

SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT
445 Randolph Road | Middletown, CT

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Held at the firehouse and via Zoom - Meeting I.D. 824 3356 6717

Present: Commissioners Kleckowski, Giuliano, Gregorio, Chief Trzaski, Deputy Chief Fischer, member of the public, and staff members.

Absent: Commissioners Pessina and Thazhampallath

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Kleckowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited.

3. ACCEPT/AMEND AGENDA

MOTION to accept the agenda without changes by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Gregorio. Unanimously approved.

4. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION – ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the public session at 7:01 p.m.

Dan Penney

Mr. Penney spoke in response to a motion made last month, item 10d on the agenda By-Laws Committee. He is concerned about the By-Laws Committee as there is no mention of an RFP or RFQ for legal services, no mention of public participation. He informed the Commission there are good examples on the Connecticut Attorney General's Office of RFP's and RFQ's requesting legal services online. He also informed the Commission about past legal summaries relative to the by-laws and encouraged the By-Laws Committee to take a look at them and share it with our legal consult. He strongly encouraged the Commission to look into its own Ethics Policy after reviewing the October 2024 Public Safety Telecommunication Report item 6. Mr. Penney inquired about various charges shown on the Monthly Expense Detail report, including 7801 Independent Materials Testing Labs, Inc. \$4,910.00, 8999L PayMac, Inc \$4,350.00 debit and what they were for. 8999M Key Chevrolet \$65,239.50 and expressed his feeling that such a large expense should require an official approval.

5. CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public session at 7:07 p.m.

6. MINUTES TO BE ACCEPTED

a. Regular Monthly Meeting of September 9, 2024

The minutes were accepted as presented.

7. TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS – SEPTEMBER 2024

a. Refunds: \$3,183.35

MOTION to accept refunds in the amount of \$3,183.35 by Comm. Giuliano /Comm. Gregorio. Unanimously approved.

b. Acceptance of the Tax Collector's Reports

The Tax Collector's Reports were accepted as presented.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

a. Monthly Expense Detail: August and September 2024

Chief Trzaski answered questions raised during the public session.

b. Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual: July 2024 through September 2024

c. Cash Balance Report: September 2024

The financial reports were accepted as presented.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS – SEPTEMBER 2024

Chief Trzaski and Deputy Chief Fischer provided an overview of the administrative reports and answered questions of the commissioners. They spoke of the success of the open house on October 12th, they did not use the burn buildings because of the high risk of fire on the day of the open house. They will be used in the future as a training prop. FMO being recognized at the Connecticut Exchange Club Dinner October 17th as Fire Marshal's of the Year for their risk reduction adult and junior fire setter programs. Chief Trzaski mentioned several events in which South Fire District is participating Trunk or Treat on Main Street and Middletown schools, Touch-A-Truck at Ace Hardware. Chief Trzaski and Deputy Chief Fischer are very pleased Dave Albert was made Chief of Middletown Fire. They are looking forward to working together. Deputy Chief Fischer briefed the Commission on the partnerships and joint training with Middletown FD and Westfield FD and Middletown Police on city-wide active shooter protocols. We have been recognized by training associates in the state as one of the only communities in the state with this robust of a plan in place. Multiple people mentioned they thought it was the first time all three fire departments and the police department worked together on one training event. The next step is to grow that and are planning a larger scale event in the spring. The car 37 as it is expected to be in-service by November 1, 2024. He also updated the Commission on Marine 3. He has a new contact at MetalCraft. They have finished their obligations to the Navy, however they have two large barges they are building on the floor, and are actively trying to sub-out. If they can sub-out the barges, our start build time would be December/January, otherwise it would be February/March. It is a six month build from the start date. He and Chief Trzaski have discussed it with the Boat Committee and are of the option to stay the course because if they pulled out of the contract, where would they go next and also they would be paying today's price, not the contracted price with Metal Craft. Department physicals are scheduled for the end of December through United Diagnostic Services. Most employees have chosen to participate; however, they also have the option of using their own doctor per the current collective bargaining agreement. Hurst tools have been serviced for the year, some requiring minor repairs. Annual preventative maintenance is underway. Annual hose and ladder testing will be performed by a third-party company in November. Chief Trzaski spoke about our security system in place and how one of our cameras was able to assist the police in determining how a traffic light was taken down by a truck on Ridge Road. Chief Trzaski also mentioned Chairwoman Kleckowski and Commissioner Pessina joined him at the Connecticut Fire Academy to witness our new recruits in training.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

a. Building Committee: Commissioner Thazhampallath

Chief Trzaski gave a brief update about the renovation project due to the absence of Commissioner Thazhampallath. He informed the Commission of the assistance he received from Dominick DeMartino regarding the kitchen layout and appliances available. He also explained the outstanding change order for the remediation of unsuitable soil is still pending. Paul Pizzo, Landmark Architects, is assisting us with Milestone Construction to resolve.

b. Pension Committee: Commissioner Gregorio

Commissioner Gregorio stated a couple of funds were removed which were not performing. Otherwise, nothing significant to report.

c. Public Safety Telecommunications: Commissioner Giuliano

Commissioner Giuliano provided an overview of the submitted report. Staffing is still 16 with two additional in training. Commissioner Gregorio questioned why they were always understaffed. Commissioner Giuliano explained it is a high stress/burnout job, and it is difficult to fill the positions. He said in a conversation with Director Wayne Bartolotta he asked if understaffed is the rule or the exception. Director Bartolotta stated it is the rule, fully staffed is the exception. The Public Safety Commission elected officers, Eugene Nocera was elected chairman and Sebastian Giuliano was elected secretary.

Commissioner Giuliano also spoke to a comment made in Public Session regarding ethics training. He stated the City of Middletown has its own Board of Ethics which South Fire District also follows the same rules. Training was put together by the City of Middletown Attorney's Office for Ethics/FOI. Commissioner Giuliano attended the training as a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission. He also stated the training is available as a PowerPoint presentation.

d. By-Laws Committee: Commissioner Giuliano

Commissioner Giuliano spoke to Attorney Richard Carella from Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. He performs municipal government work and has provided a Legal Engagement and Fee Agreement.

MOTION to accept the Legal Engagement and Fee Agreement in general corporate matters from Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. by Comm. Gregorio/Chairwoman Kleckowski. Commissioners Kleckowski and Gregorio voted in favor. Commissioner Giuliano abstained. Chairwoman Kleckowski signed the agreement.

e. Riverfront Redevelopment Update: Commissioner Pessina

Chairwoman Kleckowski provided a brief update due to the absence of Commissioner Pessina. Everything seems to be status quo and will probably slow down during the winter months. They are working on getting the hardware improvements completed. She also stated it is important for South Fire District to be aware of anything related to tax abatements and building because the District has not been part of that process.

10. OLD BUSINESS – None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Economic Development Updates –** Tradewinds Plaza has several open spaces to fill. Former Eversource site is moving forward with the soccer facility.

12. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION – ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the public session at 7:38 p.m.

Dan Penney

Mr. Penney asked for a status update on the annual audit and the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Local 3918. He thanked the Public Safety department for the recent paving/improvement to the roads due to his and many others expressing concern for the condition of the roads. Mr. Penney suggested going back to using microphones at the table as it can be very difficult to hear and understand discussions at the table.

13. CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION

Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public session at 7:41 p.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Comm. Gregorio/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Submitted by,

ACCEPTED 11/18/2024

Kathleen M. Kiley

Kathleen M. Kiley
Finance

The recording of this meeting is available upon request, according to Connecticut Freedom of Information Act requirements.