximity to first responders, either via Police Stations or patrol cars. Hartford's response time ranges from seconds to a minute in most cases.
 5. Chairman DeFronzo asked Chief Rovella if he was aware of any other technologies that are available that are similar to the Mutualink system. He replied that he was not aware of any other technologies.
 6. Chairman DeFronzo asked if a memorandum of understanding is needed to access school cameras. Chief Rovella replied that for private companies a memorandum of understanding is not needed and that he didn't see it as an issue for schools as they move forward.
 - **Fire Chief Kronenberger, Middletown CT**
 1. Chairman DeFronzo introduced the next speaker, Fire Chief Robert Kronenberger, Middletown CT
 2. Chief Kronenberger gave a brief overview of the Middletown Police and Fire Departments. Middletown has taken a unified effort with regard to school safety. They recently conducted a survey of all Middletown schools to help identify strengths and weaknesses with regards to school security. He asked that as the SSIC moves forward, that their standards do not conflict with existing fire codes. He mentioned that you don't want to solve one problem and then create another as a result.
 3. Chairman DeFronzo asked Chief Kronenberger what the fire departments role is in accessing school security. He replied that they routinely check fire alarms, ensure everything is up to code and make sure school fire alarms are hooked up to the police department.

4. Chairman DeFronzo asked Chief Kronenberger what his position would be on requiring the local Fire Marshall to participate in school security assessments. The Chief replied that he would be all for It.
5. Ron Jakubowski commented that, in his experience, school safety committees only included school personnel. He asked if Middletown's safety committee included participants other than school officials. Chief Kronenberger replied that it does. They meet once a month and include all those who have a hand in school safety: Fire, Police, School Officials and Public Health.
6. Ron Jakubowski asked who chairs the Middletown School Safety Committee. Chief Kronenberger replied that the principal of Middletown High School does.
7. Chairman DeFronzo asked if Chief Kronenberger has seen Mutualink's system. He replied that they have seen a demo, but it's not something they have access to at this time.

o **General Public**

1. Vincent Riccio, a security consultant and trainer, was next to testify. He thanked the SSIC for the opportunity to speak and read from prepared testimony. His written testimony can be found here - <http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=424>. He gave a brief overview of his experience as a retired New Haven Police Sergeant and responded to a few issues brought up during the previous SSIC meeting.
2. Chairman DeFronzo asked Mr. Riccio if he has been involved in school security assessments. He replied that he has participated in many. Chairman DeFronzo then asked Mr. Riccio to identify the highest priority areas when conducting an assessment. He replied that locks are the best line of defense and can sometimes be better than cameras. Locks need to be lockable from the inside to protect classrooms. He showed an example lock that can be purchased for \$7. Secondary to locks, are front entrances. He mentioned the importance of bullet glazing or the use of glass with metal mesh inside. Bullet proof glass can be incredibly expensive. Window laminates can be installed at a fraction of the cost of bullet resistant glass. Bullet glazing, locks and other methods can give teachers and staff time to lock down until first responders arrive.
3. Commissioner Shea asked for Mr. Riccio's opinion on mesh wire in glass windows. Mr. Riccio replied that this can be effective, but it doesn't stop bullets and can be more expensive than laminates.
4. Bill Letson from Armor Solutions was next to testify. He mentioned that everything is time based. The key to school security is giving you the minutes and even seconds needed to delay an intruder. Mr. Letson mentioned that the simple things are sometimes the most effective. He feels it's important for schools to conduct improvements in phases, rather than spend money all at once on a video system or similar expensive project. He mentioned video is only as good as the installation and what you're using it for. A closed circuit television system needs to be constantly monitored. He feels main entry ways are important, but focusing on them above other entry ways can be a mistake. Securing the perimeter of a school is critical so that you have a first and second line of defense. Access control for all doors is also very important. Mr. Letson

also mentioned a technology that allows for teachers to directly notify police of a serious problem via a two-way radio system. The teacher could directly notify a nearby police officer via a single button; this eliminates dispatch and can decrease response time.

5. Ron Jakubowski mentioned that some elementary schools could have 35 or more doors. Do you recommend blocking those doors and using general doors instead? Mr. Letson mentioned that the ability to harden all of those doors is important, but you can't turn the schools into a prison environment.
6. Dick Morris asked what Mr. Letson would recommend as a solution for hallway doors into and out of classrooms and how best to solve fire code issues. Mr. Letson mentioned that they're currently working on a special lock that takes specific fire codes into consideration. They are currently working on having Fire Marshall's adopt these codes. He mentioned that there needs to be a happy medium between life safety codes and school security. Fires are very different than active shooters.
7. Chairman DeFronzo then asked Mr. Letson for examples of the costs for laminates. He replied that the costs range from \$16 to \$22 per square foot installed. He gave a brief overview of an anchoring system used by the Pentagon. They train fire officials on how to properly break through the glass in case of an emergency.
8. Irene Roman asked if laminate installed glass is difficult to break through. Mr. Letson mentioned that with the proper tools, which all fire fighters do carry, it doesn't take them long at all to break through.
9. John Woodmansee asked if laminate would help in the event of a hurricane. Mr. Letson replied that it would help greatly, as the windows would be rated much higher with the laminate. The longer the windows stay intact, the greater chance the building has of surviving a hurricane unscathed.
10. Chris Olsen, Director of Safety & Security for East Lyme Schools, was next to present. Mr. Olsen spoke briefly about his experience as an SRO, State Trooper and experience with Military security. He mentioned the importance of finding a balance between the life safety codes and school security standards. A device on doors to prevent them from shutting during a fire needs to be seriously considered. He also mentioned the lack of communication between the courts and schools concerning custody issues. A parent who lost a child in a custody battle could pick up a child without the school knowing that they lost custody. We need better communication and notification. He asked that greater emphasis be placed on the training of school officials, police officer and fire fighters.
11. Dick Morris asked Mr. Olsen how many teacher development days there are in the course of a year and if there is time to squeeze in one to two hours of additional training for school safety. He feels that there is time, but you need to plan ahead. He also mentioned the 10 mandatory fire drills required each year for schools.
12. Ron Jakubowski asked staff at the conclusion of Mr. Olsen's testimony to review state statutes regarding mandatory fire drills.

- **Review of Next Meetings**

- Chairman DeFronzo then moved onto a discussion about the scheduling of “regular” meetings for October and November. The SSIC will be meeting three times in October and possibly four times in November.
- The SSIC will be meeting in Middletown, CT for the October meetings. Specific dates will be available on the SSIC website.

- **Review of Washington D.C. Trip**
 - The SSIC has been invited by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Division for a two day work-group to discuss the Integrated Resource Visual Screening (IRVS) Assessment Tool. A few members from the SSIC and staff will be participating.

- **Announcement of School Facility Security Products & Service Day**
 - Chairman DeFronzo gave a brief overview of the School Facility Security Products and Services Day, which is scheduled for November 12 at the Farmington Club, Farmington CT. Companies who have reached out to the SSIC have been contacted and invited to the event. The Connecticut School Construction Coalition is responsible for invites and the organization of the event.

- **Adjournment**

5 MEETING END

Meeting Schedule End: 8:00pm

Meeting Actual End: 7:28pm