

**SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT**  
**445 Randolph Road | Middletown, CT**

**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, March 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Held at the firehouse and via Zoom - Meeting I.D. 844 5502 7974**

**Present:** Commissioners Kleckowski, Giuliano, Pessina (via Zoom), Thazhampallath (arrived at 7:03 p.m.), and Gregorio; Chief Trzaski, Deputy Chief Fischer; fire department members, and one member of the public.

**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 amend the agenda to move *Item 12 d) By-Laws Committee, Item 14 Executive Session, and Item 10 Independent Auditor's Report* immediately following *Close Public Session* by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

**4. SWEAR IN FATHER RUSSELL F. KENNEDY AS DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN**

Chairwoman Kleckowski administered the Oath of Office to Father Kennedy.

**5. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION – ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the public session at 7:05 p.m.

***Dan Penney***

Mr. Penney is disappointed that it took more than eight months for the auditor's report to be completed, and that copies of the report were not available prior to the meeting. He suggested having publicly advertised bids for such services. He commended the excellent service of the By-Laws Committee but was concerned about recommended changes made to voting rights and commissioner qualifications. Mr. Penney asked for an update on the Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations. He asked questions about items on the Monthly Expense Detail report, including the \$15,900 credit to CNR – Staff Vehicle and recommended having policies and procedures pertaining to the commission's approval for expenditures over a certain amount (\$1,500 - \$2,000).

**6. CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION** Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public session at 7:11 p.m.

**7. BY-LAWS COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Giuliano thanked the members of the committee, and Attorney Carella who "steered the ship." The committee thoroughly reviewed the current by-laws and cleaned up a lot of what was confusing and hard to navigate. One of the main issues that came up was the language regarding district voting and Connecticut General Statutes. Attorney Carella confirmed that the revisions made are legitimate as the district is not required to follow state election laws. A copy of the current by-laws, the proposed by-laws, and a red-line copy will be distributed to the commissioners for review. This item will remain on the agenda for future commission meetings.

## 8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

**MOTION** to go into executive session at 7:21 p.m. pursuant to statutes section 1-200(6)(B) and section 1-225(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, to review information regarding contract negotiations by Comm. Gregorio/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved. In attendance were Commissioners Kleckowski, Giuliano, Thazhampallath, Pessina, and Gregorio, Chief Trzaski, Deputy Chief Fischer, and Matthew Sicilia, VP and Consulting Actuary of TPS Group.

**MOTION** to end executive session by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Gregorio. Unanimously approved. No action was taken. The meeting was called back to order at 8:10 p.m.

## 9. INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT AS OF JUNE 30, 2024 – CHARLES T. COSTELLO, COSTELLO COMPANY, LLC

### a. Review of Independent Auditor's Report

Mr. Costello gave an overview of the draft Independent Auditor's Report/Financial Statements as of June 30, 2024. Chairwoman Kleckowski specified that she wanted to document and make part of the official record that \$710,644 from the Tiered Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) has been earmarked for the current building renovation project.

### b. Acceptance of the independent auditor's report as of June 30, 2024

### c. Authorize Costello Company, LLC to file the Independent Auditor's Report/Financial Statements as of June 30, 2024 with the State of Connecticut/Office of Policy and Management in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes

**MOTION** to accept the Independent Auditor's Report as of June 30, 2024, as presented, and to authorize Costello Company, LLC to file the Independent Auditor's Report/Financial Statements as of June 30, 2024 with the State of Connecticut/Office of Policy and Management in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Gregorio. Unanimously approved.

## 10. MINUTES TO BE ACCEPTED

### a. Regular Monthly Meeting of February 10, 2025

The minutes were accepted as presented.

## 11. TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2025

### a. Refunds: \$419.77

**MOTION** to accept refunds as reported by the tax collector in the amount of \$419.77 by Comm. Thazhampallath/ Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

### b. Acceptance of the Tax Collector's Reports

The Tax Collector's Reports were accepted as presented.

## 12. FINANCIAL REPORTS

### a. Monthly Expense Detail: January 2025 and February 2025

### b. Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual: July 2024 through February 2025

### c. Cash Balance Report: February 2025

The financial reports were accepted as presented.

## 13. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2025

Chief Trzaski and Deputy Chief Fischer gave an overview of the administrative reports. The chief highlighted the department's presence at the Kleen Energy 15-year anniversary remembrance ceremony, his regular attendance at the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce meetings, and visits to the Capitol to attend sessions

related to initiatives affecting the fire service. The department hosted the Middlesex County Fire Chiefs Association meeting and the CT Fire Chiefs Association meeting.

Deputy Chief Fischer advised that the new HASS alert transmitters have been installed in E32 and E30. There will be a citywide active violence drill on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Middletown Fire, Westfield Fire, the Police Department, and a slew of other public agencies will be involved. The drill might be the biggest joint public safety drill in city history.

Chief Trzaski talked about South Fire's improved ISO rating of 2, from a 4. Only about 1,500 fire departments in the nation have a score of 2 or below. A better ISO rating *generally* means lower insurance premiums. The information is on our website and was sent to people enrolled in Community Connect. He also spoke of the audit and feels fortunate to be a sitting fire chief that has a wide array of people he works with, from the probationary firefighters, to the officers and training officer, the deputy chief, and the administrative staff who go above and beyond every day to save the district money.

#### 14. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

**a. Building Committee: Commissioner Thazhampallath**

Commissioner Thazhampallath gave an update on the building renovation project. Everything is going well, mid-April phase one (kitchen area).

**b. Pension Committee: Commissioner Gregorio**

**MOTION** to authorize spending \$5,000 to hire TPS Group to provide actuary services to review the pension by Comm. Gregorio/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

**c. Public Safety Telecommunications: Commissioner Giuliano**

Commissioner Giuliano provided an update and spoke of the progress of the new dispatch center. The reports are attached to the meeting packet for review.

**d. Riverfront Redevelopment Update: Commissioner Pessina**

Commissioner Pessina advised there was nothing new to report.

#### 15. OLD BUSINESS

**a. District Economic Development Updates**

Chairwoman Kleckowski updated the commission on the former CL&P service center on Randolph Road. Progress is being made on the complex with will include indoor/outdoor soccer fields, a brewery, and office space, and more. She met with staff from the physical therapy facility, Carlson Procure. They are looking forward to developing a relationship with the South Fire District. The facility accepts South Fire District health insurance. Commissioner Kleckowski believes the new complex is an excellent stimulus for the district.

Commissioner Pessina said that there might be an expansion of the Seasons Federal Credit Union where the former Midstate Tractor & Equipment was on South Main Street.

***Commissioner Pessina departed the meeting at 9:09 p.m.***

#### 16. NEW BUSINESS

**a. Set Dates/Times for Budget Workshops**

A budget workshop was scheduled for April 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

**b. Discussion of Budget Promotion**

The discussion is being postponed to the April 14, 2025 regular monthly meeting.

**c. Discussion of Budget Mailer**

The discussion is being postponed to the April 14, 2025 regular monthly meeting.

**d. Discussion of CNR Appropriation**

Chief Trzaski said that \$12,600 was put into *CNR Health & Safety* for gym equipment; however, there are not enough funds to purchase all the equipment. He asked for approval to transfer \$8,000 of interest from the STIF account to the Health & Safety line to offset the difference.

**MOTION** to provide the administration authority to use \$8,000 of interest from the STIF account for fitness equipment for South Fire District by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Gregorio. Unanimously approved.

**17. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION – ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the public session at 9:16 p.m. No one wished to speak.

**18. CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION**

Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public session at 9:16 p.m.

**19. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn by Comm. Gregorio/Comm. Thazhampallath. Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Submitted by,

**APPROVED 4/14/2025**

*Alyse McEwen*

Alyse McEwen  
Recording Secretary

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