

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SOUTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2

Press Release for Special Election

On Thursday December 16th, 2021, the Board of Fire Commissioners of South Brunswick Township Fire District #2 will be holding a special election to ask the registered voters of the fire district to approve an expenditure for the purchase of a new aerial tower ladder fire truck to replace an aging tower ladder that has become increasingly expensive to maintain and operate. Specifically, the Commissioners will be asking for authorization to purchase the replacement fire truck for an amount not exceeding \$1,950,000 and to secure lease-purchase financing relative to the purchase.

Since the Board of Fire Commissioners has been anticipating the need to replace this piece of apparatus as part of its long-range capital planning process, it will utilize \$1.1 million of existing reserve funds to substantially reduce the amount of required financing costs. The Fire District will then secure lease-purchase financing for the balance of the purchase costs not to exceed \$850,000. The Commissioners will not be proposing any tax rate increase in the foreseeable future due to the lease-purchase. Currently, the fire district's tax rate is amongst the lowest in both Middlesex County and the entire State of New Jersey.

South Brunswick Township Fire District #2, which is protected by the Monmouth Junction Volunteer Fire Department, covers the Monmouth Junction, Dayton and Deans sections of the township. The election will be held from 2 PM to 9 PM at the Monmouth Junction Fire Station, located at 573 Ridge Road in Monmouth Junction. Mail-in ballots will be sent out to those registered voters that have previously requested them from the Middlesex County Board of Elections.

Over the last year, a committee of 6 firefighters from the Fire Department have worked to develop specifications for the new truck, dedicating well over a hundred man-hours on the project. The committee recommends the purchase of a 100-foot mid-mount aerial tower ladder, custom-built by Pierce Manufacturing in Appleton, Wisconsin. The new truck will replace an aging tower ladder currently in operation by the Fire Department. The current truck has required over \$66,000 in repairs since 2004, including nearly \$18,000 in 2021 alone. "Although we take a great deal of pride in keeping our equipment in top condition, our current aerial is a very specialized piece of apparatus that has required a great deal of maintenance," says Monmouth Junction Fire Chief Scott Smith. "The new truck will be easier to maintain, resulting in less down-time and lower maintenance costs. It will weigh less, be more maneuverable, have greater reach, and be quicker and easier to set-up and operate than our current aerial, increasing our efficiency and saving valuable minutes at a fire when every second counts," according to Chief Smith. The Fire Department has had a long and successful history with Pierce fire apparatus, operating four trucks over the years, including two fire engines currently in service.

As previously mentioned, it is not anticipated that the Board of Fire Commissioners will need to raise the fire district tax rate to support this expenditure. If voter approval is received, and once the financing bids are reviewed, the Commissioners will seek approval from the New Jersey State Local Finance Board to conduct a lease-financing purchase for the truck. If approval is granted by the Local Finance Board, the Commissioners can enter into an agreement to purchase the new truck. Once an agreement is signed, construction and delivery of the truck will take approximately 16 months.

The Commissioners of South Brunswick Township Fire District #2 and the members of the Monmouth Junction Volunteer Fire Department thank the public for their support and encourages the registered voters to vote in favor of the expenditure for the new truck.

Residents with questions regarding the special election are encouraged to visit the fire district's website at www.sbfd2.com or call 732-329-0250 for additional information.