



**Fairview Fire District**  
258 Violet Avenue  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Office: (845) 452-7453  
Station: (845) 452-8770  
Fax: (845) 452-0552

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## The Fairview Fire District Makes Difficult Decision

In the Interest of Public Safety, Board of Fire Commissioners Adopt 2021 Budget; 21% Increase

On November 2, 2020, the Board of Fire Commissioners met at their monthly meeting, changed from the typical first Tuesday due to election night, to discuss and adopt the District's 2021 budget. After months of meetings and debates, the Board made the difficult decision in the interest of public safety to make an unparalleled decision to increase the 2021 budget by 21%.

"This decision was certainly not made lightly," said Chairman of the Board Andrew Calamari. "Over the past five years we have underbudgeted the needs of the District in an attempt to maintain a minimal increase to our taxpayers. This has always kept us below the NYS Tax Cap, but that decision left us with little options this year" Calamari added.

In addition to minimal increases and many decreases across line items, there are many important purchases that must be made to protect the community; portable radio upgrades and fire hose improvements are just two. Furthermore, given the current pandemic, the board chose to exclude previously budgeted donations from the budget due to the uncertainty that they will be made. Chairman Calamari added, "We have a great working relationship with numerous entities in our district who make annual donations to offset costs associated with public safety. Given the current state of the pandemic and the financial climate, we could not budget for a potential donation that may or may not be able to be made. The decision to exclude the donations from our budget should not reflect poorly on those that make them. We greatly appreciate their support, but we felt that it was in the public's best interest to ensure that the services we provide can be maintained at their current level should we not be able to receive the donation in the future."

Another hurdle the District had to overcome was the future projection totals given by the New York State Retirement System. As shown in previous years, the payment to the retirement system can vary greatly; sometimes these projections are lower and sometimes they are higher than the September projected rates. The District's projected calculations were even harder to determine for 2021 due to numerous retirements and transfers. "Our initial projection from the state gave our Treasurer enough concern to budget for a total of \$618,000," said Calamari. "After careful calculations of our own, thanks to our secretary, we felt that that number could be reduced to \$525,000." Calamari added that the District does have a reserve liability fund just in case the number is higher than calculated.

Chairman Calamari concluded with "The Board of Fire Commissioners understands that a 21% increase to a tax base is not something anyone wants to burden tax payers with, but it was something that had to be done. Continuing to reduce budget lines to near zero is no way to operate when the interest of public safety is in mind. The Board is hoping that future developments in the district will come to fruition to help offset the large increase in the 2021 budget for future budgets and will also utilize any donations received to offset the 2022 budget. The Board worked diligently to try to minimize the impact to the taxpayers. Ultimately, it was decided this was the best option for the district. We could not jeopardize public safety by cutting any more or lowering our service level."

For simplified math, a 21% increase to the budget equates to the below numbers for the Town's of Poughkeepsie and Hyde Park respectively.

Poughkeepsie 100% Equalization Rate  
\$8.74 per \$1,000 – Millage Tax  
\$193,000 Full Market Value Home  
2019 Taxes \$1424.29  
2020 Taxes \$1686.82  
Increase of \$262.53 or \$21.88 a month

Hyde Park 52% Equalization Rate  
\$16.81 per \$1,000 – Millage Tax  
\$245,500 Full Market Value Home – Taxed on  
\$135,000  
2019 Taxes \$ 1809.34  
2020 Taxes \$2151.68  
Increase of \$342.34 or \$28.53 a month

Founded in 1910, The Fairview Fire District is located in Dutchess County, New York. We protect the Northern part of the Town of Poughkeepsie and the Southern part of the Town of Hyde Park. The district is four and a half square miles large. There are homes, businesses, colleges, schools, health care facilities and more in the district. Public protection is provided by a combination career and volunteer staff 24/7/365.

If you would like more information or have questions, please contact Chief Timothy Gilnack at 845.452.7453 or at [chief41@fairviewfd.net](mailto:chief41@fairviewfd.net).