

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Budget Work Session

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	September 6, 2011 at 17:30
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Present: Commissioners Tom Gallant, Paul Auger and Patrick Clark; Chief Brad Ober, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine and Selectman Joe Jesseman.

2012 Budget

Chief Ober brought up his memo. It is pretty aggressive.

Commissioner Auger stated they will start at the beginning with training.

Training Tuition Expenses

Commissioner Clark asked how he came up with \$15,000. Chief Ober stated this is the total for training including the paramedic program. He believes \$7,500 is more realistic year-to-year after we reach our goal with the paramedics. Commissioner Auger asked how many more. Chief Ober replied one for now. They would like to have one per shift.

Chief Ober explained they are looking at the Elliot as alternative to NHTI for a couple of reasons. NHTI has had a 7% increase in tuition. If student doesn't have the general education credits to transfer in we can't afford the program time wise or tuition wise. The Elliot program, in years past when we first started this, did not have the best reputation. He's talked with students who have recently graduated. The program is doing much better. It is 18 months start to finish. They meet one day a week for classroom. The advantage is the tuition is \$9,000 for the 18 month period as opposed to \$9,000 per year. This is about half the cost. We should definitely look at that as an alternative. Chief Ober stated that he has started a grant application today for paramedic training.

64% of EMS Related Overtime Expenses

Chief Ober stated that in "thinking outside the box" he would like to fund 64% of the training and extra duty overtime expenses through the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Commissioner Gallant asked what makes him think these types of expenses could be covered under the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Chief Ober stated he believes we have to get a vote to change the purpose of the fund. Commissioner Gallant wanted to know if we can expand it to cover that. Chief Ober explained Kathy has sent a memo to DRA asking this question.

Commissioner Gallant doesn't believe it can be allowed. Commissioner Clark wants to look into it more before proceeding. Chief Ober says the intent has to be changed to include. Commissioner Gallant wants to know what type of grounds can be used to cover these types of operational expenses. Chief Ober said our training is mostly EMS related. The overtime expenses can be directly related to EMS coverage. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Clark questioned reducing training down to \$7,500. Discussion ensued. Chief Ober explained if we don't have a student in the paramedic program \$7,500 should cover training costs.

Capital Improvement Plan

Commissioner Clark brought up the CIP. Chief Ober stated one of the proposals the Commissioners will be getting once the Ladder Committee is done is a request to purchase a quint and in doing so, either through the purchase of that or when the vehicle is due for replacement, don't replace Engine 2. With the purchase of a quint, we will be able to downsize the fleet by one engine. Commissioner Clark stated he is concerned that by eliminating Engine 2 it gives you the money you need to fund training. How do you justify taking an engine out. Chief Ober replied the quint takes the place of two. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Auger asked about the cost. Chief Ober replied approximately

TNFD Commissioner's Meeting
September 6, 2011

\$675,000. Commissioner Auger asked what is in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Chief Ober replied we should end the year with approximately \$490,000. Commissioner Auger asked if there would be enough money in there to buy one by then. Chief Ober recommended we go for it at District meeting in 2012. Order it in August or Sept of 2012. The final payment will be in the Spring of 2013. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Clark wants to reflect the trend of revenues on the CIP. He wants to reflect the quint at 25 years for replacement. Commissioner Gallant doesn't feel we have been low balling revenue in budget. Chief Ober responded only on the CIP but not in the budget. The only thing he can do on the CIP is bump it up a little bit to show a more accurate. He just doesn't want to predict too much. Commissioner Gallant explained when looking at the CIP you are looking at the spread over the years when you are going to replace equipment. How you pay for it is another matter. The only year you need to be in sync is on current the year's budget and CIP. Chief Ober stated the CIP is just a tool for planning purposes. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Clark wants to check out the RSA's to make sure it you can use the Apparatus & Equipment Fund for training and extra duty overtime expenses. He doesn't want to shift money out to find out we are short on equipment. Chief Ober stated he and the officers have evaluated our equipment. They feel they are in a position now where they have caught up and can start scaling back. They are at the point now to maintain what we have. This provides healthier balance in Apparatus & Equipment Fund.

Commissioner Gallant doesn't think you can cover these things in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. He does think you can amend the purpose and set a cap based on your CIP and make transfers from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund to the General Fund to offset taxes. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Gallant wholeheartedly agrees with eliminating Engine 2 and replacing the ladder with a quint. Chief Ober explained that with our size department and the areas we cover he couldn't justify purchasing a ladder. The quint would service our needs very well. Franklin and Belmont have a ladder and tower should we need one and we would have the quint should they need one. Commissioner Clark asked the length of the quint. Chief Ober replied the minimum is 75'. Discussion ensued.

Discussion ensued about transferring money from Apparatus & Equipment Fund to the Operating Account to offset taxes. Discussion ensued about capping the amount you carry in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund.

Pressurized Hydrants

Chief Ober recommended they come up with a plan. He came up with a proposal. This is a responsible way to those control costs. It's unrealistic to wait for the bond to be paid off and see a spike in decrease. He feels a \$10,000 increase in anybody's budget is easily attained. Last year getting the cap was a good start. It's a hot topic and will continue to be. Commissioner Clark asked if they floated bond to buy. He would like to know when that is up.

Chief Ober stated the Water Department charges any building that has a sprinkler system a certain fee per sprinkler head. He was questioned why a certain building was not putting in a sprinkler system. He thinks it's interesting that they are pursuing that. Tanger Outlet just came on line with them last fall. They are paying a hefty fee for that. \$125,000 is too much to pay for pressurized hydrants. He proposes reducing the amount by \$10,000 per year. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Clark asked if the Public Utilities Commission had anything to do with what we are charged for hydrants. Commissioner Gallant said no longer. There is no State agency controlling the rates. It doesn't exist. No one else is controlling the rates. Commissioner Auger agreed that over time the rates could be reduced. He suggested the Commissioners should sit down with them again. Discussion ensued. The Commissioners requested that Chief Ober get the contact the Water Department and ask that they be first on their agenda for their next meeting.

Commissioner Gallant feels the hydrant charge should bottom out at \$50,000. Commissioner Clark agreed. He requested Chief Ober redo his chart for the meeting showing the \$50,000 as the bottom amount. Commissioner Gallant stated they are not for profit. Commissioner Clark asked if any one can

TNFD Commissioner's Meeting
September 6, 2011

review their books. Commissioner Gallant stated if you are a user you can. To be a user you must live in the Water District. He then went on to say that we account for 40% of their budget but don't we get a vote because we are not a user.

Goals & Objectives

Chief Ober stated that last March he had listed two specific objectives. They are pretty aggressive. He will admit that.

1. Adding 4th Shift. All he is proposing is they hire one more full time employee. Because of the Kelly Day situation, he is proposing they transfer those two Kelly Day positions to the 4th shift and hire one firefighter. This reduces the work week. It is the last one of the biggest pieces of the puzzle in order to become competitive. Benefits and schedule were pieces of the puzzle. The benefits package was last year. Our schedule is last biggest piece of the puzzle. His proposal is not starting until the last half of 2012. This figure is the worst case scenario as far as the benefit package. It is for a family plan.
2. Career Deputy Chief. As far as department administration and operations go is another key as to what the department needs. He fully believes that they can promote the position of Fire Prevention Captain to Deputy and combine the positions. He would recommend hiring a part time inspector for two days a week if we get another building boom. Commissioner Clark asked about hiring anyone to fill the Deputy Chief position. Chief Ober said they would promote from within. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Clark asked how a 42 hour work week will affect the overtime budget. Currently overtime is given after 48 hrs. Chief Ober explained the overtime hours worked will go up but the money will not. Commissioner Clark asked if they are making less money working 42 hours. Chief Ober stated no. His proposal is that their annual pay remains the same so the hourly rate goes up. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Auger said he needs to dwell on that. Commissioner Clark stated he is concerned about costs trickling down. Retirement was discussed. The rates are as follow.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>July 1, 2011</u>	<u>August 1, 2011</u>
Employer Portion Group I	9.16%	11.09%	8.80%
Employee Portion Group I	5.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Employer Portion Group II	18.52%	30.90%	22.89%
State Portion Group II	<u>6.17%</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
Total	24.69%	30.90%	22.89%
Employee Portion Group II	9.16%	11.80%	11.80%

Chief Ober stated the budget reflects these multipliers. The medical benefits budget reflects an increase of 16% over last year. All he did was pull that out of his hat. We won't know the exact figures until the end of October. Last year we were looking at a 3% decrease prior to changing plans. For budget reasons and discussion purposes he increased it 16%.

Chief Ober stated with everything he has proposed they do so far and taking into consideration they might be able to shift some of the costs to the Apparatus & Equipment Fund, the overall budget bottom line is coming in at a decent comparison to last year. The reason he started looking for alternative funding is adding another person.

Fourth Shift

Chief Ober stated the fourth shift objective is very important. They will still maintain three people per shift. They are not adding three more people. There is a comparison that breaks down how many calls each shift will do and how many per person will do. That does compare us to other full time departments in the Lakes Region. As you will see, other than Bristol, everybody else is doing it with a fourth shift. Commissioner Auger asked how many on were per shift in Belmont, Bristol, Franklin, Gilford and Plymouth. Chief Ober replied Belmont, Bristol and Plymouth have 2 per shift and Franklin and Gilford has three. The Deputy Chief he is not really considering for 2012. It will be in 2013. Commissioner Gallant says to break it down per person. Commissioner Auger brought up Belmont.

TNFD Commissioner's Meeting
September 6, 2011

During the day they have Chief and Deputy. Chief Ober stated they also have a day guy as well as two shift crew. Discussion ensued.

Chief Ober stated with everything proposed, which includes some additional monies out of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund, as it stands right now his proposed budget is reduced. Commissioner Gallant asked how you figure that. You are just shifting things around. Commissioner Auger asked how much he was proposing they use from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Chief Ober replied \$50,000. Commissioner Gallant said if put that back, the budget would be level funded. It is only \$3,000 more than last year. The budget last year was \$1,574,000, \$1,577,000 this year. Commissioner Auger stated that includes hiring one more firefighter. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Gallant wants to go away and review the numbers to see what effect that is going to have in 2013. Commissioner Clark stated at the last meeting they were asked to bless the Union as a bargaining unit. He wants to understand if adding another man impacts that at all. He also wants to understand exactly what that means to the bottom line. Chief Ober stated that was why he wasn't proposing pay increases for them this year. Discussion ensued. Chief Ober stated doesn't want to meld how their last request into this. It won't happen until 2013 anyway.

Commissioner Gallant stated he wants to schedule a special meeting for all the men who want to talk about it to come in to discuss it. It was very unfair for Tim to sit there and answer for his counterparts. One of the key goals, when Chief Ober came on board, was to open the lines of communication with the men. This is of great importance to us and to them. We should see if we can set up a date after the next meeting. Discussion ensued. The Commissioners agreed to hold a non-public session September 27th at 5:30 P.M. at the Center Street Station if the men are willing.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: September 21, 2011 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Northfield Town Hall, 21 Summer Street, Northfield.