

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Budget Work Session

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| Meeting Called By: | Commissioners | Date, Time: | December 5, 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: Chief Bradley Ober and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine
 Tilton Selectmen Present: Patricia Consentino and Sandy Plessner
 Budget Committee Members Present: Jane Alden and Tim Sattler

Call to Order

Commissioner Clark called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

2013 Budget

Chief Ober presented the Capital Improvement Plan to the Commissioners including an equipment CIP of items costing over \$5,000. Discussion ensued about the new Quint and SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus).

Chief Ober presented the step and grade scale to the Commissioners for reference.

Chief Ober stated two areas of increase that are out of our control are health benefits and retirement. Those are the two biggest areas of increase. Another area is the proposed staffing increase. Every other area is either level funded or reduced.

Commissioner Clark brought up the charge for pressurized hydrants. It was decided to bring this up at their meeting with the Water District. Chief Ober stated staffing levels where they should be, the fourth shift and career deputy, we could be doing with our current bottom line budget resource. Other than salaries and benefits, the hydrant charge is the largest expense we have and always has been. As you talk with the Water District, our budget resourcing is already at the point it should be with that additional staffing in place. Commissioner Gallant asked if Chief Ober was saying if as a result of having to pay for the hydrants, we are paying the price for the administrative ends of things. We are not staffed to the point we should be staffed to adequately handle things. The problem still remains that the argument will be with the Water District will be either pay it or don't pay it. Discussion ensued.

Page 1. Discussion ensued about shift coverage and what area towns have. Belmont, Bristol and Plymouth have four shifts but they have two on per shift except for Belmont who has three on during the day.

Page 3. Discussion ensued about the impact on the budget of the additional firefighter for the proposed fourth shift. Commissioner Clark asked if the 1.6% COLA was reflected in the budget. Chief Ober replied it is.

Page 4. Discussion ensued about the increases in health insurance, retirement and dental the employee will absorb.

Page 5. Discussion ensued about the proposed salary increase for the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief increase was listed at 9.4% and the Chief rationalized that his current pay was way under budget when compared to other Chiefs in the area.

Discussion ensued about the increase in the budget of \$117,003. Salaries and wages are increasing \$45,000 and benefits are increasing \$76,000.

Commissioner Clark asked if we were expecting any large bills coming up before the end of the year like call payroll. Chief Ober stated the last quarter just ended.

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Professional & Technical Services

Line 301 Auditing \$8,500

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$8,500.

Line 320 Legal Services \$16,000

Discussion ensued about how much should be budgeted. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$16,000.

Line 335 School/Training Fees \$7,000

Discussion ensued about paramedic training and encumbering \$9,500 from the 2012 budget for that. All three Commissioners agreed to encumber \$9,500 from the 2012 budget for paramedic training next year and to fund this line at \$7,000 for 2013.

Line 340 Bank Charges/Interest \$350

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$350.

Line 341 Telephone \$4,500

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$4,500.

Line 342 Information Technology \$12,275

Chief Ober explained the increase in the budget on this line. Discussion ensued. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$12,275.

Line 350 Medical Services \$6,250

Chief Ober explained why he recommended that this line be cut. Discussion ensued about the physicals. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$6,250.

Line 370 Vehicle Repairs Mechanic \$13,000

Discussion ensued about the amount spent in this line to date. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$13,000.

Line 385 Elections \$1,800

Discussion ensued about what this line actually covers. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1,800.

Line 390 Other Professional Services \$1

Discussion ensued about what this line covered. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1 to keep it open.

Line 999 Interest Expense \$0

Discussion ensued about why this line is still shown. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$0.

Property Services

Line 410 Electricity \$7,000

Discussion ensued about when the new electric company would start. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$7,000.

Line 411 Heating Fuel \$6,500

Chief Ober explained that he does not know what the cost to heat with natural gas will be. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$6,500.

Line 412 Water \$1,500

Discussion ensued about the rate increase. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1,500.

Line 413 Sewer \$1,000

Discussion ensued about the rate increase. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1,000.

Line 430 Repairs & Maintenance \$15,000

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Discussion ensued about the upcoming repairs and maintenance. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$15,000.

Line 480 Property & Liability Insurance \$20,300

Discussion ensued about whether there was going to be a rate increase in this line. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$20,300.

Purchased Services

Line 550 Printing \$500

Discussion ensued about whether this line was funded for enough. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$500.

Line 560 Dues & Subscriptions \$1,500

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1,500.

Supplies

Line 610 General \$0

Discussion ensued about funding this line at \$0. Chief Ober explained that this line has been combined with the Miscellaneous line. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$0.

Line 620 Office \$3,000

Discussion ensued about the increase in this line. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$3,000.

Line 625 Postage \$650

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$650.

Line 630 Equipment Maintenance & Repair \$7,000

Discussion ensued about what this line covers. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$7,000.

Line 631 Service Testing \$7,650

Discussion ensued about what this line covers. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$7,650.

Line 635 Gasoline \$7,000

Discussion ensued about whether they should cut this line or not. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$7,000.

Line 636 Diesel Fuel \$17,500

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$17,500.

Line 660 Vehicle Repair Parts \$18,500

Discussion ensued about possible upcoming expenses. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$18,500.

Line 670 Books & Periodicals \$200

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$200.

Line 680 Departmental \$200

Discussion ensued about the overage for 2012. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$200.

Line 681 Municipal Fire Alarm \$0

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$0.

Line 683 Fire Prevention \$2,000

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$2,000.

Line 685 Uniforms \$6,350

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Chief Ober explained each career employee gets an allowance of \$450 per year. This includes the additional firefighter he is proposing. Commissioner Auger stated he would like to hold off on this for now.

Line 690 Miscellaneous \$100

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$100.

Capital Outlay

Line 710 Land \$1

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1.

Line 720 Building \$1

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1.

Line 730 Other \$1

There was no discussion. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1.

Line 750 Furniture & Fixtures \$1,500

Discussion ensued about what expenditures were expected. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1,500.

Line 775 Dry Hydrants & Cisterns \$1,500

Discussion ensued about the cisterns. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$1,500.

Warrant Articles

590.2 Pressurized Hydrants \$125,988.48

Commissioner Gallant stated this will be a warrant article. Discussion ensued. All three Commissioners agreed to fund this line at \$125,988.48.

Health Insurance Deductible

Discussion ensued. All three Commissioners agreed to not include this on the warrant this year since so little has been spent out of this line.

Quint

Chief Ober stated we do not need to include this as a warrant article this year.

Salaries & Wages

Commissioner Clark stated salaries and wages are up about 5.3%. That includes half for the new guy. The whole idea is whether they are willing to accept another shift. Before they get into that he stated he wanted to give them some information. He presented information he received at the LGC Conference and the seminar he attended on budgets. The rational for wanting to hold the budget tight is that the NH Retirement System is funded at only 58%. It is a 3.7 billion dollar deficit and the State is backing out of making payment. That is going to come home to roost. Discussion ensued about the retirement system and health insurance costs.

He then presented a graph on District Salary, Wages and Benefits. Discussion ensued about the graphs and the information not being apples to apples through the years. Commissioner Clark then compared this to incidents in the same time period. He is open into looking at all this information and getting feedback on it. Commissioner Clark stated he is not into making a change this year. He would like to look at this information and come back to it.

Discussion ensued between Commissioner Gallant and Commissioner Clark.

Chief Ober stated as you look at the stats and this information on the power points is that if a business loses business or they sell less in a year they have the ability to reduce the amount they make. We can't do that because our services are not business model run. Our call for service doesn't reflect an economy change. We have a responsibility. We have to answer our calls for service. We cannot

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control that. The demand for our fire staff remains the same. You cannot run it as a business model. It just isn't going to work.

Commissioner Clark stated that in the private sector if their insurance costs go up dramatically they push back on the employee to pick up more of that. We haven't done that. Chief Ober stated you just barely two years into a decent plan to begin with.

Commissioner Clark stated they made substantial changes in the past two years. Chief Ober replied that's fine and you think that is enough. What he is saying is we are understaffed to do the job we are charged to do. You can't say we did a better benefits package for you so that should be enough. You can't look at it that way when you are looking at staffing levels and demand for service.

Commissioner Auger stated he doesn't look at it that way. He works for a company that has cut back quite a bit. If you feel you are understaffed he is sorry. He thinks that you are asking the people of the community to give more. How much more can you expect them to give? He can't give any more. He is maxed right out.

Chief Ober stated it is his job as their Fire Chief to advise them what the department needs. Someday, somebody is going to get hurt. If we have identified that we are understaffed, don't you think we should get somewhat to a point where we are getting a little bit better. He is not increasing staff on each shift. He is just proposing to hire one more full-time firefighter. Discussion ensued.

The Commissioners decided to meet again Tuesday, December 11th at 5:30 PM to work on the Salaries & Wages and Benefits and wrap up the budget.

Adjournment

Commissioner Gallant made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 19:42.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: December 11, 2012 at 17:30. Work session to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Upstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.