



# Arlington Fire District

11 Burnett Boulevard  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603  
www.afd.org

Business: (845) 486-6300  
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**For Emergencies**  
***DIAL 911***

*“Safeguarding Our Community”*

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to adhere to social distancing guidelines set forth by both Federal and the State, the 2021 Proposed Budget Public Hearing was broadcasted live via videoconferencing using the platform ZOOM and by telephone call in.**

## **2021 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING OCTOBER 20, 2020**

### **ATTENDEES:**

Comm. Ralph Chiumento, Jr. – Chairman  
Comm. Jon Adams  
Comm. Bruce Griffing, II  
Comm. Peter Valdez – Vice Chairman  
Comm. Peter Longi

Chief: William Steenbergh  
Assistant Chief: Eric Philipp  
Director of EMS: David Violante  
District Secretary: Renee O’Neill  
Treasurer: James Passikoff

Chairman Chiumento opened the 2021 Proposed Budget Public Hearing at 7:36 p.m. There were a total of fifty (50) people in attendance, which included District Officials and those who logged on or phoned into the Zoom meeting.

At 7:36 p.m., Chairman Chiumento spoke about the 2021 Proposed Budget. His comments ended at 7:41 p.m.

At 7:41 p.m., Chairman Chiumento turned the Public Hearing over to Treasurer James Passikoff who presented and discussed a PowerPoint summary of the 2021 Proposed Budget. His comments ended at 7:54 p.m.

At 7:55 p.m., Chairman Chiumento opened the Hearing for public comments. Three (3) people submitted their comments online, which are attached to these minutes. Ten (10) people chose to speak during the live Zoom meeting. The public comment period ended at 8:26 p.m.

At 8:26 p.m., Chairman Chiumento answered some questions that the public asked during the Hearing. No other comments were made by the members of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

With no further comments from the public or Board of Fire Commissioners, Chairman Chiumento closed the 2021 Proposed Budget Public Hearing at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Renee O’Neill  
District Secretary

**From:** [Phil Van Itallie](#)  
**To:** [contactus](#)  
**Subject:** Arlington Fire District Proposed 2021 Budget Comments -- Use the fund balance to reduce the budget  
**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 9:12:00 AM

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My name is Philip Van Itallie. I have resided in the Croft Corners region of the Arlington Fire District (AFD) for over 50 years and have a major concern spurred by the large proposed tax increase. The 2021 tax levy for fire protection is higher than the entire Town of Poughkeepsie tax levy. The town has more employees and offers far more services in an overlapping jurisdiction for less taxpayer money.

The fund balance has not been used to reduce the budget. The fund balance should be used to reduce the taxpayer cost. I understand that AFD "rolls over" any unspent funding to its fund balance. After a modest fund balance is achieved, any extra should be used to lower the budget. The 9-page budget does not even show the fund balance. Just as a point of local interest, Kingston City Mayor Stephen Nobel crafted his 2021 budget at \$43.15 million, down more than \$1 million from \$44.37 million in 2020 by using money from the fund balance. AFD should do this also.

Fireman salaries are \$7,800,000, an increase of \$500,000 a 6.8% increase (unreasonable!). This is unreasonable for retirees who live on a fixed income and people who have lost their jobs. Overtime is going up \$300,000, from \$1,700,000 to \$2,000,000 or 17.6%. Again, this is unreasonable and unfair to seniors. I understand that the professional fire fighters wages are supplemented by free medical, dental and retirement. No other wage earners get that kind of benefits today. AFD employees should contribute to these benefits.

I do not understand why there is a new, never before budget item "Fire House Record Management" of \$50,000. AFD has been keeping records for a long time as part of their job. Don't expect taxpayers to stand back and let another set of waste be added to their bill.

The town now uses a separate EMS. There is no need for Arlington Fire to have any EMS employees. There should not be any EMS personnel on fire trucks. That is a boondoggle or "feather beading" that should have been removed when EMS service was discontinued.

I object to the obfuscation in the budget of using fire house numbers without specifying which is which. It does not hurt (or cost money) to mention Red Oaks Mill, Rochdale and Croft Corners sections with their firehouse number.

I am appalled that the inflationary budget has been proposed. With fat like trying to improve the firehouse and then have the gall to increase the rent for the district paid improvements is irresponsible.

Please realize that the taxpayers of AFD have to make ends meet. We do not support improving the land lord's properties and then encouraging them to raise our rent. The budget should be revised. Downwards. AFD should only consider an absolute

minimum budget with no increases, no expansion of the facilities and above all, the use of the burgeoning fund balance to REDUCE the 2021 budget for the Arlington Fire District.

**From:** [Bev K](#)  
**To:** [contactus](#)  
**Subject:** Budget - please reduce to 2% as the law states  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 11:18:23 AM

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Please reconsider the 8% increase. I would ask that you look at ways to reduce expenses. Of course our firefighters and EMTs deserve a good wage, however, you need to consider ways to reduce expenses, spread out the taxpayer burden, and become more efficient.

Do the colleges pay for some of the calls? Why do so many personnel come when there is a call? Are the hotels causing more calls? are they paying their share?

Thank you,  
Bev Kawalski

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*'Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.'*

Martin Luther King Jr.

Thanks be to God!

From: [John H. Libolt](#)  
To: [contactus](#)  
Cc: [muni-newburgh@osc.ny.gov](mailto:muni-newburgh@osc.ny.gov)  
Date: Monday, October 19, 2020 8:34:05 AM

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## AFD District Budget Hearing Oct 20,2020

These are VERY difficult times for thousands of people in our community. People are getting sick, being laid off, businesses closing and personal savings are being depleted. Many people are choosing between food, medications, or taxes. Some have been forced to sell their homes that they have worked years for to find cheaper accommodations, some moving in with their children, or moving out of state.

You would think reasonable people would take these things into consideration before they raise taxes 8% when a cap of 1.56% is in place. Spending hundreds of thousand of dollars over the cap limit is cruel and unreasonable punishment to the people that have supported this community for years.

In these times, additions to buildings that are not owned by AFD district can certainly be put off. Fire trucks will still run, firemen will still respond, etc. Any reasons for these spending increases can be implanted over time, not all in the same year. If needed at all ? We sure don't need to spend money to buy the Rochdale Fire House. It would take many many years of paying Rochdale rent to equal the cost of this needless expense.

Please consider the hardships that many of your neighbors and the community you serve are dealing with.

We need to do more with less, not less with more \$\$.

John Libolt  
Town Of Poughkeepsie NY