

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	November 14, 2012 at 17:30
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton NH

Commissioners Present: Paul Auger, Patrick Clark, Tom Gallant
 Staff Present: Treasurer Roland Seymour, Chief Bradley Ober, Deputy Chief Mike Robinson, Captain Timothy Joubert and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine
 Tilton Selectmen Present: Patricia Consentino, Katherine Dawson and Sandy Plessner
 Northfield Personnel Present: Selectman Steve Bluhm, Town Administrator Glenn Smith and Budget Committee Member Gretchen Wilder

Call to Order

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

Minutes

October 17, 2012

Commissioner Gallant made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

October 31, 2012

Commissioner Gallant made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Correspondence

An email was received from Tilton-Northfield Water District Commission Chair Roland Seymour, inviting the Commissioners to their December 10th meeting at 7:00 PM to discuss the hydrants. Commissioner Gallant made a motion that they, as Commissioners, attend the TNWD December 10th meeting and be on the agenda at 7:00 PM. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Town of Northfield

Selectman Steve Bluhm stated they were here to discuss dispatch fees. Last year concerns were brought to them by the Northfield Budget Committee, and the Selectmen agree, that the Mutual Aid Dispatch portion paid by the Town of Northfield and Town of Tilton should be a joint District effort. They met with the Commissioners, Chief Hayes from LRMFA and the Tilton Selectmen. It is nothing more than an extension of the Fire District. For the Fire District to work properly, you need communications. At that time, he was appointed to the LRMFA Board of Directors as the Northfield representative. At that time he didn't really know what they did as a whole. It was talked about that it is up to towns to find a way to get the calls to the Fire District and that is when they took over. The only problem is, in while learning how it runs, is they do so much more than communications. He then passed out copies of *The Rural Hitch* referring everyone to page 3 and *From the Chief...* which provides information on what is happening at the Communications Center. He would like to convey that LRMFA is more than a dispatch service. They handle so many services that make the Fire District what it is. At the current status of the Mutual Fire Aid the District doesn't have any say in what they do. Brad is the representative for the Town of Tilton and he is the representative of the Town of Northfield. By rights, the Fire District has no say in anything to do with training, inspections of equipment, reviewing the EMS system or any mutual aid or dispatch matters.

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Commissioner Auger asked if that wasn't what the Chief does. Selectman Bluhm stated he does it through the Town of Tilton, not through the Commissioners. Commissioner Clark stated it was set up so Selectman Bluhm was the rep for Northfield. Selectman Bluhm agreed. Again, as Brad would be looking for the best interests of Tilton, he would be looking for the best interests of Northfield. That may not jive with the people actually running the District. In his case, you are putting it in the hands of a rookie to make a vote on what is important and what isn't. Obviously, Brad knows. They are fine with it. They have no problem on their side with making it a District. If there is a budgetary number or a training exercise you are not happy with, you have a say as a District because it affects your employees.

Commissioner Clark asked if that discussion came up where they said that is the way it could be handled. Selectman Bluhm stated he believes that is correct that when they talked to Chief Hayes. In fact they said it would be easier for them to handle it as a District. Glenn Smith stated there are some accounting issues that will have to be worked out. Chief Ober stated that whoever they send the bill to doesn't matter to them.

Discussion ensued about the voice the District would have versus the needs of the town.

Selectman Sandy Plessner stated she has a hard time going with this train of thought. If you have a representative from Northfield and a representative from Tilton they are looking out for the best interest of the Town which would also be the best interest of the District because the District is serving those people. Before we just had either the Chief or someone like that that looked out for both towns. You took it upon yourself to have two representatives so Northfield would have a representative and Tilton would have a representative. The job overall is still the same. The representatives from the two towns are there to see that the best is going to take place for their people which is what the District is looking to do.

Commissioner Clark stated the bills in every other case go directly to the towns. They have dealt with it unified as a District by having the Chief go. The fact of the matter is they really didn't have any say over it. That is the way they have had that work out. Selectman Plessner doesn't see where it will make any difference whether the District represents itself or the two towns are representing the whole District. They all want the same thing.

Commissioner Gallant stated that up until this year, the Chief of the District was the representative for both towns. He assumed he would speak in favor of what was in the best interest of the District. Selectmen Bluhm stated that both towns have different needs. The Town of Northfield is a residential need which would look for maybe more training in entering houses or different equipment for more residential buildings than commercial. If it came down to a vote, Brad may be voting for more mutual aid equipment that could handle doing the malls or could evacuate people out of a big setting.

Commissioner Clark stated as far as the Fire District goes we have a pretty good balance in terms of looking at it as one unit, as a District. We try to balance out those kinds of needs and we do a pretty good job of it. What it really gets down to is a matter of money. What Northfield says is if it goes to the District instead of the individual towns it would be handled as another bill in the District and you feel that is an equitable way to handle it. The shift in the cost for that would shift about \$9,000 over to Tilton to pay. That is the bottom line need. He asked Selectmen Bluhm if they would be here if it was the other way around. Selectman Bluhm stated the whole point again was for the Budget Committee. They want it off the books. They don't feel it's a Town budgetary number because why is the Town paying for fire dispatch when fire dispatch should be paid by the Fire District. It would be no different than any other outside agency. That is the main reason. As for the cost, it is not exactly that. Belknap County charges off a 100% evaluation instead of charging off what Mutual Aid members voted on. The swing would not be as big as what you are looking at. We are not looking at it as a number situation but rather as a Fire District situation or matter that should be handled by the Fire District.

Commissioner Auger feels they should look into it and see if they can come up with something. He agrees with Selectman Bluhm. It should be a Fire District situation.

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Selectman Bluhm stated they don't have a problem with a Selectmen from each Town and a Commissioner see if there is any credence to is this a whole Fire District matter. Commissioner Clark asked what he meant by that. Selectman Bluhm stated they as a board could do the work to see whether or not it really is a District matter or whether they want to have representation and put the towns together to look into it.

Commissioner Gallant stated they should look at it. Send to it to the Budget Committee to look at it and see what they think. They should have some input into it.

Chief Ober stated it is all good input. He thinks it is going to come down to dollars and cents. Maybe a subcommittee should be put together so we don't keep coming back to this year after year. So everybody can put it to bed. The other component that has to be brought in is Belknap County because of way they pay for the Belknap County towns.

Commissioner Clark stated the bills go directly to the communities. Discussion ensued on how Belknap County handles the billing.

Selectman Katherine Dawson asked why not use the same formula the school uses. They know what this is all about. When this was brought up a year ago, Northfield's option was to have someone else dispatch for them. You don't hear the Town of Tilton complaining. It is their tax dollars that go to Belknap County.

Selectman Pat Consentino requested they keep in mind that if they shift the bill to the District, the Town of Tilton still has to pay the County tax on dispatch. So in a sense they will have to pay twice because they have to pay Belknap County. Belknap County is not going to take X amount of dollars out of their budget because you are shifting the bill to the District. They still have to pay that to the county. Selectman Dawson stated that the County tax rate is going to get paid no matter what. If they have them switch the bill to the District, they are still going to have to pay their County tax. Selectman Consentino stated they checked that out with the County last year after it came up and you cannot remove that. They are not going to give them a refund.

Glenn Smith stated that they all agree that if they go down this road they have to be 100% certain that the Town of Tilton does not pay twice.

The Commissioners took this under advisement and will get back to Northfield.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Seymour presented the Treasurer's Report.

The account balances are as of today after disbursements.

Apparatus & Equipment Fund	\$416,312.32
Debit Card Account	\$4,334.99
Operating Budget Account	\$257,519.71
Payroll Account	\$500.00
Land & Building Fund	\$217,854.68
Health Insurance Deductible	\$4,828.27

Apparatus & Equipment Fund

Treasurer Seymour commented that we will make the budget and it might be a little over.

Cash Flow

Treasurer Seymour stated he did not do the Cash Flow as there is only one month of the year left. We know where the money is coming from and going.

Operating Budget

Treasurer Seymour went over the report. The two towns have been sent the final bill. He is waiting for DRA to get back to us on the matter discussed last month. The bills equal the amount budgeted for the towns. We will end the year with a surplus.

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Commissioner Gallant made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Gretchen Wilder asked when we anticipate the arrival of the quint. Chief Ober stated it will probably be next September or October. They had the preconstruction meeting about a month ago. The chassis has been ordered. It is about a five month delivery time for that. Then the truck will be built on that. On the short side, delivery takes 270 days. Discussion ensued.

Fire Prevention Report

Captain Joubert presented the Fire Prevention Report for the month.

Discussion ensued fire prevention in the schools. Commissioner Auger asked how the liability works should someone get hurt during fire prevention at the schools. Chief Ober stated it is treated the same as a field trip.

Captain Joubert stated he has been working with PCC on some updating of their fire suppression system. The water supply to the building had been upgraded. They are now updating the riser system.

Captain Joubert stated he has been spending a lot of time at the Dollar General with inspections. Discussion ensued about the types of inspections done.

Captain Joubert stated he did recent fire extinguisher training at Spaulding with the staff. It went really well. They did the classroom portion. They will follow in the Spring with the practical portion.

Commissioner Auger asked about The Arches. Chief Ober replied that he has an update for them and will cover that under his Chief's Report.

Chief's Report

Chief Ober passed out his report. The first page is the highlight of his monthly activity. The next report is the Incident by Town breakdown, then monthly activity breakdown for October by Incident Type and Category. This is followed by the Period Comparison for the three years prior through October and the last page is the activity for Hurricane Sandy. One side is for the 29th and the other is for the 30th. We had additional staffing in anticipation of the storm. The thunderstorm on the 30th created more activity in a shorter amount of time than the 24 hours prior. Two houses were fairly severely damaged and one car demolished. There were no injuries. There were a few scattered power outages. All in all we did pretty well. We had 31 calls in two days. Not all the calls were storm related.

Chief Ober reported that our Overlapping Incidents through the end of October are at 205 overlapping for the year which is 15%. We are running about 300. It is a number we need to keep track of. Discussion ensued.

Hand Tub

Chief Ober stated that AutoServ has agreed to display the Hand Tub in their Nissan showroom. We will get roping and stanchions to help keep people away from it. He will get keep off signs and will do up the history on it. It is a very important part of the history of the District and it will be awesome to have it so people can see it. It has been added to the insurance inventory. We need to find an appraiser to come in and give us a real value on it.

Generator

Chief Ober reported the generator has been ordered and is in. He is waiting for some of the transfer switching to come in. He doesn't want to start the project until all of it is in place. He is going to give us a couple days notice. We are going to be without power for about four hours during the switchover. We will run off a portable generator to run the vital; lights, radio and stuff like that.

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Boiler

Chief Ober reported we are waiting for the third estimate on the boiler. As soon as it comes in he will get in touch with Chairman Clark. We will hopefully get that going.

Task Force

Chief Ober reported we have been asked through the Mutual Aid system and then through a The State has been asked to provide five ambulance task forces to New Jersey. We have crew ready to go should the request come through. It will be for a four day deployment. Lakes Region will be providing five ambulances and a chief officer. Other areas of the State will be coming up with four other task forces of that magnitude. A total of 25 will be going down. He is not 100% certain that they will call back and say we need you. Right now it is a resource on standby. Everything is reimbursable through FEMA for the staff that goes for their time, the backfill time and there is a FEMA rate for the ambulance. It is a two week window that they can call and say we need. If we don't go within the two weeks, we probably won't be going. Discussion ensued on how the task forces are set up.

Cardiac Arrest Reports

Chief Ober reported he is working with Captain Michaud on cardiac arrest reports for 2011 and 2012. Definitely as we go in to 2013, we can track it better. We can tell how many cardiac arrests we had but the data they want to track is what the outcome of the patient was. He will provide this report at the next meeting. Discussion ensued.

AutoPulse

Chief Ober reported the two Autopulse are in service. Personnel have had training. He will try to have a demonstration at the next meeting.

The Arches

Chief Ober gave an update on the status of The Arches Alzheimer's Facility. On November 13th, he was notified by DHHS The Arches will be closed as of Friday of this week. She has decided to close the doors. Discussion ensued.

New Business

LGC Annual Meeting

Commissioner Clark stated he attended LGC's annual meeting and attended some of their seminars. He asked for reimbursement of the \$40 cost to attend. He attended the one on wellness, the annual meeting, a labor relations strategies compensation for retired benefits, conducting effective meeting and dealing with difficult people. Commissioner Gallant made a motion to allow the Chair to a submit expense report for seminar. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

2013 Budget

Chief Ober passed out the 2013 Budget packet so they can start digesting it. He believes they will be able to complete it in one or two work sessions. Commissioner Clark asked if there is anything in there that is different than what we do all ready. Chief Ober stated it is the same proposal as last year adding a fourth shift. Besides the shift proposal, insurance and retirement are up. The rest of budget is either level funded or reduced.

Commissioner Clark asked if the Budget Committee was up and running. Chief Ober stated it was. Donnie has been in and asked the status. Commissioner Clark asked if they have a representative to go there. Chief Ober stated they need to appoint someone for this year. Commissioner Auger volunteered to be the Commissioners representative to the Budget Committee.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to appoint Commissioner Auger to the Budget Committee as their liaison. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

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Chief Ober asked if they wanted to set some work session dates. Discussion ensued. It was decided to hold a Work Session on December 5th at 5:30 PM and again December 10th before their meeting with the Water District, if needed.

Dispatch Fees

Discussion ensued. It was decided Chief Ober will contact the County Administrator to see if it would be double taxation for the Town of Tilton. He is to contact Chief Hayes to see if they are willing to bill the Fire District rather than the towns.

Old Business

Generator

Chief Ober covered this under his report.

Boiler

Chief Ober covered this under his report.

Other Business

Commissioner Gallant asked what the Commissioners have planned for January 2nd. They have already given the Chief his pink slip. Who is going to take over? Do they have any plans? Commissioner Clark stated they haven't talked about it.

Commissioner Clark asked Chief Ober if there has been any change in his position. Chief Ober stated no, he hasn't even had anybody who has wanted to come look at it. He just renewed his contract with the listing company.

Commissioner Clark stated they will have to decide that at the next meeting. They can talk about it now if people want to talk about it. Commissioner Gallant stated it made a difference to him. He didn't want to vote that way. It is up to them, whatever they want to do. It is all on them. It is not on him. It was a foolish move to start with. They can handle it. He just thought he would bring it up.

Commissioner Gallant asked the Deputy if he was in a position to take over as before. Deputy Robinson said no. He won't have the assistance or knowledge that they had before. The team would be broken up. He can't. Commissioner Gallant stated his work is entirely different now than it was. Deputy Robinson stated the demand would be much more. We had the team before. We would be minus one team member.

Commissioner Clark asked about the possibility of Tim stepping in if need be. Deputy Robinson said he is not up to speed. Commissioner Gallant stated he didn't believe he would have any interest in doing it.

Commissioner Clark asked if there was any backup personnel that may have retired, an area fire chief from Belmont or Franklin. Deputy Robinson asked why don't we work with the Chief we have. Commissioner Gallant stated they chose not to.

Chief Ober stated if they remember in some of his conversations about his proposal for staffing, the residency thing aside, if he were hit by the proverbial bus tonight and taken out, this department is not set up in a command structure so you have an easy transition. His first priority was the additional fire fighter and ultimately a career deputy chief. There aren't many organizations that don't have the top guy, the second guy, the third guy, etc. The department has grown to a point where we use Mike a lot and he is very valuable to the department, on that day to day administration stuff you need to have a plan in place to address that. If the number two guy isn't up to speed and educated and able to step in and take over, the District

is set up to fail. Deputy Robinson stated he will get the fires put out for them, handle the emergencies; but administratively it just falls further and further behind.

Commissioner Clark stated he doesn't know if they should even talk about it. Is it right to talk about it now or wait until after January 2nd comes. Can you fore plan for this kind of thing? Is that kosher? Chief Ober stated if he was them he would want to be planning. Commissioner Clark asked if legally they were overstepping their bounds saying that they can't do anything until after he lets them know. Chief Ober stated in his world he plans for a future. That is what he does.

Commissioner Clark asked Chief Ober if he was okay with that. Chief Ober replied that it was up to them. They are responsible for a fire chief here. It comes back to this Board and if one is not going to be here, they are the Board that puts him in place. Their responses to him are pretty clear. They don't want him here.

Commissioner Clark said he wants him here but he wants him here on the terms they had to begin with. Chief Ober replied their actions speak different. Their actions speak way different. Commissioner Clark stated he wants him here on the terms they had hired him. Chief Ober stated those terms aren't possible so they have to come up with some other terms. This Board has been very clear in saying there are no other terms. Commissioner Gallant stated the majority of the Board.

Commissioner Auger stated that he guessed what Chief Ober was saying is the way he looks at it is, that it is it. When it comes to that day, that is it. Chief Ober replied that he has been telling them that he can't comply. Commissioner Auger stated he knows. It has been two years. Is it going to be another two years? Is it going to be 10 years? Chef Ober replied that he can't tell them. All he can tell him is that he cannot afford to move without selling. That is not new. They need to have a plan.

Commissioner Clark stated that Chief Smith retired from Franklin, Clarenbach was before that and there was a Belmont chief that stepped down recently. Those are three potential backups. Commissioner Auger stated not Jimmy Davis. He would not be the best candidate. Commissioner Gallant stated he did not believe he would have any interest. Chief Ober stated not after the way they have seen how they have treated him. Commissioner Gallant stated that is a fact. You are going to have a hard time even getting anybody to even apply for his job. Deputy Robinson stated they had trouble last time. Commissioner Clark stated it was a whole different dynamics last time. Commissioner Gallant stated you can explain it any way you want. The facts are the facts. Commissioner Clark stated tonight it's definitely an uncomfortable situation, he will agree. Commissioner Auger stated you say the way we treated you Brad. He thought they treated him with respect. The way they wanted him to move into the community; they gave him everything he wanted except for that one thing.

Commissioner Clark stated historically his overview on the whole thing is he thought they did the right thing by extending it another six months and stretching it out to two years. Thought that might be helpful. We let it go where you were going to handle that end of it and we were going to sit by and see how that worked. It will be two years, a little over two years. From the get go, his feeling was that one of the biggest thing they needed to bite off was getting a new fire department. Bond issues for that kind of thing is two thirds and usually that is a huge task to get those kinds of voters out for a big bond issue like that. Having a fire chief in Town to be able to rub elbows with people. Commissioner Gallant disagreed. Chief Ober stated he was going to leave because he didn't know what he was talking about. Commissioner Gallant

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stated he didn't blame him. Commissioner Clark stated he will do some homework if they want.

Adjournment

Commissioner Gallant stated the hour being 7:05 he makes a motion to adjourn. There is nothing else to be conducted here tonight. They can do what they want. He is not part of this. You two engineer anything you want. You have engineered it this far. Engineer it the rest of the way.

Commissioner Clark asked if there was a second on that. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion to adjourn passed.

As Commissioner Gallant was leaving he stated just be ready to answer the question What would you have today that you don't have if he lived next door. You can't give me an answer. You have never been able to and you never will. You are not missing anything. Be ready to defend that in court. You might be called upon to do that. The attorney you hired told you that.

The meeting adjourned at 19:06.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: December 5, 2012 at 17:30. Work session to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.