

**SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT
of the City of Middletown
445 Randolph Road, Middletown, CT**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Held at the firehouse and available via Zoom - Meeting I.D. 875 9549 4703**

MINUTES

Present: Commissioners Kleckowski, Giuliano, Thazhampallath, Penney, and Pessina; Chief James Trzaski, Deputy Chief Russ Jacobs; members of the public; staff members

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was recited.
2. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairwoman Kleckowski called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
3. **ACCEPT/AMEND AGENDA**
MOTION to amend the agenda by moving Item 12a. to Item 6b. by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Pessina.
Unanimously approved.
4. **OPEN PUBLIC SESSION** Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the Public Session at 7:05 p.m.

Bob Daniels, 896 Millbrook Road and 874 Millbrook Road

Mr. Daniels stated that he has lived in the district all his life and is proud and respectful of the firefighters and has always supported them. Emergency vehicle access is number one priority and is now asking for help from the chief and the commission to turn the closure of Lyceum Road around and open it. He is happy that Councilmen Pessina and Nocera are on the Public Works Commission and were eager to hear the concerns expressed at the commission meeting and options to keep the road open by using gravel, partial gravel, or to fix the road completely. He stated that two-thirds of the road is in good shape and this type of situation happens about every 10 years. He would appreciate the support of South Fire District to keep the road open.

Sheila Daniels, 896 Millbrook Road

Mrs. Daniels' statement is attached to these minutes.

Alicia Penney, Chamberlain Hill Road

Mrs. Penney's statement is attached to these minutes.

Harold Graves, 48 Chauncey Road

Mr. Graves said it's a lot safer for machines and tractors to use Lyceum Road than Millbrook Road or Wilcox Road where there is a lot of traffic.

Commissioner Penney excused himself as a commissioner at 7:16 p.m. to speak as a member of the public. Commissioner Giuliano called Point of Order saying Commissioner Penney can make his presentation during debate and wouldn't lose his prerogative as a commissioner to have a discussion. By withdrawing from his seat, and becoming a member of the public, he would lose his ability to participate in a vote. He suggested that Commissioner Penney make his presentation as a member of the commission. Commission Penney took the remarks into consideration.

Angelo Bonamico, 331 Chauncy Road

Mr. Bonamico told the Commission that he regularly plows roads in the area for emergency vehicles. He said Lyceum Road isn't that bad and it could be graveled or have a section repaired. He mentioned that Cauncey Road is in bad condition and wondered if they would close it as well. Recently, Mr. Bonamico's girlfriend blew out a front tire on Paddock Road and he recently had to replace the front shocks of his truck, which cost him \$180 apiece. Additionally, with the gas prices going up, it is cheaper and less hazardous for farm tractors to use Lyceum Road as opposed to using a main road.

Diane Hayn, 309 Chamberlain Road

Ms. Hayn suggested permeable pavers be considered, where the water goes through, and everything stays in place.

Bob Daniels

Mr. Daniels said many of the residents don't have city water and, in the past, he has seen mutual aid from Durham and Haddam using Lyceum Road. It's a quick way to get there especially to Chamberlain Hill Road. If they used GPS, they would be directed to a closed road.

5. **CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION** closed at 7:19 p.m.

6. **A. MINUTES TO BE APPROVED - REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022**

MOTION to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 14, 2022 by Comm. Pessina/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

B. LYCEUM ROAD CLOSURE

MOTION to have the Commission write a letter to the City of Middletown and the Public Works Commission and city leadership as appropriate to reopen Lyceum Road by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina.

Commissioner Penney asked for a friendly amendment for the motion to read "given the safety, especially risk associated with the possible loss of Harris Brook Bridge, as well as functional concerns shared this evening that the district send a letter signed by all commissioners to the Public Works Facilities Commission to request the reopening of Lyceum Road as soon as possible."

Commissioner Penney read his prepared statement, which is attached to these minutes.

Commissioner Pessina asked Recording Secretary, Alyse McEwen, to send Commissioner Penney's statement to Chris Holden, Deputy Director of Public Works. He gave a synopsis of the background of the closure of Lyceum Road and an overview of the March 9th Public Works Commission meeting. He guaranteed this topic will be on the Public Works Commission meeting agendas with public hearings henceforth. Commissioner Pessina agrees that the road needs to be open.

MOTION to suspend the rules to allow a member of the public to speak by Comm. Penney/Comm. Kleckowski. Unanimously approved.

Angelo Bonamico, 331 Chauncey Road

Mr. Bonamico said the biggest problem is not just the closure of Lyceum Road, but the drainage as well. City trucks are there every morning spreading salt. More money should be spent on more catch basins rather than salt, which is adding to the infrastructure problem. Additionally, the use of salt is contaminating the residents' wells.

Sheila Daniels

Mrs. Daniels said during the Public Works meeting, Mr. Holden stated that he conferred with everyone for their input regarding the closure of the road – PD, South Fire, the land trust folks, and the mayor's office. She asked if the chief gave his approval, will Gene's motion tonight include everyone, including the chief? She believes the letter must include everyone, otherwise there's a contradiction of what the message is.

Chief Trzaski addressed the public. He stated he received a call from Deputy Director Chris Holden about a month ago who told the chief that the risk manager said he had to close the road. He asked the chief if South Fire had an alternate route if necessary. The chief answered by saying the department always appreciates more ingress and egress and the greatest risk reduction, and he would turn the situation over to the commission. When he was told the road needed to be closed because there would be a risk benefit for the city, he thought it was an emergency situation. The chief stated the department would like to see the road open, and he is working together with the commission so there is one solid voice.

The chief went on to say if there's a major fire in an area without fire hydrants, the closest choice is the brook on Lyceum Road. The department often drafts water and Sumner Brook, although sometimes high enough, it not a sustainable water source so it cannot be relied on. Chief Trzaski explained that the department has an automatic tanker task force response - five 3,000 gallons tankers are immediately dispatched with South Fire, which carries its own 2,000 gallons of water.

Commissioner Giuliano called point of order stating that the original question was what did the chief communicate with the public works director? Speaking about how the fire department responds to a fire is out of order.

Chief Trzaski told the public that the fire house is open to the public and encouraged the residents to stop by any time.

Commissioners Giuliano and Thazhampallath both expressed their disappoint in the lack of communication from the Public Works & Facilities Commission to the public and the South Fire Commission and would vote in favor of reopening the Lyceum Road. They agreed that a letter registering their disagreement with the city's decision to close the road should be sent by the commission.

Chairwoman Kleckowski stated that the rules were no longer suspended.

MOTION that the commission to write a letter to the Public Works & Facilities Commission to reopen Lyceum Road by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

MOTION that, given the safety, especially the risk associated with the possible loss of Harris Brook Bridge, as well as functional concerns this evening, that the district send a letter signed by all commissioners to the Public Works & Facilities Commission to request the reopening of Lyceum Road as soon as possible by Comm. Penney/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

MOTION to have the chair designate a subcommittee to draft a letter for circulation to the full commission before the next meeting by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Thazhampallath. Unanimously approved.

MOTION to have a five-minute recess by Comm. Penney/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Kleckowski called the meeting back to order at 8:07 p.m.

7. TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2022

A. REFUNDS

MOTION to approve tax refunds in the amount of \$142.03 by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

B. TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT

MOTION to approve the Tax Collector's report by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2022

A. MONTHLY EXPENSE DETAIL – JANUARY 2022 AND FEBRUARY 2022

MOTION to approve by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina.

Commissioner Penney noted he remains concerned about Bank of America expenditures related to "meals" and other such expenses.

The motion was unanimously approved.

B. PROFIT AND LOSS BUDGET VS. ACTUAL - JULY 2021 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2022

MOTION to accept by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

C. CASH BALANCE REPORT – FEBRUARY 2022

Motion to approve by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2022

Chief Trzaski gave an overview of the reports and answered question of the Commission.

10. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

A. BUILDING COMMITTEE – COMM. THAZHAMPALLATH

Commissioner Thazhampallath said the committee did not meet tonight and they were at the close out stage. There is one outstanding invoice which has been authorized to be paid. The committee would meet one last time if needed. Commissioner Thazhampallath will communicate with the city when the committee can be released from its obligations.

B. PENSION COMMITTEE – COMM. KLECKOWSKI

Chairwoman Kleckowski advised that a meeting of the committee is anticipated after the budget and appointment of a commissioner to that committee.

C. PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATIONS– COMM. GIULIANO

Commissioner Giuliano provided an overview of the PST meeting. The *Monthly Call Statistics – 2022* report was attached to the meeting packet.

D. RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE – COMM. PESSINA

Commissioner Pessina updated the Commission on the progress of the Riverfront Redevelopment.

11. OLD BUSINESS

A. TAX COLLECTOR POSITION

Chairwoman Kleckowski said the tax office is still in limbo, but Lee is willing to continue in her current position without disruption. She and Kathy work very well together. The commission will be discussing how to move forward, and this item will be back on the agenda.

B. RESCUE/PUMPER REPLACEMENT FUNDS; APPROVAL FOR CHIEF TO SIGN CONTRACT TO PURCHASE PUMPER

MOTION to approve the proposed contract with Firematic Supply Company, Inc. for the value of \$843,541.11 with the authorization to sign said contract by the chair of the South Fire District Board of Fire Commission by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

C. DISCUSSION OF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Chief Trzaski advised the commission that he met with the employees who will be doing self-evaluations. The chief will meet with them individually prior to meeting with the commission. Commissioner Penney requested copies of contracts and job descriptions.

D. HEALTH INSURANCE FOR RETIREES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS Nothing to report.

E. CONSIDERATION OF BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS DECAL

MOTION to reject the idea of a decal or any visible identifier for commissioner vehicles by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

F. CONSIDERATION OF BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS PHOTO I.D.

MOTION to adopt the photo identification that is currently in use by the district by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Pessina.

MOTION to amend the motion to indicate that photo identifications will have expiration dates by Comm. Pessina. The amendment was accepted by Commissioner Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

G. DISCUSSION OF SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT BY-LAWS AND CHARTER REVISION

Chairwoman Kleckowski spoke to the district's attorney who didn't recommend charter revision due to the large cost involved. He advised if changes needed to be made, they should be made in the by-laws. She asked the commissioners to send her an email if they were interested being a member of the committee. Commissioner Penney expressed his desire to be considered. The commission and administrative staff will begin reviewing the by-laws and recommend changes. This item will be an agenda item for the May 9th meeting. Alyse will provide a Word version of the by-laws to the commission.

12. NEW BUSINESS

A. EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN COMMISSIONERS

Chairwoman Kleckowski recently had a conversation with Tom Hennick regarding email correspondence between commissioners. Hitting "Reply All" to discuss official department business may constitute a meeting which would need to be properly noticed. She advised the commissioners to contact Mr. Hennick directly if they had questions and/or concerns about case history and/or legal reference.

B. APPOINTMENT OF (1) COMMISSIONER AND (1) ALTERNATE COMMISSIONER TO PENSION COMMITTEE

MOTION to appoint Chairwoman Kleckowski to Chairperson and Commissioner Thazhampallath as the alternate by Comm. Pessina/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Comm. Pessina.

Commissioner Penney stated for the record that he has volunteered to be on several committees, but he has never been accepted.

The motion to adjourn was seconded by Comm. Thazhampallath. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Submitted by,



Alyse McEwen

Recording Secretary

APPROVED AS AMENDED 4/11/22

From: Sheila Daniels <scd5258@gmail.com>
Date: March 14, 2022 at 8:46:01 PM EDT
To: Deb Kleckowski <DKleckowski@southfiredistrict.com>
Subject: Re: Please share w/SF Secretary

To: South Fire District Commission
From: Sheila Daniels, South Fire District resident
Re: Lyceum Road Closure
Date: March 14, 2022

Good Evening Members of the South Fire Commission.

Thank you for addressing the current closure of Lyceum Road and allowing the public to share our opinions on the topic.

I come before you this evening with concern for those of us in the vicinity of Lyceum Road and the impact of its closure on our well-being in the case of an emergency.

I am drawing my concern on a recent incident occurring on Millbrook Road where a tree was down across the road north of Lyceum Road, making the road impassable. Had there been a fire or an emergency where South Fire was called to, their response time would have been impacted by the downed tree and the road closure

Google Maps outlines the most direct route from place to place and when searched for directions from South Fire to 896 Millbrook Road, it tells the driver to exit head west on Randolph Road to Millbrook Road, turning left and heading south to 896 Millbrook. This route is 1.5 miles and is clocked at 3 minutes.

If we had a fire the evening Millbrook Road had a downed tree, South Fire would not have had the access to use Lyceum to get beyond the roadblock and to our home at 896 Millbrook. Instead they would have to get to the closest intersecting road, which would be Livingston via Randolph Road to Arbutus Street. This route would take the firefighters 3.3 miles and at least 6 minutes to arrive at 896 Millbrook Rd.

This scenario is reflecting firefighters' full knowledge of the road blockage, had they not been aware of the road issue, response time would be even greater because they would have to turn around and navigate their way to Livingston and finally 896 Millbrook.

We all know in the case of an emergency, time is of the essence and we are not comfortable knowing time would be doubled if Lyceum Road were not open in case of any access issues on Millbrook Road for responders to get to us as quickly as possible.

I am sure you can understand our concern and the concern of other households south of Lyceum Road with its closure in the event of an emergency.

While not a direct fire district issue, you might want to know if there were a police issue or ambulance need south of Lyceum on Chamberlain Hill Rd., the response time is longer to Commissioner Dan Penney's home if Lyceum were closed.

South Fire District Board Of Fire Commissioners

I share the same opinions that you have heard here tonight about the abrupt closure of Lyceum Road.

As I expressed at the public works meeting of last week , I am disappointed with the ill conceived idea of closing Lyceum Road.

I want to commend Commissioner Pessina , who also sits on the Public Works Commission for acknowledging his embarrassment concerning the abrupt closure.

Lyceum deterioration began when the Millbrook Road repaving project was completed.

Crews spent days screaming down Lyceum Road with heavily loaded construction trucks carrying millings. This resulted in serious damage to Lyceum Road with the city neglecting to address needed repairs.

Now Lyceum Road is a problem and according to the city to expensive to fix.

I request that the Chief object to the closure of Lyceum Road based on the concerns expressed this evening and that he request of the city to make the necessary repairs needed to open Lyceum Road as well as address the issues with the entire Sumner Brook Corridor including the upper unpaved area of Chamberlain Hill Road.

Sumner Brook is being polluted and destroyed from decades of silt and process stone runoff.

This should be the focus,not closing Lyceum Road.

After all, if you look at the water table adjacent to this building , you should realize it might not be too much longer before your valuable services could be in jeopardy due to flooding.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Coughlin Penney
1101 Chamberlain Hill Road
3/14/2022

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **daniel penney** <danpenney0628@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 15, 2022, 7:56 AM

Subject: SFDBFC 3/14/2022 presentation of Daniel J Penney (note: last paragraph was combined with motion of Commissioner Thazhampallath)

To: Home <danpenney0628@gmail.com>

SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

LYCEUM ROAD & SUMNER BROOK CORRIDOR :

FIRST, ITS VERY CONCERNING THAT LYCEUM ROAD HAS BEEN CLOSED WITHOUT THE FINDINGS OF A TRAFFIC STUDY,ENGINEERING STUDY AND WITH A TOTAL DISREGARD TO MAKING THE NECESSARY REPAIRS AND MAINTAINING SUCH AFTER A SMALL SECTION OF THE ROAD WAS DAMAGED.

SINCE THE CLOSING I HAVE WHITENESS SEVERAL SAFETY CONCERNS WHICH HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PW&FC. ONSTAR AND SIMILAR NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEMS CONTINUE TO TAKE TRAVELERS TO LYCEUM ROAD WHERE IT IS FOUND CLOSED AND RISKY SAFETY TURN AROUND ATTEMPTS ARE OCCURRING DAILY.

LYCEUM ROAD IS ONE OF ONLY TWO CROSSOVER ROADS IN THIS AREA OF SOUTH FARMS. IT ALSO SERVES AS ACESS TO MILLBROOK ROAD WHERE A TRAFFIC LIGHT IS AVAILABLE TO EXIT ONTO THE VERY BUSY RANDOLPH ROAD.

MOST CONCERNING IS THAT CHAMBERLAIN HILL ROAD AND THISTLE LANE COULD

BE ISOLATED IF THE NARROW VERY OLD HARRIS BROOK PASSOVER/BRIDGE ON CHAMBERLAIN ROAD WERE TO FAIL OR OTHERWISE BE COMPROMISED DUE TO AN ACCIDENT. THE FAR SOUTH END OF CHAMBERLAIN HILL IS AT TIMES NOT SAFELY PASSABLE AS IT IS NOT PAVED AND LACKS PROPER DRAINAGE. IT REQUIRES PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES AFTER ALMOST EVERY WEATHER EVENT. THERE ARE SOME 90 HOMES IN THIS AREA WITH 180 - 200 VEHICLES DAILY THAT MAY USE THE PASSOVER.

I AM EQUALLY EMBARRASSED THAT THIS COMMISSION WAS NOT INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF THE CLOSING OF LYCEUM ROAD.

LYCEUM ROAD SUPPORTS CROSSOVER ACCESS FOR BOTH CRITICAL UTILITIES (EVERSOURCE) AND COMMUNICATIONS (VERISON) WITH ACCESS RESTRICTED AND IN AN EMERGENCY TIMELY RESTORATION OF SUCH CRITICAL SERVICES WOULD BE DELAYED.

ONLY A SHORT SECTION OF LYCEUM ROAD REQUIRES REPAIR. FIRST, GET THE SURFACE WATER DIVERTED BY SERVICING ROADSIDE SWALES, MAKE POT HOLES REPAIRS WITH IMPROVED WEATHER, OPEN THE ROAD AND PLAN PERMANENT REPAIRS FOR JUST A SMALL DAMAGED SECTION. OVERALL, LYCEUM ROAD IS IN VERY USEABLE CONDITION.

I AM MAKING A MOTION, THAT GIVEN THE SAFETY, ESPECIALLY RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THE POSSIBLE LOSS OF HARRIS BROOK BRIDGE, AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL CONCERNS SHARED THIS EVENING THAT THE DISTRICT SEND A LETTER SIGNED BY ALL COMMISSIONER TO THE PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION TO REQUEST THE REOPENING OF LYCEUM ROAD ASAP.

RESPECTFULLY,
DAN PENNEY

SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
03/14/2022