

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
Pennington Borough Fire District No. 1  
P.O. Box 387  
Pennington, NJ 08534

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 11, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting, conducted remotely through 'Zoom' was called to order by Chairman Blackwell at 7:35 p.m. following adequate and electronic notice under the Open Public Meetings Law and N.J.A.C. 5:39 (special meeting notice, including information on how the public could access and participate in the remote meeting, make public comment and where relevant documents, if any, would be made available was provided to the Times of Trenton (3/08/21) and to Packet Publications (Hopewell Valley News) (3/08/21), published in the Trenton Times (3/10/21), sent to the Borough Clerk for filing and posting and posted on the board's website, at the firehouse entrances and at board offices, as well as provided to any person requesting same in advance of the meeting).

**ROLL CALL**

Present by roll call were Commissioners Mark Blackwell, Wayne Blauth, Bob DiFalco, Ryan Fraser and Brian Hofacker. Absent: None. Also present were J. Carducci and Attorney Griswold.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss amending the 2021 adopted budget to include additional funding for some underfunded appropriations as well as to make adjustments to the budget document to address same. Formal action of the board may be taken.

Information realized since the 2021 budget was adopted in January indicate that this year's rescheduled election expenses will likely rise appreciably from last year and that no increase in the election appropriation was provided in the 2021 budget. For the 2020 election the county covered the cost of distributing the vote-by-mail and provisional ballots, as well as the cost of renting the machines to tally the ballots. This year these costs are likely to fall on the only two fire districts holding elections in April, Pennington being one of them (in 2020 there were 11 districts that would have shared costs). Further, largely due to COVID19 the number of voters on the automatic vote-by-mail ballot distribution list has increased and the costs associated with printing the ballots falls directly on each fire district. The appropriation for election expenses is insufficient to cover the probable, and as yet unknown increased costs. The contingency appropriation was lowered from \$2,000.00 to \$500.00 in the 2021 budget, which amount provides inadequate protection for further unexpected expenses, particularly given already incurred repair expenses for firefighter equipment and radios. The professional service appropriation was reduced in the 2021 budget and is now insufficient to meet contractual obligations.

The appropriations to be amended are Election expenses, Professional fees and Contingencies. The proposed amendment to the already adopted budget should not result in taxpayers seeing any further increase in the dollar amount of taxes the borough will assess for fire tax purposes.

## **ACTION**

Cmsr. Hofacker moved that the board move forward with the steps necessary to 1) amend the 2021 adopted budget, 2) authorize the accountant to confirm the procedure with DCA and finalize the amended budget figures and the documents necessary to proceed, and 3) have the attorney advertise a public hearing on the amendment, if required, for the earliest date it legally can be held. Cmsr. DiFalco seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motioned by DiFalco, seconded by Hofacker and passed, the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on March 16, 2021.