

**SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
445 RANDOLPH ROAD
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457**

**SPECIAL MEETING – ADOPT BUDGET/SET MILL RATE
Monday, May 23, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.**

Held at the firehouse and available via Zoom - Meeting ID 821 0506 8286

Present: Commissioners Kleckowski, Giuliano, and Gregorio; Chief Trzaski, Deputy Chief Fischer (via Zoom)

Absent: Commissioners Thazhampallath and Pessina

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Kleckowski called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Kleckowski opened the public hearing at 6:03 p.m.

Dan Penney

Mr. Penney offered the following comments and questions regarding the DRAFT proposed budget as of 5/23/2023.

- He asked the commission to confirm they were following the 5-minute rule for each public speaker. Chairwoman Kleckowski verified they were.
- In reference to *Motor Vehicle Property Tax Calculation*, Mr. Penney questioned why the 2023 FY amount of \$521,885 was only \$480,369 for the 2024 FY, which is a \$41,516 difference.
- Mr. Penney noted that the draft proposed budget had just been made available today, leaving little time to research and share. He asked for clarification as to what the “real” mill rate is because in the proposed budget, the motor vehicle mill rate is separated from the property mill rate.
- Mr. Penney believes there are many opportunities to reduce spending. He stated that the April 2023 *back taxes and back interest collected* was \$7,300, which wasn’t budgeted for, and *Commissioner’s Compensation* is an additional \$9,000, which totals \$16,300.
- Regarding revenue history, Mr. Penney commented there is a history of significant carryover of funds. He asked if the district received or reviewed the draft annual OPM mandated audit. If so, what is the carryover as of 6/30/22 and if it could be expensed other than 50% CNR/50% general

fund. He said the district has about \$2.5 million, which is more than what OPM recommends.

- Mr. Penney asked that, since no detail has been shared, what the total interest will be on borrowing money for the new project.
- *7708 – Commissioner’s Compensation:* (2) five-year terms totals \$90,000 and could be eliminated from the budget.
- *7603 – Replacement/Call Backs:* The 29% increase in overtime is very concerning. Although it is contractual, it can be negotiated.
- Mr. Penney noted only a 3.9% increase in spending, while SFD has over a 9.3% increase in spending.

4. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Chairwoman Kleckowski closed the public hearing at 6:07 p.m.

5. ADOPT BUDGET/SET MILL RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2024

MOTION to adopt budget and set the mill at 4.160 for motor vehicle taxes and 5.311 for real estate and personal taxes by Comm. Kleckowski/Comm. Gregorio.

Commissioner Giuliano advised that the city did not reduce the mill rate proposed in the mayor’s budget. The numbers SFD had at that time are the same numbers we have now. Had the mill rate been adjusted, it might have affected what the district could collect on motor vehicle taxes. With the motor vehicle mill rate cap, this is all the district can do. He stated there is not as much relief on the real estate and personal property tax mill rate we had hoped for. Commissioner Giuliano supported the proposed budget as presented. Commissioner Gregorio also supported the proposed budget as presented.

The motion was unanimously approved.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Submitted by,

Alyse McEwen
Recording Secretary

ACCEPTED 6/12/2023

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