

Board of Fire Commissioners

Fire District #2

Township of South Brunswick

Regular Meeting
Third Monday at 7:00 P.M.
Monmouth Junction Fire House

P.O. Box 114
Monmouth Junction, N.J. 08852

PRESS RELEASE REGARDING THE 2023 FIRE DISTRICT ELECTION

On Saturday February 18, 2023, the annual fire district elections will take place throughout the State of New Jersey. As part of the election, individuals are elected to fill expiring three-year terms as Fire Commissioner. Also voted on in the election is the annual budget for each fire district. Per New Jersey State Statute, the annual fire district elections are held on the third Saturday of February.

The election for South Brunswick Township Fire District No. 2, which covers the Monmouth Junction, Dayton and Deans sections of the township, will be held from 2 PM to 9 PM at the Monmouth Junction Fire Station, located at 573 Ridge Road in Monmouth Junction.

South Brunswick Township is divided into three separate fire districts, each with their own elected five-member Board of Fire Commissioners. The Commissioners are responsible for providing fire protection to the residents and businesses of their respective district. Since the creation of the fire districts in the township in 1978, the providing of fire protection is funded through the levy of a fire tax on all property owners within the respective fire districts, which is paid as part of the township property tax (residents do not receive a separate bill). Prior to the creation of the fire districts, funding for fire protection came through fund raisers run by the local volunteer fire departments, along with a small stipend provided by town council.

The annual budget for the fire district is drafted by the members of the Board of Fire Commissioners and must be presented at a fire district meeting at least 60 days prior to the date of the election. Once adopted, the budget is then submitted to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs - Division of Local Government Services (DCA DLGS) for review. Once approved by the DCA DLGS, the budget is then presented at a public hearing during a fire district meeting where residents are welcome to comment.

Following the public hearing, the budget must be formally adopted by the majority of the 5-member Board of Fire Commissioners. Once adopted, the budget is sent back to the DCA DLGS for final review and comment. Once reviewed and approved by the DCA DLGS, the budget can then be placed on the ballot for approval/disapproval by the registered voters of the district.

The 2023 budget for Fire District No. 2 calls for total appropriations in the amount of \$2,396,243, which is an increase of \$1,163,370 (+94.4%) compared to the 2022 adopted budget. The primary cause of the proposed increase is the inclusion of a \$1,100,000 capital appropriation to support the lease/purchase of a new tower ladder that received voter approval in December 2021.

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Despite the aforementioned increase of \$1,163,370 in appropriations, the amount to be raised by taxation will amount to an increase of only \$25,430 (+2.4%) due to the planned utilization of \$1,100,000 of capital reserve monies. The proposed tax rate of \$.043 per hundred of assess value is the same as budgeted in 2022 and only .001 per hundred higher than realized in 2022.

For a single-family residence in South Brunswick Township assessed at the average value of \$195,190, a taxpayer in Fire District #2 would pay \$83.93 a year for fire protection. Residents can check their property tax bill from South Brunswick Township to see exactly how much they pay for fire protection.

Included in this year's budget is \$27,000 in grant funds received from the State of New Jersey as part of their American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant that was awarded at the end of 2022. The fire district will utilize the grant funds to purchase firefighter protective clothing including turnout gear, helmets, and Nomex hoods.

Also on the ballot this year is a question asking for authorization to expend up to \$80,000 for the purchase of a new Command Vehicle. If approved, the Board of Fire Commissioners would be able to place the expenditure in the 2024 budget. It is the intent of the Commissioners to replace a 2014 Chevrolet Tahoe Command Vehicle in 2024.

As mentioned earlier, the fire tax is used to fund fire protection to the residents and businesses of the fire district. This includes the operation and maintenance of the fire stations and fire apparatus, as well as the purchase of firefighting equipment, supplies and protective clothing for firefighters. Since 1924, fire protection has been provided by the Monmouth Junction Volunteer Fire Department. The use of an all-volunteer firefighting force results in a significant savings for taxpayers every year. In fact, the fire tax in Fire District #2 is among the lowest in not just Middlesex County, but also the entire state.

For the 2023 election, there is one Commissioner's position that is up for election for a 3-year term. Incumbent Charles M. Smith is running un-opposed on the ballot for re-election.

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 our 2023 fire district budget and the additional ballot question.

Residents with questions regarding the fire district election or the proposed budget can visit the fire district's website at www.sbfd2.com or call 732-329-0250.