



Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date / Time:	November 3, 2008 at 18:03 to 21:24
Note taker:	Katina Lemay 18:03-20:00 Chief Carrier 20:00-21:24	Place:	Northfield-Tilton Congregational Church

Attendees: Comm. Kevin Waldron, Comm. Bob Watson, Comm. Paul Auger, Chief Carrier, and Clerk Katina Lemay

Call Meeting to Order - Comm. Waldron called meeting to order at 6:00PM. Stated for the record that all three (3) Commissioners present and Chief Carrier.

Minutes from 10/14/08 Commissioner's meeting on the budget have yet to be approved.

Minutes from 10/22/08 Commissioner's meeting on the budget discussed. Motion to accept the minutes by Comm. Waldron and seconded by Comm. Auger. Corrections made were line item 630 correct spelling of the word bearings, line item 660 correct the spelling of Duane's name, line item 670 correct 2008 spent to date total to \$100.95, Public Comment correct to read Budget Committee meeting (not Water District), line item 301 correct spelling of John's last name to Lard and line item 335 fifth line done reword sentence starting Comm. Waldron to "Comm. Waldron did not remember voting for 100% of the Paramedics Program being covered and Chief Carrier recommended that he check the minutes from that meeting". Motion to accept the minutes as corrected by Comm. Waldron and seconded by Comm. Auger. Comm. Watson abstained because he was not present for that meeting.

Minutes from 10/27/08 Commissioner's meeting on the budget discussed. Motion to accept the minutes by Comm. Auger and seconded by Comm. Watson. Corrections made were line item 411 corrected spelling of Center, line item 560 corrected spelling of NFPA and page 4 Building line item corrected to 720. Motion to accept the minutes as corrected by Comm. Auger and seconded by Comm. Watson. Unanimously accepted.

Comm. Auger asked Chief Carrier if he had any information on the remaining fuel in the tanks (line item 411). Chief stated that he did speak with Kidder and the station had only used 200 gallons since the last fill up. It was suggested to wait until December for the next scheduled delivery and this billing would still fall under 2008's budget.

2009 Commissioner's Proposed Budget

300 Professional & Technical Services

- **320 – Legal Services \$5,000** – \$3,700 has been spent on this line item as of 10/08/08. LGC offers free legal advice, but does not like to work on labor issues and labor lawyers charge between \$150-\$200/hour. To cover the possibility of union talks, Comm. Auger feels this line item should be raised to \$5,000 (27 hours). Comm. Watson agreed.
- **350 – Medical Services \$6,000** – Chief got the information on annual physicals (\$389) and full physicals / entrance exams (\$716). Current practice (which is below national standards) is yearly physicals are required for full time employees 40+, physicals every 2-years for full time employees in their 30's, and physicals every 3-years for full time employees in their 20's or younger. 11 (firefighters) x \$389 (annual physical) = \$4,279. At a total of \$5,000 for this line item, it would only allow for one (1) new employee (\$716 entrance exam – required of all new employees). \$6,000 allows for all full time firefighters to get an annual physical (which are due). \$6,000 approved by Comm. Watson and Comm. Auger.

500 – Purchased Services

- **590.2 - Pressurized Hydrants** – skipped, waiting for 11/10/08 water district meeting.

700 Capital Outlay

- **720 – Building \$25,000** – Chief Carrier spoke with Mike Somerset from Northfield Highway Department. He said there were paving projects scheduled for 2009 and the Park Street station could jump in on one of those jobs. The paving costs are at \$80/ton but the figures (measurement) still have to be calculated as to how many tons would be required – so there is no estimate as of yet. Chief will look for Porter's estimate to see if it had the tonnage required for the job. Comm. Watson and Comm. Auger approved this line item at \$25,000 for the overlay paving to be done at Park Street. Comm. Waldron is opposed to having the overlay paving done.

Revenues

- **3110 – Property Taxes Northfield - skipped** - need to have all budget numbers to calculate this number.
- **3110 – Property Taxes Tilton – skipped** – need to have all budget numbers to calculate this number.
- **3351 – NH Shared Revenue Block Grant \$13,500** – as in past years.
- **3502 – Interest on Investments \$300** - \$62 in revenues as of 10/08/08. Need to check with Treasurer Seymour if this number is actually higher. Chief warns that it is better to underestimate revenues so you do not fall short on income and have to take from expenditures.
- **3506 – Other Insurance Reimbursements \$500** – as in past years.
- **3509 – Miscellaneous Revenue \$3,000** - \$7,657 in revenues as of 10/08/08. This is revenue from fire prevention fees, records requests and sports game standby. Any overages from this line go into the General Fund.

Salaries & Wages – no final numbers have been decided on under these categories

- **110.1 – Base Pay** – Comm. Watson would like to see \$611,958 accepting the 3.07% increase in pay wages. Chief Carrier's wage increase is 4% as stated in his contract. Comm. Auger is not opposed to raises, but due to the economy being bad, he does not feel that a pay raise this year would be

appropriate but does not have an amount for this line. The benefits and clothing allowance are “gifts” for service and not something that has to be given. Comm. Watson reminds everyone we are already paying our employees less than other departments in the area. Chief Carrier reminds the Commissioners that the employees work more hours than any other department in the area, and are paid less. Comm. Auger feels that the Over Time (\$127,128) the firefighters receive makes up for this. Chief Carrier would like to see other items cut in the budget in place of wages. He doesn’t feel the employees are valued by the Commissioner’s as much as they are valued by him. Comm. Waldron would like to know where the biggest, least offensive savings in Salaries & Wages and Benefits would be. Salaries & Wages shows a \$46,080 increase over 2008 – this includes fourteen (14) on the payroll. Comm. Auger feels the Chief is inflating the numbers here in hopes of getting the raise he wants after the cuts. Chief stated that he does not inflate anything in the budget and that the budget is running bare bones as it is. He can not see any justification in cutting the pay for the people who do the most work. Comm. Watson adds that without the yearly cost of living raises, the employees are not likely to stay with the department and that means higher costs in training, physicals, etc. that are not accounted for in the budget. Chief adds that there is something to be said for consistency, trained personnel, regularly knowing who you are working with on a call. Comm. Waldron added that the ability to pay higher taxes is harder now. It’s harder for people to make ends meet than it was years ago – there are layoffs, foreclosures, banks closing, and loss of savings from stocks – not a good time to ask for a raise that the tax payers would have to pay for. Chief feels the Commissioners are putting more value on the “dollars and cents” than the people impacted by these decisions. Other departments have step and grade scales for wages. Even with a mere 3% yearly raise, it still leaves us the lowest paid department in the area. Salaries and Benefits directly affect the employees. It was asked if other towns pay 100% of employees’ health insurance. Chief responded, “Only Franklin”.

- **110.05 – Holiday Pay** – Comm. Watson would like to see this line stay at \$26,136. Chief does not see the need to keep extra money in this line if it doesn’t correspond with salaries. So, without any raise, in place of \$18.00/hour average, Chief suggested using \$17/hour which lowers this line item to \$24,684. $11 \text{ (holidays)} \times 11 \text{ (employees)} \times 12 \text{ (hours/day)} @ \$17/\text{hour}$ is how this number is reached. 12 hours is gathered from a work week is four 12/hour shifts.
- **110.06 – Overtime** – this line item is projected to reach approximately \$120,000 for 2008 which will be overspent (budgeted at \$100,650). It includes coverage for vacations, personal and sick days as well as fire prevention classes, inspections and training to maintain three (3) on staff at all times (this does not apply to Call coverage). In 2008, \$1,000 was budgeted for fire prevention and \$484 has been spent as of 10/08/08. Chief Carrier and Brad cover as many daytime shifts as possible. There are also extra duty costs in this line item, which include shift holdovers when still on a call after a shift ends. Training is for full time employees only and includes outside department training taken on employees off duty time. If training is held during their normal shift time, they are paid straight time for it. Chief approves trainings. Comm. Waldron noted that wage increases up the contribution to retirement line and the overtime line (since overtime is 1.5 times the wage). Comm. Waldron asked if there was any way to change the use of overtime, limit the number of vacations taken at one time, not cover the shift and run short (2 rather than 3 on duty) or if it was feasible for Chief, Brad or Sean to cover the overtime shifts. Chief said if they were busy covering shifts, operationally, they would not be doing their jobs as Chief and Captain. Also added that Brad is an hourly employee and any time over his regular 8-hour shift would be overtime. He also stated that this line item is figured on number of vacation hours, not shift coverage. Comm. Waldron asked if it would be feasible to decrease the on duty to two (2) on the night shifts. Chief commented that the more serious calls happen in the middle of the night and that it would not good to be understaffed from the get go and that there is a report out that indicates we should

be staffed at 4/shift. Dropping to 2/shift would be in direct conflict with the report's recommendations. Comm. Auger would like to see the wages bottom line, with overtime included. He also asked about the firefighter that was out part of 2008 and if him being back would decrease expenses in this line item. Chief answered that part of the overtime from 2008 was to cover this firefighter. Brad was working 8-hours/week overtime (at time and a half) to cover this shift (about \$2,100 for the year). Comm. Watson reminded everyone that even though this firefighter was back, in 2009, there could be someone else out.

Comm. Waldron asked how many full time personnel come back for training after their shifts. Chief Carrier answered 2-5/meeting. Comm. Auger asked how much overtime is spent on trainings and meetings. Chief answered \$18,518. Comm. Auger asked how much is spent on extra duty. Chief answered \$26,241. Comm. Waldron asked how this was spent. Then the commissioners questioned every line in overtime expended. Chief Carrier will get a print out of these to them from 01/01/08 – 10/14/08 for review. Comm. Waldron asked if we have personal days (Chief said they do). Comm. Auger asked how many. Chief's answer is 60-hours per year. Comm. Waldron doesn't want to cast anything in stone on salaries, wages and benefits until the whole package is looked at.

- 120 – Call Salaries & Wages - Comm. Watson felt this number should be dropped back to last year's numbers. Comm. Waldron said not to get defensive, he knows it's hard, but they haven't cast anything in stone yet. Comm. Waldron asked Chief why he didn't give raises to Call firefighters. Chief answered that he didn't feel it was necessary. He explained that it was incentive based. Full time firefighter's raises are based on percentage and on merit. Comm. Auger asked for clarification on Call salary incentives (Chief gave examples). He then asked if open response exists (Chief said yes). He asked if firefighters are allowed to respond to medical calls (Chief said yes). Comm. Waldron asked how much of stipend is time for the Deputy Chief (Chief said none). They received a memo from Secretary Vary in reference to the Deputy Chief's salary. Comm. Waldron asked if the Commissioners are happy with the stipend. Comm. Watson said yes and that he is happy with the whole line. Comm. Auger was puzzled by the stipend and the \$1/hour raise for 2009 and asked about the Deputy Chief's qualifications. Comm. Waldron again asked how the Commissions felt about the stipend. Comm. Auger and Comm. Watson both agreed that the stipend was okay. Comm. Waldron asked how they felt about the \$1/hour increase. Comm. Auger feels it is not fair to give the \$1/hour raise if they are not giving a raise to the others. Comm. Waldron agrees that if the wages are not changed for the others, it should not be changed for the Deputy.

This leaves Revenues, Wages, Benefits and one (1) line item to discuss:

- 590.2 – Pressurized Hydrants

Non-public Session RSA 91-A:3 II(a) – Motion to go into non-public session by Comm. Waldron. Call vote to proceed into non-public session - unanimous.

Back to public session at 9:22PM.

Motion to adjourn made by Comm. Watson and seconded by Comm. Auger. Unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:24PM.

Next Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 5, 2008 at 6:00PM.