

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Budget Work Session

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	October 18, 2011 at 18:00
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Center Street Station, 12 Center Street, Tilton

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 18:05 PM.

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

Minutes

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The minutes were reviewed. Commissioner Clark requested a typo be fixed on page 3 under benefits package. Last you needed to be changed to last year. Under retirement he requested we reflect the State portion in the table. Discussion ensued about the retirement contributions. Commissioner Gallant made a motion to accept the minutes as printed with the exception of the clarification on page 4 under the section that speaks relative to contributions to the retirement plan. Commissioner Clark wants the contribution broken out between what the State and Employer pay. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget

64% of EMS Related Overtime Expenses

Commissioner Gallant asked what we had heard from the State relative to the proceeds of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. Chief Ober stated you can do what you want. You need a warrant article to change the intent of the fund. Commissioner Gallant stated if we do that in our meeting in 2012 that we not go into effect until 2013. As it relates to our budget in 2012 we cannot reflect the 64% as discussed at our last meeting.

Capital Improvement Plan

Chief Ober explained the packet with the two spread sheets is the latest version of the CIP. He explained where that has gone in the last couple weeks. Commissioner Clark asked if 10/17/2011 was the correct one. Chief Ober replied yes. Chief Ober explained how he came up with the figures. He used a 4% increase per year. It was taken off the replacement value. That's an insurance number and includes all the items on the truck right now. He changed it to be taken off the purchase value. It makes the plan look a lot better as far as the ending balance goes. Commissioner Gallant stated utilizing a 4% annual increase and looking at 2016 that number is probably high. From the standpoint of the CIP as he sees it the numbers are all on the high side. Chief Ober stated you can reverse this with the revenues. He believes the revenues are low projected. Discussion ensued.

For 2012 he is recommending that they replace the ladder and Engine 2 with a quint. In 2015 replacing Engine 1 and moving the current Engine 3 to second due and let the new engine be first due. The replacement schedule recommended will be 20 years for engines, 25 to 30 years for a ladder and 10 years for ambulances.

Revenue to Off Set Taxes

Chief Ober went over the second spread sheet. He explained that he used \$3,000 as the projected increase to the revenue per year which is on the conservative side. Starting in 2013 he is recommending they use a portion of the revenue to off set taxes. He proposed \$20,000, as an example, be returned to the General Fund to help level fund the budget. Discussion ensued.

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Chief Ober asked for direction on the CIP. The CIP is a fluid plan. Commissioner Gallant stated that it is clear Commissioner Clark does not want to go with an off set of taxes. If that is the general consensus then he will make it a warrant article. It's the only thing that makes any fiscal sense.

Chief Ober stated that starting with 2013 going forward, if the Commission buys in to his proposals to them and they think that what he is recommending with the fire department staffing and where it really needs to be. They all know that is going to cost money. What is the easiest way to get there with the least amount of impact on the bottom line? How can they make that all work. He fully believes the ambulance revenue fund starting in 2012 can help maintain close to a level funded budget for the next five years. Commissioner Gallant stated to bear in mind that the CIP does not deal with physical facilities. That's another whole discussion. Commissioner Gallant stated the CIP only deals with rolling stock.

Deputy Robinson spoke about the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. He can't believe the public has accepted it as well as they have. Nothing is spent out of that account without a vote from the body. It keeps the revenues in front of them all the time. It justifies having your community take care of your medical services.

Further discussion ensued about the CIP and off setting taxes with the revenue fund.

Commissioner Gallant asked Commissioner Clark again if he agrees with using monies from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund to the general fund. Commissioner Clark and Commissioner Auger agreed.

Fourth Shift

Chief Ober explained he is trying to propose where this department needs to be. He is recommending hiring one more person to add a fourth shift to bring the work week to 42 hours plus adding a deputy chief. He would make a slight reorganization. Fire Prevention, training and department operations would be shared between the Chief and Deputy. This is the next step the department needs to take. It is the last big piece of the puzzle needed to stay competitive. Discussion ensued. Chief Ober stated he is not proposing both in the same year because of the huge impact. We are one employee away from doing that.

Discussion ensued about overtime.

Chief Ober stated the Budget in front of them includes that additional person for half a year. In doing so he did not propose any salary increase for the staff. Discussion ensued.

Discussion ensued about training.

Commissioner Gallant asked Commissioner Auger if they do or do not approve off setting taxes. Commissioner Gallant stated he is obviously does. Commissioner Auger is for that as long as the money is used in the right place, if the money is used to off set taxes. Commissioner Clark asked if they were proposing the \$20,000 the Chief put in. Commissioner Gallant said no. All he is asking is if they support. The amount is for another discussion, whether it be fixed or be variable. Commissioner Clark stated he feels he is being played a little bit. He has already explained that. Discussion ensued.

The CIP was discussed again. Commissioner Auger stated the Chief's job is to advise them on what is needed for rolling stock.

Commissioner Gallant asked again whether they are comfortable returning X number of dollars on an annual basis from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund to the General Fund. He still hasn't gotten an answer to that. Commissioner Clark stated he will go along with that, no other strings attached. Commissioner Auger agreed with that.

Chief Ober stated he is trying to propose to them where he feels this department needs to be which includes one more person to bring them to a 42 hour work week and a career Deputy Chief on the staffing side. If in the future they get to a point where the Deputy Chief cannot handle the Fire Prevention and training, he would suggest they hire a civilian part time inspector. Today he does not suggest that. It would be if the activity gets back to what it was. It would take some slight

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reorganization of the department. It would shift off some responsibilities to the shifts. Chief Ober explained. Fire Prevention, training and department operations would be shared between the Chief and Deputy. He fully believes this is the next step the department needs to take in order for us to do a lot of different things. It is the last big piece needed for us to stay competitive as far as retention of our firefighters. It puts us in line with activity per shift and further down per firefighter with departments our size. The reason you are not getting a proposal from him to do both things in one year is because, he like them, understands that is a big impact all at once. It is important they understand that they are one employee away from doing that. It takes away that Fire Prevention Assistant position and puts him on shift so they no longer have that extra person two days a week. Commissioner Auger asked about vacation. That would create more overtime. Chief Ober stated no more than they have right now. Discussion ensued about overtime.

Chief Ober stated the budget in front of them right now includes that person for six months as that is the least amount of impact. In doing so he opted to not propose any salary increase for the staff. Discussion ensued.

Chief Ober stated that with all that being said, the bottom line as it stands today, is a .2% increase or \$4,000. That's pretty close to a level funded budget. That's why he, in good faith, is very comfortable in bringing that to them. To bring the CIP money into this, it is the mechanism as you go from 2012 to 2013 to help maintain a level funded budget. As we go forward from 2013 on, using the money toward taxes, it helps you maintain that level funded budget.

The training line was discussed.

Commissioner Gallant requested a flow chart to illustrate what happens to staffing when they go from a 48 hour work week to a 42 hour work week by heads. Commissioner Clark thought that would be really good. Chief Ober replied we can do that. Chief Ober explained that the 42 hour work week is an average. Discussion ensued.

Discussion ensued about the hydrants.

Commissioner Gallant requested Chief Ober portray the \$4,449 flip that one year utilizing the Apparatus & Equipment Fund to show what the impact will be by virtue of the changes in 2012. Chief Ober replied he will try to project out what 2013 will be with the proposal they have in front of them.

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 8:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: October 26, 2011 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main Street, Tilton.