

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Work Session

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	June 8, 2011 at 17:45
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM.

Present: Commissioners Tom Gallant, Paul Auger and Patrick Clark; Chief Brad Ober, Deputy Chief Mike Robinson and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine.

Commissioner Auger stated the meeting tonight is on the Goals & Objectives of the Commissioners and Chief Ober.

Correspondence

Commissioner Gallant requested they review the letter dated May 19th from the Town of Tilton regarding the generators. He read the letter.

Dear Chief Ober:

Thank you for your letter of May 10, 2011 requesting a waiver of the NH Veteran's Home building permit fee in exchange for a donation of two (2) existing emergency stand-by generators to the TN Fire Department. The Board discussed your request at our Selectmen's meeting on May 12, 2011 and voted in favor of waiving the building permit fee subject to the following conditions:

- 1. If it is discovered that the TN Fire & EMS cannot utilize both generators and therefore does not take ownership, the generators would remain the property of Turnstone Corporation and the Town of Tilton will enforce their original permit fee for this project; and*
- 2. The TN Fire & EMS donate one of these generators to the Town of Tilton. The generator would then become the property of the Town of Tilton and would be used as an emergency generator by our Town Departments.*

We would appreciate receiving more detailed information on the generators as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly for its use. Please let us know if these conditions are acceptable to the TN Fire Commissioners.

Commissioner Gallant explained he talked with Joyce Fulweiler. She and Dennis Allen have spoken. They are making the recommendation to the Selectmen to let the Fire Department take the generators. They don't have a need for them. We have a use for both of them. If we are willing to write a letter to that effect she is sure they will go along with it. Commissioner Clark what the total cost of the permit fees is. Commissioner Gallant replied \$3,000. Discussion ensued about the use of the generators.

Commissioner Clark made a motion that we write a letter to the Tilton Board of Selectmen to go along with Dennis and Joyce to keep both generators for TNFD use. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. Commissioner Auger stated we should put in the letter that one will be used at Center Street, one at Park Street. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gallant will draft the letter and email to Kathy to print on letterhead. The Commissioners will sign it at the meeting next week.

Chief's Evaluation

Commissioner Clark suggested they look at the evaluation for the Chief first as the Goals & Objectives will take some time. They will take more than one meeting. All agreed.

Commissioner Clark stated he had read the Chief's objectives before. He did not read the memo Chief Ober wrote on the 25th until last week. He's assuming he is already doing some of it. Chief Ober replied some is on going, some is finished and some has not even started yet.

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Commissioner Clark said residency hasn't even been started. He highlighted the four things they, as Commissioners, decided their focus was going to be before they even hired someone in terms of evaluating them. Commissioner Clark recommended the following:

1. Use the Chief's goals in the memo of May 25th and compare those to what Commissioner Clark had already handed out that the Commissioners had listed. They dovetail together nicely.
2. Fine tune the goals by having some way to measure them to show improvement. Commissioner Auger asked if Chief Ober had not already done what Commissioner Clark wanted. Commissioner Gallant stated he had. It is already in there. Discussion ensued.
3. Commissioner Clark requested they look at training. Looking at the memo dated the 25th number 4 on page 2 reads *To improve Call force enrollment and activity level. The attendance to department trainings has improved. We still struggle with attendance of Call FF's to calls and other activities. A few examples – the Open House only attracted 4 Call members; a well in-advance scheduled training at the Fire Academy (with two dates to choose) and with Franklin FD had very minimal attendance from any Call member.* Commissioner Gallant recommended they look at page 2 *Balance Career and Call* of Chief Ober's Goals and Objectives. Commissioner Clark agrees there is a lot of good information in there. What he's talking about is what they will look at at the end of three months to see improvement. Chief Ober replied they can look at attendance rosters. They will see a gradual increase in Monday night trainings. Commissioner Clark wants it spelled out clearly. Commissioner Gallant requests this form be kept up to date. Commissioner Clark wants a clear understanding of what his method is to improve training. He wants it spelled out in writing. Chief Ober says what he's talking about is day-to-day department operations. They have monthly officers meeting. The training schedule is projected out three months. They are always looking at this. It's always being talked about. He can't focus a lot of time and energy to this. Commissioner Auger stated this has always been recorded. Chief Ober explained incentives are in place. He believes they will see an increase from the first to second quarter. Deputy Robinson agreed. Chief Ober said the data is collected. Commissioner Clark wants to see it in writing. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Gallant requested the memo be kept up-to-date and sent to them monthly or quarterly. Chief Ober stated to measure how things are going they need to get feedback directly from staff. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Auger brought up the Explorer program Franklin has. It is the greatest thing in the world and he wishes we had something like that here. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Clark stated he wants data to look at. Chief Ober stated some of it he won't be able to get data from. Deputy Robinson gave example of Chief Ober giving him the project of increasing call company activity for training. Discussion ensued. Deputy Robinson requested they give them a goal, don't micromanage. Commissioner Clark stated he wasn't micromanaging. Commissioner Gallant told him he was. Chief Ober stated change is happening every day. Discussion ensued.
4. Performance evaluations were discussed. Chief Ober stated performance evaluations are just that. You are measuring performance and at the same time measuring attitude. Commissioner Clark wants it done frequently. Chief Ober stated they are not going to be interested in completing this form all the time. Commissioner Auger asked Commissioner Clark if he felt that was important to have. Commissioner Clark stated that data is important to have. He needs to get that feedback. For him to evaluate Chief Ober he needs this. Deputy Robinson said they are reporting on a regular basis with the monthly Chief's report, the Deputy's input, the weekly InfoBlast. They are picking away at their goals. The Chief reports on them.

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Commissioner Auger asked if the info Commissioner Clark is asking for is important. Commissioner Clark replied it is to him.

Commissioner Gallant stated things are different now. Steve Carrier and Chief Ober are different type of managers. Their philosophy in managing is different.

Chief Ober stated you need to find the balance. Know who you are talking to and what their needs are. Attitude from the corner office filters down. The corner office is Chief Ober, Deputy Robinson and Captain Joubert eventually.

Commissioner Clark stated the only thing he is harping on is the data. He needs the data. Deputy Robinson stated as they are working on the goals ask, they will update him.

Commissioner Clark wants to call firefighters and find out why they are not attending training.

Commissioner Gallant and Commissioner Auger both said this is not their job. Commissioner Auger stated it is Chief Ober's job to lead the Department. It is their job to watch the Chief and the Deputy. They don't need to know what happened to Joe Shmoe. He doesn't need to go to them. They need to go to the Chief.

Commissioner Gallant stated the chain of command is first the Chief, then Deputy Robinson.

Commissioner Clark doesn't care if he asks the questions or hands the form out to firefighters. He doesn't mind doing that. Discussion ensued.

Chief Ober said the 360 Assessment is designed for the candidate to fill out on him/herself and then peers at the same level and then a supervisor. Most candidates evaluate themselves harder than another person does. Then you compare them. Discussion ensued.

5. Commissioner Clark brought up the residency requirement. Chief Ober stated there hasn't been a discussion on that yet. He wants some input from the Board. He asked what they are looking for. Commissioner Auger asked if this was just the Chief's position or everybody's. Commissioner Clark stated everybody's. Commissioner Auger would like to know what the surrounding areas do. When they hired the Chief it was that he lives within a certain radius. Commissioner Gallant stated it was vague and indicated that it would be determined some time in the future. Commissioner Clark said Franklin has a 5-1/2 mile radius from the station. Whatever they want to determine. Having a map in front of them is a good thing to do. Commissioner Gallant said the policy needs to be subjective. Deputy Robinson said in the past they never even encouraged it, never asked the question. Commissioner Gallant stated it has never been a factor. Commissioner Clark stated when they hired Brad it was with the understanding that he would be a resident within 18 months. Discussion ensued.

Chief Ober stated that operationally it is better to have full time staff available to come back for calls. They need to support that. They must be willing to pay them. It's not just as easy as saying okay you have to live here. A lot of spin offs happen with that. It is okay to say that but it isn't said about a school teacher, a highway worker, a cops. Commissioner Clark stated he has never looked at that. Chief Ober stated that when you look at defining or just having a kind of encouragement of a residency deal you should look at to see what benefit they will get. Commissioner Clark said operationally if they live within the community you will have more people showing up for a fire. He brought up training. Chief Ober stated we currently don't have a training policy for full time personnel. Commissioner Gallant stated it will affect overtime.

Deputy Robinson said they see more permanent people coming back for training since Brad has been Chief.

Commissioner Gallant stated he and Commissioner Auger don't need to see the numbers. This representation is good for them.

Commissioner Auger asked how many young people. Young people are more active. The older you get the less active you are. He asked what ages applied for the full-time positions. Chief Ober stated the ages were in the mid 20s. A few years ago it was 19-20. Commissioner Auger said it is very seldom to see someone in their 30's come in. If they do they are coming in for a higher rank. When they leave, they leave for another reason. It may be money.

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Commissioner Gallant said we are trying not to be the training ground we have been in the past. Chief Ober said the key is to not nail residency down. If there is a happy medium between specific to generalized. We need to lighten up on the call back policy. Deputy Robinson says make it topic of discussion. Commissioner Clark says if we leave the option open either way they won't want to move. Chief Ober said to leave the current staff as is. If you sweeten the pot, have a better call back policy that might be enough for them to move back. When you look at residency policy you need to look at operations. Commissioner Clark wants to see a residency requirement on new hires. Wherever it is decided the Chief lives, that is the radius firefighters live in. Franklin residency requirement discussed. Chief Ober stated there has been talk about loosening the requirements on that.

Commissioner Clark thinks picking out three criteria from the areas they are looking at to concentrate on. He believes that in order to make an evaluation they need the data to prove it. Commissioner Gallant asked Chief Ober to give Commissioner Clark data. Deputy Robinson asked them to give that as goal for this year. Commissioner Clark says he doesn't see it as a big deal. Commissioner Gallant and Commissioner Auger do not see the need as it is micromanaging. Commissioner Auger said all he needs to know is if morale is up or down. Commissioner Gallant said all you have to do is walk in the station and see the change in mood. Commissioner Gallant and Commissioner Auger overrode Commissioner Clark in data requirements.

Commissioner Gallant and Commissioner Auger want to have surrounding towns up to Meredith and finding out their residency requirements. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Gallant stated that Chief Ober is more resident now than Carrier was in seven years. It's because he gets out of that corner office.

Commissioner Gallant stated the one thing the Commissioners felt Carrier failed on was he was not a resident. His off time concerns were in Gilford. This department wouldn't be where it is by a long shot had it not been for Carrier's insight and oversight for the last seven years.

Commissioner Gallant doesn't care about residency as long as they participate in the community. Commissioner Clark feels having a residency requirement is a positive thing. Commissioner Gallant says it needs to be subjective.

Commissioner Gallant suggested Chief Ober take ball and run. Poll the surrounding departments for their residency requirements. Discussion ensued. Chief Ober said he will try to put data to 1 2 and 3.

Chief Ober asked if he was getting input from the officers on a specific evaluation form. He asked which form they will be using to get input from the officers of the department. The Board needs to be clear on what they want him to do.

Deputy Robinson said his gut reaction is that the 360 Assessment shouldn't go to the employees. Commissioner Gallant stated the 360 Assessment should be done by them.

Both Commissioner Gallant and Auger agreed that Commissioner Clark will not go talk to the men. Commissioner Clark stated he is trying to come up with a way to evaluate the Chief that is going to be honest and fair and get the information they are looking for. He wants to know if things are getting better between call and full time firefighters. Deputy Robinson said that was a good question. Commissioner Clark said he can't do that. He sees management getting feedback from the staff people toward management. That's good feedback to get.

Commissioner Clark is more than willing to come up with a list of questions and go over them with Chief. He feels they need to get the feedback from people that are working in the department. Commissioner Gallant stated that he should go over them with the Deputy. The Chief is uncomfortable with it. He has said that from the beginning. The Deputy is the one that said 60 questions is too much.

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It was agreed that Commissioner Clark would come up with a list of questions and go over them with the Deputy.

Chief Ober will try to provide data to support what's going on in the top three.

Adjournment

Commissioner Gallant made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Vote was unanimous to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 19:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: June 15, 2011 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main Street, Tilton.