

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	January 17, 2008 at 18:00 to 21:06
Note taker:	Janine Vary	Place:	Center Street Station

Attendees: Comm. Tom Gallant, Comm. Bob Watson, Comm. Kevin Waldron, Treasurer Roland Seymour, Chief Steve Carrier, Deputy Mike Robinson, Capt. Brad Ober, Fire Prev., and Secretary Janine Vary. Absent: no one. Members of the public: Gretchen Wilder and Don Stevens of the TNFD Budget committee and others.

Comm. Gallant called meeting to order at 6:00PM. Tom moved to review only the public meeting minutes. Minutes from 11/15/07 Tom motioned to accept. Bob seconded. Discussion: Kevin under new business "Chief's evaluation needing to be done either orally or" what? Tom stated "in writing". Correction needed. This is the only correction. Minutes accepted unanimously with the correction. Now reviewing the minutes from 11/29/07. Motion by Kevin to accept minutes as written and seconded by Tom. Discussion: none. Minutes from 11/29/07 accepted unanimously. Minutes from 12/4/07, budget workshop, Kevin motioned to accept as written and Tom seconded. No discussion. Minutes accepted unanimously as written. Review of minutes of 12/18/07 special meeting. Tom motioned to accept as printed. Seconded by Kevin. Discussion, none. Minutes accepted as written.

Review of Treasurer's report. Looking at "Account Balances – Checking & Funds", these will be numbers that will be finalized in our audit report. Ending fund balance for the App. & Equip. Fund is \$134,106.65 with a 2007 increase of \$54,494.62. Operating account balance is \$263,007.54 with a 2007 increase of \$93,118.31. Review of App. & Equip. Fund under maybe 8% of revenue estimated but spent less than budgeted also. Tom stated that that would reflect that it increased \$54,494.62 during year end of 2007. So if we look at account balances, \$134,106.65 in the App. & Equip. Fund and none of that was raised through taxation, just ambulance proceeds. Roland reported that Plodzick and Sanderson are still finishing up audit for 2006. The App. & Equip. Fund reflects all assets in the account of 12/31/07. The operating account reflects all bills paid up to 12/31/07. Tom said for purposes of audit it has to be done on an accrual basis. So audit should be close to our figures. Tom said that we have an unaudited surplus for the year of \$93,118.31. if we add it to 170,440. and will come out with . Kevin said that we were told there is 290,000 in unreserved. Roland said that it takes into account all accounts. \$250,000 in cash and the \$40,000 that is accts receivable. Tom mentioned that the auditors made an error in reporting the \$79,000 that is from the App. & Equip. Fund which is a special revenue fund. Roland recommended referring to the account balances shown here to see what the true unreserved balance fund is that is available. Tom said he had looked at it in detail and didn't have any questions that we haven't dealt with before. We will talk about the surplus in the App. & Equip. Fund and the General fund later when discussing the budget. No more questions, Tom motioned to accept the Treasurer's report as printed; Kevin seconded. All ayed unanimously. This is the only treasurer's report ending on 12/31/07. Commissioners did not look at the Dec 20 reports that were done for that canceled meeting or a "current" report as of 1/17/08 because it was not submitted at this time.

Fire prevention report. Early Dec. had a lot of activity on construction and pre inspections and meetings with sprinkler companies, alarm companies, etc. then the weather turned. Nothing new as far as new development. Winnipausaukee River Health Center facility is still progressing. Hampton Inn is working and so is the Holiday Inn Express. We are in receipt of a grant from Wal-Mart towards the purchase of an intelligent training system for extinguisher training which will be a lot safer and easier to set up and better for the environment. We are purchasing the unit with Franklin Fire Dept. and will share back and forth. FSB has also been approached for a grant. Total cost \$5100 to \$5200. Part of TNFD's money came from the fire prevention budget line, \$1100 from Wal-Mart and some from FSB. No more questions.

Old business

Tom, looking at agenda for tonight, recommended that we not discuss tonight the Purchasing policy, goal setting, web site and Chief's eval. Suggested to set up time frames to deal with those in this order: Chief's evaluation, the purchasing policy, goal setting and web site. Tom asked Chief if he wanted his evaluation to be done in a public or nonpublic meeting. Chief didn't care. Tom moved to do in nonpublic forum and then determine if they are to be made public. Kevin commented that the directive should come from the employee and not the board. Tom said he just gave us the choice, normally it would be nonpublic and he has waived that. Tom recommends nonpublic. Kevin said it was OK with him. Bob agreed. 1/31/08 at 5:30 commissioners will do the Chief's evaluation and it will be a nonpublic meeting. On Mon. 2/11/08 at 5:30pm commissioners agreed to meet regarding the purchasing policy. Goal setting and web site will be after the annual meeting.

District meeting: Janine announced that the public hearings will be on Monday, February 4th. She asked for the order. Commissioners decided that we will have the warrants first at 7:00pm and followed by budget hearing at 7:30. This was

agreeable with Gretchen Wilder.

Janine also asked when the commissioners want to meet with Moderator Scott McGuffin. Commissioners would like to invite Scott to come to Feb. 21st monthly meeting to discuss the annual meeting.

Budget: Tom wanted to finalize the number we are going to recommend on the budget. Chief said the newest budget should have 1/10/08 date, and a total of \$1,397,126 for operating budget. Kevin asked if the 2007 lines were left intentionally blank. Chief said the budget year hadn't been closed yet and we just received Roland's numbers. In gross numbers \$1,432,487 for 2007. Based on the amount not spent in 2007, adding \$93,118.31 to the general fund surplus. Salaries and wages and the hydrants were lines where a good amount was not spent. Tom asked for comments from the commissioners. Looking at the operating budget. Kevin stated that both commissioners (Tom and Bob) are on board with the full amount. Kevin hasn't gotten over the wages yet, even though the Budget Committee felt it was OK. Tom agreed with the Budget Committee and discussion has already been had why he agrees with the salaries line. There was discussion about the auditor's. No bill received yet for 2006 audit (also not done) so that shows up in your surplus funds, Roland commented. He was told you can't accrue auditing fees. Bob motioned to accept the budget as printed at \$1,397,126. Tom seconded motion. Discussion: Tom asked where we are on the hydrants, what is the consensus. Bob thought we had decided to accept the amount given. Kevin said his position has not changed. Too much money. Tom asked for options. Kevin commented that one is to send a wake up call to the water district. They have to come around at some point. Maybe put the money in an escrow account. Tom doesn't feel it is our option to give them a "wake up call". Kevin said we need to fund but at \$110,000? One issue not only do we pay what they bill but also expose ourselves to additional risk when our men are shovelling out the hydrants. Tom said as long as he has known we have always cleaned out the hydrants. Bob said we are not doing a favor for them, we are doing ourselves a favor because we are the ones who use the hydrants. Kevin reported that 2 people from Bristol do 147 hydrants. There was more discussion on who pays and doesn't pay for hydrants. Tom stated for the record he believes that we should pay the amount that has been budgeted for hydrants and hopes we can continue to work in a positive manner with the water district like last year. The article in the Laconia Sun yesterday regarding ISO ratings was very good. Tom supports the full amount reflected on this budget worksheet. All in favor: Bob and Tom voted in the affirmative and Kevin voted against. Motion passed.

Now Tom wanted to shift discussion to the unrestricted funds balance. He had asked Janine to communicate with DRA relative to how the surplus can be used. His concern was that the surplus was made up of 2 parts, general fund surplus and there is a surplus in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund which is a special revenue fund. The of unaudited surplus number is \$134,106.65. He would like to deal with that number first. It is being accumulated for purposes of purchases of future equipment, capital equipment like a truck. The question that was asked of DRA was not answered. Specifically it was asked can the unreserved fund balance be used to offset debt from the special revenue fund (he read from email Janine had sent DRA). Tom wasn't happy with the answer to that question. "Yes, you may use fund balance to offset an appropriation in a warrant article." (He quoted from Jamie's written email response.) Kevin said he can reiterate what Jamie told him and Bob in December. He asked if we can take money from unreserved fund balance to pay off leases and she said yes. Tom said his question was properly worded and properly answered. He is in favor to use surplus to pay off debt. If we don't have it in writing from them, however, how can we be sure. He also wants a paper trail on everything because we have to do it right. The true surplus of the general fund is not gathered by an expenditure that is raised and appropriated through taxes. The Apparatus & Equipment Fund is a self sustaining fund and has nothing to do with the general fund. We have two surpluses. She is telling Janine that that is ok but he still doesn't feel it is right. Kevin said there were steps we had to go through to get it done. If Apparatus & Equipment Fund is to buy equipment why have we up to now used it to make payments for equipment. Tom said that is the same thing, you purchased it but chose to finance it. Tom said to drain the Apparatus & Equipment Fund down but leave the general fund surplus alone and then we could use that amount in operating account. There is nothing in rsa's that say you have to leave something in the unreserved fund balance. Tom said to pay off what you can. Roland said that when we started the Apparatus & Equipment Fund we were told by Tom that the district wouldn't come again to raise taxes to buy a vehicle. Roland didn't agree to use the surplus to pay off vehicles. Tom said if we use the Apparatus & Equipment Fund to pay what we can, it is a self propitiating account. It will grow at a faster rate. Kevin said all our debt is length of loan, \$240,000 but it could be reduced because we are paying off earlier. If we used the Apparatus & Equipment Fund surplus and the remaining out of the general fund surplus, then the Apparatus & Equipment Fund would be able to grow faster. Kevin felt that it would reduce the taxes to the citizens. But Tom explained that it doesn't affect the taxes because the leases and loans are being paid from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund which is the self sustaining account. If we eliminate these loans/leases, then the projected income will increase much quicker. Rather than \$97,000, the full \$230,000 would be the surplus in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund, we would be \$156,000 to the good. If we take the money out of general fund to pay off a vehicle, it doesn't affect taxes either because the money is already there. This is why Tom would not hesitate to sign a warrant article using the full amount. Kevin said if we could use some of the general fund, would he agree to use it towards a vehicle? Tom said no. Tom would recommend to just leave it there for now. Our budget is only operating expenses. Roland recommended that we should reduce taxes this year by \$17,000 because we didn't have to pay the water district that amount this past year. Roland would vote to

have no surplus at all and he would vote with Kevin. He disagrees totally with surpluses. Kevin said if we pay down the debt from Apparatus & Equipment Fund, would Tom be in favor of changing the purpose of that special revenue fund. Tom said no. Every year we are accumulating a surplus so at one point do we decide what percent. Roland feels that we got \$17,000 last year and then \$35,000 next year, it should be reflected back to the taxpayers and give it to them. Bob doesn't feel we should spend all the reserve of the general fund. He agrees with the 10% unreserved surplus. Kevin said that would leave \$139,712 or would it leave that and budgeted expenses out of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Tom will support a warrant article \$134,000 surplus that is now being paid through the Apparatus & Equipment Fund but not reduce the operating budget surplus. More discussion on the unreserved fund and use of the surplus. Tom motioned to pursue a warrant article of \$134,000, Bob seconded. Kevin felt like he was twisting his arm. Money to be used to decrease expenses. Leases and other debt that are currently being paid for by Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Unanimously carried. Tom made a motion that if DRA can confirm that it is legal or acceptable to take money from general surplus to pay off the debt in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund, however that amount would not exceed 10% of the surplus in the general fund. (surplus would be \$263,007.64), so that we maintain 10% of the budget, which would be \$140,000, leaving \$123,000 available and Kevin seconded. Discussion: Roland said he can't see how Tom could make that kind of a motion; he felt it was completely hypocritical. Any discussion from board. No other discussion. Vote taken and was unanimous with the commissioners. Roland continued stating his feeling that this is wrong.

Kevin said the rescue truck will be 15 years old before it is all paid for. Tom said on Jan. 29, 2008 is the last date to have a petition warrant article to abandon the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Tom asked Kevin to lead the charge to verify the accuracy of the second motion with Barbara Robinson of DRA.

Donnie Stevens (member of Budget Committee) agrees kind of with that idea but is it our intent to keep at the 10% and turn the remainder back to the taxpayers or would we let it grow up again like it did? Tom said that it doesn't need to grow. Tom said yes, that would be his intention and the money to be used to reduce taxation. He agreed with Roland somewhat. Donnie said he doesn't mind the general fund surplus being ten percent but not \$400,000. Tom said based on the way motions made there would be two warrant articles. Tom said Roland's point was well taken. Kevin asked about the idea of having a district with no debt. Tom couldn't see how that would be possible. Roland just wants to stick with the deal that was made to not purchase apparatus and equipment with tax payers' money.

Gretchen Wilder (Budget Committee Chair) Asked where the Apparatus & Equipment Fund is held. It is a checking account at Franklin Savings Bank but acquiring no interest. We are not paying fees for the account itself but paying fees for direct deposit. Roland said that right now we are at the surplus. Gretchen said if we want to just keep 10% she thinks it is high. This fund only needs a warrant article to remove from general fund surplus. She would like to use the bulk of the general fund surplus to pay down expenses. She has questions on profit and loss statements for the end of the year. There was a recent purchase of computers. Was it bought with municipal discount? Chief said that the person who did purchasing with municipal discount. We should get a municipal discount. She asked about computers or plans to purchase some, she didn't realize 2 computers were discussed. She wasn't surprised but disappointed. There was no discussion of that. Why did we need two? Brad asked to speak to that. We have a lot of times when a number of people are doing multiple reports at the same time. If we have 3 or 4 patients, even not injured, we have computers available for us and the call members. The better of the computers is being replaced and Janine's old one will be used as an extra. There are three computers available for others to use. Gretchen: another question is, when bills are being processed, who decides where money comes from. Janine and Chief. And then when verified, does someone go and checking. She finds things in the wrong account lines. Some things are recorded one way one month and another way the next month. The purchase of the new extractor recorded anywhere. Is it added to the fire association that it was purchased from? Gretchen said then for auditing purposes there should be a check and balance. Can be carried on an equipment report. Should be clear so when she does the MS 37 form and she wants to understand what form she is signing her name to. We had under capital out bldg., project 794, for \$1500 early in the year, line 720. Lowes, what was that for? Janine to check on couldn't remember. Gretchen asking commissioners that purchases should be discussed with them prior to policy is being done. She is concerned at money being spent on things. On MS-35 form that we create, she would like to see the previous years printed. Bob said it is written in the annual reports. It hasn't been a point of discussion in the past, Chief said. She feels that there is no discussion until after the fact is done. She has been coming to meetings but no discussion on anything other than big ticket items. Would like to see the MS-35's in the annual report. Tom recommended putting them on the web site. We could just scan it in. Gretchen continued with the hydrant shoveling. She feels the world is different and liability is different, it will be us caught with the expense if there is injury or an accident. Chief said it's a customer service issue for us. Tom said he agreed with us doing it. We have full time staff and we can do it effectively. Don Stevens said they had discussed with Ken Money years ago and Ken felt it was our job. Chief said that is why we shovel them because it is our problem. Chief said there has been a couple of times the water district to help us and they have come out with a loader to help us out. Gretchen would like a purchasing plan so that we are looking for savings. Don't always have multiple sources when looking for equipment but Monadnock Spring water at \$100 plus a month would still be there if she hadn't said something. Gretchen

continued that there was a purchase of a battery back up. Janine explained it was a battery back up for chief's computer. Gretchen stated she is angry and frustrated. She will continue to ask questions.

Tom asked for any other comments/questions. Janine asked Commissioners about Chief's contractual pay increase. It is in his contract to have a pay raise in January, 2008. Can it begin now or does she have to wait until District meeting. Tom motioned to pay his increase. As stated it is in his written contract that was signed by all 3 commissioners. Bob seconded. Discussion - none. All in favor, Bob and Tom approved. Kevin opposed. Motion passed.

Janine stated she was going to ask about paying the Plodzick and Sanderson bill but was told by Greg Colby that when the audit for 2007 is done, the payment would be looked at as a 2007 expense seeing we are doing audits on an accrual basis.

Kevin said a letter dated 11/12/07 from Water District to Chief, states several of the hydrants didn't meet those standards. What was the agreement that we have? We agreed that \$450 acceptable level for them to base the billing on. Chief thought that it was discussed with the commissioners, maybe not a vote but it was discussed. Tom said that it was on the table that \$450 was the agreed upon payment per hydrant. Kevin said he is not a party to that agreement. Tom said that he isn't versed enough in that to make that type of decision.

Kevin asked about Brad's blackberry cell phone. Chief stated it was damaged and not replaced. He has a phone that we had that was reactivated. Kevin asked about how it was damaged and Chief responded it got damaged at a call, was damaged by the vehicle. Kevin asked if the pocket calendars were corrected. Janine said yes and 20 additional copies were given to us at no extra charge. Kevin asked about the clerk's position job description. Janine had checked with sec of state's office and they indicated that we can have "responsibilities" described for any elected position and offer it to those who may want it as they are considering candidacy. She has copies ready for anyone coming in for clerk's position.

Kevin wanted to discuss his exceptions to the manifests. Alstart bill. Janine said the item was deleted, was sent to us in error. The Automatic Laundry bill, he felt if all they did was the bolting to the floor and the wall, he feels we got took. Chief stated there was a purchase of a base and they moved it into place, then drilled the holes for attaching to the floor and the walls. They will also setup the machine to have the controls working. There was a charge to Ben's that was reduced. Chief commented that a couple of members had gone over in their personal accounts, so they paid for that.

Kevin is very upset about the 2 computers that were bought and never discussed by anyone at any time. He wants more control over what is purchased. He feels that this isn't Chief's money. Maybe we should have a consultant come in. He is aggravated very greatly by it. It gets bought, used and then we get to pay for it. It shouldn't be used until paid for. Kevin felt we should we send the one computer not set up yet back. Chief said that would be a mistake. How can Chief budget for call fire fighters? Kevin said the call side of the department is another issue. Chief said there was \$17,000 in hydrants, \$10,000 in bank charges, we saved that money. He didn't expend that. He would have spent every dime. If we squeeze the budget too much, we could possibly be very close to over spending the budget. We had overages in both vehicle repair lines and felt that we would be over budget. We can't go into the last 3 months of the year with a definite idea of how much is left. Then in the last month, you can finally make some purchases. We were going to replace Bob's computer and then Janine's goes down, so buy two. Kevin said so if you have money, you spend it. Chief said he had held Brad back on buying that training item until it was sure the money would be there. Gretchen said then why did Brad buy his computer from fire prevention, shouldn't it be data processing. Chief stated that Brad had the money in his budget line and said he wanted to buy the computer with it. Kevin said he has a problem with the process. Chief asked why Kevin doesn't come into his office to discuss any problems he has with purchases. The \$6000 for the air bags were balanced. Tom feels it is micromanaging and Kevin feels it is not. Kevin said that Tom doesn't know what the items are the Apparatus & Equipment Fund budget. Ambulance billing, \$17,550. Then vehicle payments line is \$57,941, so the rest is all new fire equipment, EMS equipment and rescue equipment. And we don't know what those items are. He also contests the Mike Thevenin bill. Brad stated in that invoice Mike is also buying a router and licenses out of his own pocket. Tom said he is charging \$350 to set up the two computers. Janine explained the scanner feature that was added to the copier. It allows paper documents to be sent to email addresses as jpg files. The module also allows each computer on the network to send faxes right from that computer, which will save a lot of time especially for the EMS reports that need to be faxed to the hospitals. Will also reduce toner usage seeing faxing can be done electronically. It only scans in black and white, so that is why a regular scanner was also purchased so that color scanning could be done for training and other purposes.

The Northfield bill for the replacement of the gas pump was discussed before but the meeting ended abruptly and wasn't resolved. Chief didn't see a problem with paying it seeing we had the money left in the budget for 2007.

New business

Reviewed bills that Kevin had questions on. After review, all manifests signed by commissioners. Tom indicated that Sean

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Chandler, Esq. has taken over Charlie Chandler's law practice and Charlie has retired. He will stay on and help Sean out as "counsel". Tom read Charlie Chandler's Announcement into the record: "Chandler Law Office Announcement". "It is my distinct pleasure to announce that, on January 1, 2008, the ownership and operation of the Chandler Law Office will be assumed by my son, Sean T. Chandler, Esquire. It has been my honor to have served clients throughout central and northern New Hampshire since 1980. On January 2, 2008, I will be retiring and Sean will take over the day to day practice of law and perpetuate the name – Chandler Law Office. Sean has over fifteen years of legal experience with his most recent position being that of Deputy Director of the Office of Public Guardian. While I will not be actively involved in the day to day practice of law, I will nevertheless, remain "of counsel" to Sean and be in the office on a regular basis for that purpose. Charles W. Chandler, Esquire".

Tom also read into the record a letter of 12/27/07 addressed to Chief Steve Adams from Chief Carrier. "Dear Chief Adams, I would like to take the opportunity to point out the work of two of your personnel at the scene of a recent building fire we tended to on Scribner Road. Corporal John Rafaely and Officer Michael Hutchinson were of great assistance to our personnel that evening. More than one firefighter has come to me to point out the cooperative spirit shown by your men that night. It was pointed out to me that above and beyond the regular police duties necessitated by a building fire during a snowstorm, Officer Hutchinson assisted in securing the supply line as it was laid in the driveway and Corporal Rafaely assisted in rolling 4" hose. You don't know how much this was appreciated on a night like that. It is refreshing to have the type of working relationship that was displayed that night – and on many other nights that have gone unnoticed. We look forward to working with your department at many more incidents and we really appreciated the help. Keep up the good work!"

Hour being 8:40 Tom called meeting to move into non public session per RSA 91-A:3 II.a., Kevin seconded. All in favor, Bob aye, Kevin aye, Tom aye.

Back in public session Tom made a motion to keep the Nov. 29, Dec 4 and Dec 18th nonpublic minutes sealed in their entirety. Kevin seconded. Tom motioned, per request from Kevin, that we consider keeping the minutes of the Oct. 18th meeting from its convening hour at 5:37pm through the sentence ending "all 3 commissioners voted unanimously to wait ..." to remain sealed. The balance of the minutes from October 18, 2007 to be unsealed. Seconded by Kevin. Discussion: none. Tom said we will let the motion stand. All in favor of the motion, unanimously approved by all commissioners.

Kevin said there was new law passed earlier this year to allow towns to appoint their treasurer rather than have that position elected. He didn't know if we wanted to present this to the voters. Kevin asked for opinions. Tom felt that appointing you have to know who is out there. It's a tough job to get someone in the position. He believes that we haven't addressed the hiring of someone to help Janine in her duties. He doesn't feel we have to go to the body to hire a part time secretary; you could make a case for doing that. Just like a case for the treasurer's pay or the commissioners pay. We really haven't resolved the problem with the clerk. Tom doesn't have an opinion one way or another. If it comes to a point to run anymore, anyone who wants the job. Bob doesn't have a problem with appointing the treasurer's position. Tom said we need to explain to Roland that is not an affront to him. Kevin will look into the use of the unreserved fund balance. Tom said we need to meet again to formalize the warrant. He and Kevin will work on warrant articles next Thursday night. Tom motioned to adjourn at 9:06PM and Kevin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janine L. Vary, Secretary

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

February 21, 2008 at 18:00 at Center Street Station