

**SOUTH FIRE DISTRICT  
445 RANDOLPH ROAD  
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457**

**Board of Fire Commissioners  
Special Meeting Minutes  
October 1, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Commissioners: Bartolotta, Thazhampallath, Giuliano, Penney; Chief Howley

**Absent:** Commissioner Kleckowski

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Bartolotta called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS – Robert S. Ford, eBenefits Group Northeast, LLC**

Bob explained health insurance plans from various companies. One of the biggest problems the District faces in obtaining coverage for early retirees and their dependents is most health insurance companies do not offer “under 65 retiree coverage” to small groups (2-100 employees). We received quotes from United Healthcare and are expecting quotes from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. Bob suggested January 1<sup>st</sup> as the effective date; January rates will be available November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Motion** to recess for ten minutes by Commissioner Giuliano/Commissioner Penney.  
Unanimously approved.

The meeting was recessed at 3:35 p.m.

**4. CALL BACK TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Bartolotta called the meeting back to order at 3:47 p.m.

**5. DISCUSSION OF BUILDING RENOVATION PROJECT/BID RESULTS**

Commissioner Thazhampallath reiterated his appreciation for all parties involved in the project. He asked Local 3918 President Nick Fischer to speak on behalf of the Union members.

President Fischer reminded the Commission of the Union’s steadfast attempt to make a positive contribution to the project and of their testimony during a prior Building Committee meeting when they suggested the project be downsized, while including the most necessary renovations, i.e. a men’s and women’s locker room, and moving the IT equipment to free up space for gear washing equipment. The only add-alternate he supported other than the new IT setup was the rear pitched roof. President Fischer indicated that if their previous suggestions were taken, a lot of the delay, and now the lack of sufficient funds to complete the project, could’ve been avoided. He encouraged the Commission to take action tonight (either borrow the funds from CNR or apply for a private bank loan). Losing the funds would jeopardize the chance of receiving such federal or state grants into the future and would be an embarrassment to the staff, the Fire Commission, and the District as a whole; the District would be scarred forever.

Chief Howley showed a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate funds available, shortfall of funds, and options to overcome the shortfall (the presentation is attached to these minutes). A discussion took place regarding the options.

Commissioner Penney requested and received assurance from Commissioner Thazhampallath that the Building Committee would be in full support of the actions being brought forward.

Relative to the use of CNR district taxpayer funding for the project shortfall, Commissioner Penney received confirmation that for FYE 06/30/2020, the CNR account has received 50% of revenue in excess of expenses of \$256,177.50.

**Motion** to appropriate funds from the CNR account to guarantee the completion of the building renovation project by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Thazhampallath.

Chairwoman Bartolotta moved to amend the motion to add “not to exceed \$332,273.”

Commissioners Giuliano and Thazhampallath accepted the amendment. The motion to appropriate funds from the CNR account to guarantee the completion of the building renovation project, not to exceed \$332,273, was adopted as amended.

**Motion** to have the Chief and financial staff pursue options to offset CNR by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Thazhampallath. Unanimously approved.

Chairwoman Bartolotta expressed her frustration over the unacceptable lack of support and response from the City and others which caused the project to be delayed. She feels if there was a real partnership, the District wouldn't be in the position it is in. She said it's time to hold people accountable for their actions. Chairwoman Bartolotta reiterated her extreme frustration and disappointment in the individuals responsible for putting the District in this situation.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion** to adjourn by Comm. Giuliano/Comm. Penney. Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Submitted by,

Alyse McEwen  
Recording Secretary

**Approved 10/20/2020**