

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

**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, March 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Held at the firehouse and via Zoom - Meeting I.D. 894 9026 0082**

**Present:** Commissioners Kleckowski, Giuliano, Thazhampallath, and Pessina (via Zoom); Chief Trzaski; Deputy Chief; staff members

**Absent:** Commissioner Gregorio

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Kleckowski called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was recited.

**3. ACCEPT/AMEND AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

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

Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the public session at 7:08 p.m.

*Dan Penney, 1101 Chamberlain Hill Road*

Mr. Penney suggested that the commission research the CT General Statutes and the charter prior to amending the by-laws and recommended a member of the public be on the committee. He asked for the proposed budget to be made available to the public well in advance of the first workshop. He expressed concern about the tax collector's reports and the financial reports not being approved by the commission and asked about the status of his previous request regarding the process being used for the Building Committee's payment of invoices. Mr. Penney spoke of the possibility of using the collection of back taxes and supplemental motor vehicle taxes to benefit taxpayers. He recommended the practice of publicly advertised bidding specifically for vehicle repairs and auditor expenses. Mr. Penney asked for an explanation on how the poll worker's pay is determined and certain building repair expenditures. He also commended the new reporting format being used by the fire marshal's office.

**5. CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION** Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public session at 7:18 p.m.

**6. MINUTES TO BE ACCEPTED**

a. Regular Meeting of February 19, 2024 – The minutes were accepted as presented.

**7. TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2024**

**a. Refunds: \$1,789.17**

**MOTION** to accept refunds in the amount of \$1,789.17 for February 2024 by Comm. Thazhampallath/Comm. Giuliano. Unanimously approved.

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

The Tax Collector's Reports were accepted as received.

**8. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

a. Monthly Expense Detail: January 2024 and February 2024

**b. Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual: July 2023 through February 2024**

Commissioner Giuliano questioned specific line items that have exceeded the budgeted amounts. The chiefs provided explanations.

**7504 – Cyber Insurance:** The annual premium is paid in full at the beginning of the fiscal year.

**7905 – Firefighting Equipment:** Grant funds and donations received do not go back into the same budget line item; therefore, it appears that the line is over budget.

**7915 – Medical Testing:** Invoices from previous fiscal years were paid out of this fiscal year’s budget due to accounting errors on the part of the medical testing facility.

**7404 – NFPA/OSHA Compliance:** Ladder and hose testing came in higher than quoted. The hydrotesting of SCBA cylinders during this fiscal year was overlooked.

Commissioner Thazhampallath asked for an explanation of specific line items that are under budget. The chief provided explanations.

**7603 – Replacements /Call Backs:** It was anticipated that new hires would potentially be sent to the CT Fire Academy, which will not occur during this fiscal year. Additionally, the expenditures for this line will increase as “vacation season” is approaching.

**7607 – Heart & Hypertension:** The budgeted amount reflects the anticipated liability of three eligible employees.

**c. Cash Balance Reports: February 2024**

The financial reports were accepted as submitted.

**9. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS – FEBRUARY 2024**

Chief Trzaski and Deputy Chief Fischer provided an overview of the administrative reports and elaborated on the entry level job application process, new legislation which will affect the fire service, the NFPA standards OSHA is adopting, and recent actions taken by the Health & Safety Committee.

**10. COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

**a. Building Committee: Commissioner Thazhampallath**

Commissioner Thazhampallath provided an update on the progress of the Building Renovation Project. Additionally, he will follow up with Mr. Penney regarding Building Committee invoices.

**b. Pension Committee: Chairwoman Kleckowski**

Chairwoman Kleckowski advised that a meeting is planned for April 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. Deputy Chief Fischer is in the process of developing a “pre-retirement checklist.”

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

Commissioner Giuliano provided an overview of the Public Safety Telecommunications meeting, as is presented in the report. It was suggested that Commissioner Giuliano ask if there is a specific reason for the staffing issues at the next PST meeting.

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

Commissioner Pessina has been out of state and will provide an update at the next meeting.

**11. OLD BUSINESS** None.

**12. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Discussion of South Fire District By-Laws Amendment(s)**

**MOTION** to schedule a special meeting pursuant to *Article VIII* of the by-laws for the purpose of repealing *Article II, Section 4* of the by-laws, with all publications and notices published as required, by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Pessina. Unanimously approved.

The special meeting was scheduled for April 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. A legal notice will be published in the Hartford Courant and the Middletown Press on March 26<sup>th</sup> and March 28<sup>th</sup>.

“By-Law Amendment Committee” will be an agenda item for the April 2024 monthly meeting.

**b. Set Dates/Times for Budget Workshop(s) and Public Hearing(s)**

**MOTION** to schedule a budget workshop on March 26, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.; a budget workshop on April 2, 2024, at 6:30, with a special meeting/public hearing immediately following; and a special meeting on April 11, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. to adopt the proposed budget and set the mill rate, by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Thazhampallath. Unanimously approved.

**c. Discussion of Budget Mailer**

It was decided that a tri-fold brochure will be mailed to eligible voters of the district.

**d. Completion of Rescue 35 Project and Apparatus Tour**

The apparatus tour did not take place. Chief Trzaski and Deputy Chief Fischer gave an overview of the district acquiring the apparatus at no cost to the district and the work performed to outfit it for service. The old Rescue 35 will go out to public auction this week. The monies recouped will go back into the CNR apparatus line. The deputy explained that vehicle repair funds were used to bring it up to safety standards. The acquisition of the truck and the work done by the staff members saved the district hundreds of thousands of dollars.

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

Chairwoman Kleckowski opened the public session at 8:51 p.m.

*Dan Penney*

Mr. Penney asked who the representatives for the collective bargaining negotiations are, and encouraged the commission to ensure the district is not in violation of state mandated early voting.

Chairwoman Kleckowski expressed her appreciation of the condolences and acts of kindness she and her family received during the difficult time following the passing of her father.

**14. CLOSE PUBLIC SESSION**

Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public session at 8:54 p.m.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Submitted by,

**APPROVED 4/8/24**

*Alyse McEwen*

Alyse McEwen  
Recording Secretary

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