

## Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	April 22, 2010 at 18:02
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton School, new Academic Building, School Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 213, Tilton

Commissioner Gallant called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Present from the Board: Commissioners Paul Auger, Pat Clark and Tom Gallant.

Also Present: Chief Stephen Carrier, Deputy Chief Mike Robinson, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine; Firefighters: Captain Brad Ober, Captain David Hall, Lieutenant Tim Ames, Jon Powell; Selectman Geoffrey Ziminsky; Public: Lisa Swancott, Gretchen Wilder, Bill Wilder; Reporter: Donna Rhodes (Winnisquam Echo).

### Public Comment

Lisa Swancott came regarding the overtime line. She asked if there was a way to break it out as it is not broken out on the Operating Budget vs Actual report.

Chief Carrier replied it is not broken out on that report as it is a subaccount. We can get the information to her.

Commissioner Gallant went over what was included in the overtime line.

Lisa stated it seems large. She asked if there is a better way to manage the Fire District so this can be reduced. It seems like a lot of money for overtime. She asked if they have looked at a better way to manage it. She wanted to know if they looked at using call people to help cover vacancies.

Chief Carrier responded that they have talked about this quite extensively in the past. We can't guarantee the call firefighters will always be available. We can guarantee full-time employees.

Discussion ensued about using call firefighters vs. career.

Commissioner Auger stated that he has inquired with other departments on how they handle the situation. He is working on it. He personally feels it is high.

Jeff Ziminsky asked if call firefighters have been used for that purpose in the last six months.

Chief Carrier stated not in the past two years. Further discussion ensued.

Lisa Swancott asked if the meeting next week is open to the public. Commissioner Gallant responded it is.

Commissioner Gallant asked if it wasn't Franklin Fire Departments policy when someone is out they don't fill that shift because they run a four man crew.

Chief Carrier responded that they run three man shifts if someone is out.

Chief Carrier asked Lisa if she wanted the overtime breakdown emailed to her.

She said yes and gave the Chief her email address.

Jeff Ziminsky, Northfield Board of Selectmen, asked the Commissioners if they would approve the Chief attending one of the selectmen's meeting a month. They would like to work more closely with him over the coming year to build up relationship. He had talked with the Chief about this but felt they should ask them.

Commissioner Clark commented this was perfect timing as it's on their list of goals.

Jeff Ziminsky intends to come as often as he can to meetings. He stated Chief Carrier is okay with attending their meetings.

Discussion ensued about which meeting would be best for the Chief to attend. Jeff Ziminsky gave the Chief suggestions of what to bring to the meetings.

Gretchen Wilder got some copies of the meeting for March 18<sup>th</sup>. She wanted clarification regarding the paramedic school request. She noticed there was some discussion on it. No one mentioned cost. She wanted to know how much was in training. Discussion ensued. Gretchen brought up the training agreement. Gretchen commented on how Manchester, Concord and Bedford handle their costs for education. Pay was questioned.

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Commissioner Clark stated he wants to minimize the hostility. He asked Gretchen to provide the Commissioners with her information.

Commissioner Gallant stated it is a matter of record that the year 2010 will cost the District \$2,621; 2011 will be \$7,585 and 2012 will be \$2,233. However, it went on to say he will be transferring credits in an Associates Degree in Fire Science therefore drastically reducing costs.

Brad Ober stated he wanted to bring to the attention of the Commissioners the lawsuit that has been filed by the Professional Firefighters of NH against the Local Government Center. They are claiming LGC has surplus money that should have been turned back. They believe that the amount is \$135,000,000. Discussion ensued.

Brad Ober stated the other thing the PFF Local would like to talk to them about is the Wage & Benefit Study. They would like to offer to help by providing information from other sources and to help them come to a conclusion with that study.

### **Correspondence**

Copies of the Budget Committee appointment letters were received from Kent Finemore. He reappointed Donnie Stevens and Vicki Virgin for three years.

### **Minutes**

#### March 18<sup>th</sup>

Commissioner Clark made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion was carried unanimously.

#### March 18<sup>th</sup> & March 31<sup>st</sup> Non-Public

Commissioner Gallant stated these minutes will be discussed in non-public session.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The reports were reviewed.

Commissioner Gallant asked how many payments have been received from Tilton and Northfield. Kathy responded that Northfield made their first quarter payment in March and Tilton has paid through April.

Chief Carrier commented that what stood out for him is the vehicle maintenance and repairs. This is a result of the ladder truck being repaired.

Commissioner Gallant asked how many payments we have received from Comstar in ambulance charges.

Kathy responded that we have received three months. They make the deposits at the end of the month.

Commissioner Gallant commented on the Balance Sheet.

Lisa Swancott asked why the net income does not match.

Commissioner Gallant replied that he does not know where he gets those numbers. He will follow up with Roland on that.

### **Chief's Report**

Chief Carrier reported it was pretty straight forward for April. He attended the EFO Graduate Symposium at the National Fire Academy. One of the topics was on strategic planning. The Superintendent of the Fire Academy spoke about what the fire service is doing to itself and negative publicity. He actually gave some examples. The final session of the weekend was based on a book written by a Harvard professor.

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The NH Association of Fire Chiefs annual meeting was the NH Fire Academy. He was able to work with the academy and they followed up on the seminar the guys had on cyanide poisoning. That went over very well. They had about 50 people attend.

He had a breakfast meeting with Chief Cormier and Chief Adams. They talked about 911 addressing and street light issues in Northfield.

He walked the newly proposed portion of the Winnepesaukee River Trail with contractors and Town officials.

The Ladder is back in service. The inspections are done and they still have the problem with the pump seal on Engine 3.

Looking forward, they will be discussing the Strategic Plan tonight. He has requested the District be resurveyed by ISO. He is in the process of starting the paperwork. One of the things he noticed is they don't have the water system mapped correctly. We are not getting credit for any of that.

They are sprucing up Park Street. The Deputy has been heading that up.

A big deal for us lately has been trying to improve attendance at training. We are not hiring in our EMS training and are handling it ourselves. The shift officer is handling that. We have moved our fire training to Wednesday nights. A couple of the call officers and some call members requested it. We are trying it for six months to see how it works out.

Commissioner Auger asked Chief Carrier if covering shift was for one shift or more than one and if there is any way he could put the dates on there.

Commissioner Auger asked what the reasoning was behind switching of the Monday night to Wednesday night.

Chief Carrier replied that some people were having difficulty with Monday nights.

Commissioner Clark asked if they had seen a marked improvement in attendance by doing this. Deputy Robinson replied that they have only had two sessions on Wednesday night.

Lisa Swancott asked what the street light issues are in Northfield.

Chief Carrier responded that there had been some talk about them at the Selectmen's meeting.

The activity log is fairly interesting in the past month. The medical aid calls are down to 56. This isn't necessarily unusual for this time period but the total stayed up around 123. This is around average for the month. We are staying fairly active. The first two months were a little more active than normal. Fire calls were up and ambulance calls were down in March.

### **Fire Prevention Report**

Captain Ober reported they continue to work with Spaulding on the corrective plan of action. They met with a representative from the DHHS. They are working on fire drills and coding of residences to see what kind of response they do.

There has been a couple of interesting things with properties. Tanger and Kohl's have been experiencing sprinkler system issues. Kohl's is under way of getting the water supply tank repaired. Tanger is in the process of abandoning the pond and hooking into the water district for that.

The high school wood chip plant has begun. They have the area fenced off.

The hydrant system on West Main has been completed. They assisted with a couple flow tests. The flows are in the 1200 gallon range. Jenson Park is around 900 gallons. This is a huge improvement.

He attended a seminar in Gilford on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was on fire investigation and called Zero to Hero. It will be a useful tool.

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**Old Business**

Web Site

Captain Ober reported that we have switched our email onto our server. We have moved the website to our server. Brian Dumpka is working with Tim Pearson to finalize the website. We are closer to moving it over. We are on target for the June 1<sup>st</sup> date.

**New Business**

Sole Source Purchasing Requests

**Bergeron Protective Clothing.** Tim Joubert submitted a request to continue to use Bergeron as our sole source supplier for our protective clothing. We are happy with the gear and service. Commissioner Clark made a motion to use Bergeron Protective Clothing as our sole source provider for 2010. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion.  
Discussion: Commissioner Clark asked if these items could be purchased from others and who would they be. Chief Carrier explained. Accessories can be purchased elsewhere. We have had excellent luck with Bergeron. Captain Hall spoke for Tim Joubert. He keeps up on the gear. Nothing jumps out that says we should switch gear. There isn't any other gear out there that we should switch too. The gear itself is the expensive part. Commissioner Auger asked how long we have been with Globe. Chief Carrier replied we switched and went to Cairns but then the price went up and they went back to Globe. Deputy Robinson commented that all that was priced and this was the best price. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion was carried unanimously.

Purchasing requests

**Request for two medications refrigerators for our ambulances.** There are two intravenous drugs that are used at the Paramedic level that are required to be refrigerated. This will be purchased from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. The cost is \$103.60 each plus \$19.39 for mounting hardware for a total of \$245.90. Commissioner Auger asked what we did before. Chief Carrier replied that we didn't carry the drug. He then explained how protocols are constantly changing. Commissioner Auger made a motion to approve the purchase. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion.  
There being further discussion, vote was taken. Motion was carried unanimously.

**Request for a slide out tray for Engine 2.** Chief Carrier stated this is new equipment for the portable pump that sits in the rear compartment of Engine 2. He then explained how this will help with moving the portable pump. This will be purchased from the Apparatus & Equipment. Commissioner Auger asked how often the pump is used. Captain Hall replied the pump is not used very often; however, it is taken out once a week to be run and checked. Commissioner Gallant made a motion to purchase the slide out tray from LMR Fabricators for \$450.96. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion.  
Discussion: Commissioner Auger asked where LMR Fabricators are located. Captain Ober replied in Ashland. Commissioner Auger asked how long the truck will be down. Chief Carrier responded less than a day.  
There being further discussion, vote was taken. Motion was carried unanimously.

**Request for cases and mounts on defibrillators.** Chief Carrier explained why new cases and mounts are needed. These will be purchased out of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Commissioner Gallant made a motion to authorize the purchase of items covered in Captain Michaud's memo. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.  
Discussion: Commissioner Clark is of the opinion he would like to talk with Captain Michaud before voting on it. He would like to look at what they have. Chief Carrier stated defibrillators are the most critical piece of equipment on the ambulance. They are carried in on 50% of calls. Commissioner Auger stated he was a little confused as well. He would like to see what we have as well. He asked if Greg would come to the next meeting to explain.

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There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Commissioner Gallant for, Commissioners Auger and Clark against.

Commissioner Clark stated he wants to bring it back again. He wants to look at it. He wants to know where the other \$900 is going to come from. Chief Carrier explained that something would suffer for it. Jeff Ziminsky asked if he would use the same logic should this come up in October and they hadn't know anything about it. Would they make the decision not to go forward with it? What would be the decision process? Chief Carrier replied he would look at the bottom line and buy as much as possible. Commissioner Clark made a motion to bring it back to the table. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. 2 yea, 1 nay. Commissioner Auger voted no, Commissioner Clark had questions. We will ask Captain Michaud to come in next month to answer their questions.

#### Health Insurance for Tim Ames

Commissioner Gallant stated we have a request for approval to increase the 2 Person Plan to the Family Plan. He read the request. Commissioner Gallant spoke to it. He stated the intent was to grandfather employees to the time of the change. To the extent of his request, Tim is correct. Commissioner Clark asked for Tim to step them through this. Tim stated when he was hired he was offered the family plan if needed. Shortly after that Mike Sommeret retired. At that time the commission decided new employees would be offered the single plan. He and Gina Thompson went to the board and asked for clarification. They were told they would maintain the plan offered when hired. Further discussion ensued about whether Tim was entitled to the increase in coverage. Vote was taken, decision was unanimous.

#### Goals & Objectives

Commissioner Clark read each list of goals and objectives provided by each Commissioner. Commissioner Gallant had ten, Commission Auger had four and Commissioner Clark had ten. Chief Carrier and Deputy Robinson came up with goals as well. Commissioner Clark recommended they put them all together to see what can be combined together, prioritize them and pick out the top 10. The whole goal was to come up with a strategic plan. He will put them together and bring them back to next meeting. He feels that as commissioners they should be taking a look at going from a strategic plan to an operational plan.

#### Strategic Plan

Chief Carrier stated the strategic plan he started is very basic and in a very rough draft. It is loosely based on Milford's strategic plan. It starts out with an introduction of who we are and what we do. He needs to expand on the District. It restates our mission. It restates our vision and values. He did an overall on the history of the District. There is some data on major fires. They will use this in probationary packet as well. The last section is services to the District. Discussion ensued.

Chief pointed out there are many different forms and formats for strategic plans. It is a more comprehensive report to understand and to try to reach out to the community. Commissioner Gallant is happy to see it coming back.

Lisa asked if the International Firefighters Association looked at just firefighter needs or do they look at costs. Commissioner Clark responded they can certainly tie the wage and benefit study in. Communication is key.

Tom said they look forward to that next month.

#### Code of Ethics

Chief Carrier put together a Code of Ethics as a result of the conversation they had last month. The Commissioners need to review and endorse it. The Commissioners would be subject to the Code of Ethics as well. Chief Carrier briefly explained how he came to this. He was exposed to a few different ones. One was for firefighters specifically. One was for fire chiefs. He came across this one. It

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seemed the best one. It hits all of the highlights, the categories they want to hit when talking about the Code of Ethics. Conflict of interest was discussed. It was decided that the Commissioners would take it home to review and bring back next month.

**Other Business**

Captain Ober asked if there was any specific information they would like to see on the employee bios for the website. Commissioner Gallant replied that he is looking for their educational background, what makes them special and an asset to the department. He would like it if there was enough there so people can get a sense of who they are. Anything they do that makes them different. Commissioner Clark stated that when the community reads that they will have a better feel for who you are as people. We want them to have a sense that you are extremely capable at what you do. We also want them to have a sense of knowing who you are personally. Donna Rhodes commented that we wanted to make it personal but not too personal.

Captain Ober also asked if it was for just the career people or should include the call company. Commissioner Gallant replied that it should include the call company as well. He asked Deputy Robinson to discuss this with the call company to see how they felt about it.

An annual picnic was discussed. Deputy Robinson commented that we do have an annual Christmas get together. Captain Ober asked if was for the fire department or an open house. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Clark suggested that we ask for community feedback. His cousin was Chief of Police in Minnesota. He had a feedback card from everybody the officers dealt with. There was a marked improvement in terms of performance of the policemen in the police department and there was a marked improvement in community appreciation and people calling in when they saw neighborhood watch problems. It was a plus, plus on both sides. Chief Carrier recommended making it one of the goals.

Commissioner Gallant made a motion to go into non-public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II(a). Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion roll call vote was taken: Pat Clark, yes; Paul Auger, yes; Tom Gallant, yes.  
At 8:19 PM they have gone out of public session.

Commissioner Gallant stated they are back in public session at 8:59 PM.

Commissioner Gallant made a motion that the minutes of the non-public sessions remain non-public. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Clark asked why we don't make them public. He wants to take them out of non-public and make them public.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to unseal the non-public minutes. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner Gallant made a motion that we keep the minutes non-public and review all three sets of minutes again next month. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Clark wants to review RSA on non-public to find out what constitutes whether we can keep them non-public. Commissioner Gallant recommended he read RSA 91-A. When you are dealing with employees it is extremely important that it stay non-public. That is about the only thing that will stand on its own. The motion covers everything because they are going to review all three of them next month to determine whether they stay non-public or become public.

There being no further discussion, vote was taken. The vote was unanimous. The minutes of the meeting tonight as well as March 18<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> shall remain non-public.

**Bills**

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Manifest

On the last manifest Commission Auger had crossed out Sanels but he released the payment. He did this to remind everyone to that they need to use the vehicle the parts are for as the purchase order number so we know what the parts were purchased for.

By-Laws

The Commissioners signed the By-Laws so they could be filed with the NH Secretary of State's office pursuant to RSA 52:24.

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine  
Administrative Assistant

**Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:** May 20, 2010 at 18:00. Meeting to be held at Tilton School, new Academic Building, School Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 213, Tilton.