

## Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	December 19, 2012 at 4:30 PM
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Clark called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

Commissioners Present: Paul Auger, Patrick Clark, Thomas Gallant  
 Staff Present: Chief Bradley Ober, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson, Captain Timothy Joubert, Captain Greg Michaud, Captain David Hall, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine  
 TNFD Budget Committee Members Present: Jane Alden, Timothy Sattler  
 Tilton Board of Selectmen Present: Patricia Consentino, Sandy Plessner  
 Public Present: Eric Pyra, Gretchen Wilder, Cynthia Reinartz  
 Reporters Present: Michael Kitch, Dan Seufert

### Minutes

#### November 14, 2012

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

#### December 5, 2012

Commissioner Auger made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Clark stated he wanted to add detail to the minutes on page 1 under shift coverage to show Belmont, Bristol and Plymouth have four shifts but they have two on per shift except for Belmont who has three on during the day. He wanted to add detail regarding the Chief's proposed salary increase to show that 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. On page 4 he commented that they met with the Water Commissioners and he will be bringing up more information from Scott Davis under Other Business. Under Salaries & Wages there was talk about presentation information that he got from LGC and there was mention of 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 and he would like that mentioned. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes as corrected.

#### December 11, 2012

Commissioner Auger made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Clark stated he would like to make a change on page 2 where it states Greg Michaud stated in 2005 when the District went 24 hours employees went from 42 to 48 hours keeping the same annual pay taking a reduction at the time. This would be giving back the reduction. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Clark stated he would like to add some detail on that discussion that had to do with them going through the wage and benefit study and step and grade process and how that involved comparing them to other area fire departments and that really did bring it back up to speed. There is some wording to that effect in there. He didn't have time to look at it but if they could add that in there. Other than that additional information, if people are comfortable with that amendment he would like to accept the meeting minutes as amended. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes as amended.

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Correspondence

Letters were received from both the Town of Tilton Board of Selectmen and the Town of Northfield Board of Selectmen regarding Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid apportionment formula.

Public Comment

Gretchen Wilder stated she reviewed the meeting minutes of August 17, 2010 where the Commissioners reluctantly accepted the resignation of Stephen Carrier. Then they went into nonpublic. Commissioner Gallant is going to become insistent that whoever gets the job is going to become a resident of either Tilton or Northfield within 18 months so when she read the article yesterday in the Daily Sun she is angered by it. The words honor, integrity, principle, distinction, professionalism, none of that comes to mind. Disgrace, shame, dishonor, scandal, front page; Fire Commissioners cannot as Selectmen cannot go forward and discuss personnel issues, especially things like this. Although it has always been public and the Fire Chief has said that he wanted to go public in the past. If she took a job with a trucking company and they say you have three months to get your driver's license and she failed to do that, she wouldn't have a job. She signed a contract, a conditional letter of employment in that case; she doesn't understand how this is any different. She voted candidates. Any candidate should come in and think about the District and what is best for the District. If someone signs a conditional letter of employment and is given an extension whatever happens at the time of the extension deadline, it is in writing. It is a legal document. She hopes they support that document.

Commissioner Clark stated relative to that article and speaking in public, they have been advised not to talk about personnel issues in public.

Cindy Reinartz spoke regarding the conditional letter. Sure a conditional letter was signed. The Commissioners can change their minds. She can't see them losing a wonderful Chief with the background, professionalism, the wonderful job that he has been doing and the money they have invested in him. To try to find another Chief that actually lives in our District, she goes through that with her deputy. The pool is so small. When you shrink that pool, you are not going to get the caliber of people you have in Brad. She thinks it is horrible that an exception can't be made. Rules are always bent. She would hope that the Commissioners would consider that as she would hate to lose a fine, wonderful Chief.

Eric Pyra spoke. He lives in Tilton. He read the article this morning. He attended the Commissioners meeting where the agreement was changed where he had to live within 25 minutes of the firehouse. He thought his address in Ashland met that. Was that just a temporary thing? Commissioner Clark stated that was tabled by a two to one margin. Eric stated his comment as a Fire Commissioner, when you hire someone, it sounded like it was a job agreement and it wasn't a clear definition. It was to be decided at some point what the radius was going to be, what the restriction was going to be. You got a candidate. You put the cart before the horse when did that. Now you are trying to put the cart back behind horse. It doesn't sit well with him. He passes him on the highway every day. He drives 45 minutes north and knows exactly how long it takes to get here from exit 24. It takes him about 25 minutes to get from North Ashland Road to his house on Cedar Street. His taxes go toward the Fire District. He hates to think that they are going to wasting his money. If you lose this Chief, what is it going to cost to replace him? What other type of morale is going to go through this Fire Department. What is it going to cost the taxpayers beyond the actual replacement of the Chief? He quoted an article he found on line from *Public Management* magazine, "*Carla Cataldo noted one of the strongest arguments for opposing a residency requirement: ...residency requirements can prevent qualified applicants from applying for jobs. Because tax dollars are a scarce resource, it behooves localities to get the most 'bang for their buck' by hiring the most qualified applicants, regardless of their addresses. Ms. Cataldo had conducted a survey of 32 Massachusetts and Rhode Island chief executive officers and found that 31% of them had turned down or refused to apply for jobs with residency requirements. You can make the case that your community is best served when its appointing authority is able to*

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*choose from the broadest pool of potential candidates for any position. A residency requirement limits those choices.*" He believes the Chief was originally hired in 2004 as the Code Enforcement Officer. He has an intimate knowledge of every single building in the Fire District. You can't replace that. That is an intangible. That is something you can't get. The morale that is going to be affected by my Fire Department is going to be high. I strongly suggest you find a way to make this work for the taxpayers. It is going to cost a lot more to do this. He has only had two experiences with the Fire Department since he has lived here since 2001. They were outstanding. He sees the pride that these firefighters have. They take pride in their community and it starts at the top. He has pride in the community. Whether or not you want him to be vested in the community, he sees his car here long after you see most people go, The Chief is the best man for the job. You are not going to find a replacement for him in this town. Let's not lose this guy. We are going to have to spend thousands and thousands of dollars to replace him. We don't have a qualified candidate to replace him.

Pat Consentino spoke as a resident of Tilton. She finds it really difficult after meeting after meeting to talk about this issue publicly. We even had a meeting back in April, May where it was upstairs in Town Hall where Commissioner Clark spoke about talking to friend in the banking business to help the Chief. She feels that was pretty personal. Now you are hiding behind attorney, client privilege. We have had meeting after meeting with this issue in public, as a public forum. Now you are not allowing us to talk about this issue going forward, what you are being proactive about, what you are doing about it and what happens after January 2<sup>nd</sup>. She finds it despicable that they are hiding behind attorney, client privilege suddenly about personnel issues. That is not a personnel issue when you give somebody a letter of intent to fire after January 2<sup>nd</sup> if in fact they are not living in the District. You have a problem. There is an issue here. You are not going to have a Chief. Are you doing anything about not having a Chief? Are there any provisions whatsoever? Have you started looking? Have you put any money in the budget as being proactive in looking for a Chief?

Commissioner Clark stated he doesn't think it is in there yet. The deadline for getting the budget completed isn't until after January anyway. They do have time to deal with that if they need to.

Pat Consentino stated that when people of the District ask them if they are going to be proactive in that, that is the time to step up and answer those questions. Not hide behind I can't talk about that. You are not talking about a personnel issue; you are talking about being proactive in the District with the situation coming up.

Commissioner Clark stated as individuals they can each do some homework and prepare for what might come about and he is hoping that they have. In terms of talking about it in public, right now they are told not to do that.

Pat Consentino stated if the go forward with what their intent is to do, they are doing a grave disservice to the Town of Tilton safety wise. You are putting them at a safety risk if we lose our Chief. That is unconscionable. You know how we all feel. You know how the Board of Selectmen feel, now you know how she feels. On top of this whole situation, you have yet, as a Board of Commissioner to formally define what the District is. Commissioner Clark made a motion to define the District as five miles from the Center Street and found it was illegal to do that and rescinded the motion. You have yet to make a formal motion in public to define that. As stated in the letter of intent of hire, you have not done that. How are you expecting to let him go on January 2<sup>nd</sup> when in fact you haven't even done that?

Sandy Plessner asked if it doesn't bother them at all. You have a fire department that works and works well. He is always here. She has never heard of one time when he is late or never shows up. He is always here. Why? What is wrong with you that you want to destroy something that works so well? It is totally beyond what she can put her mind around because it is not fair. You are not being fair. You are not looking at it logically at all. You know that old saying "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". What about all the problems you may face because of this asinine procedure you think you have to instill in this town. Our police don't all live in Tilton. They are always there when you need them. The Fire Department has always been there when we needed them. She happens to think you have a very good Chief. She

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has known him since he started with the fire department. He genuinely cares about his men and these communities.

Jane Alden spoke. She is a resident of the Town of Tilton. She has been very active in this whole residency issue since it started. It is the elephant in the room in every meeting the Fire Commissioners have had since it first came up. The elephant is now on the table here tonight. Mr. Pyra, who knows nothing about it other than what he has read in the papers, spoke from his heart tonight and said what she thinks most of the residents of Tilton feel. The residents of Tilton, who pay 67% of the budget, feel very strongly that you have a wonderful, well qualified Fire Chief in Brad Ober. You have Gretchen from Northfield who talked about applying for a Class A or B driver's license and it was a requirement of that job, she would be fired if she didn't meet that required. She said this is the same thing. Jane stated this is not the same thing. A Class of driver's license is a requirement of a technical skill. This is not a technical skill. You say your concern is that Brad be active in this community. As Mr. Pyra said, Brad is here long, long after the rest of a lot of us in this room have left our jobs and gone home. Brad heads north then, when there is no longer a problem. When Tilton Senior Center went to Brad about a generator, he had already thought about it and was well into the process to find out how they could get one as he was when they went to him about getting a defibrillator. He had already anticipated that need. This about the communities of Tilton and Northfield and their safety. They can talk about the money it is going to cost the taxpayers, and that is a very important issue. More importantly, on January 2<sup>nd</sup> when Brad Ober is no longer here if you get your way, the safety of this community is a much higher price than the price of taxes because you, as Fire Commissioners, have made no provision whatsoever should there be suddenly no Fire Chief. You have no back up plan. You wanted to do this dastardly deed for quite some time. You have had time to think about what you could do as a back up plan. You have a Deputy Chief who has a full time job. Who is going to take the Chief's place on January 2<sup>nd</sup> if what you would like to see done is done. The answer is no one. There is no one qualified or trained to step forward. That involves the safety and the lives of every single person in the communities of Tilton and Northfield. Those are the issues you should be thinking about. Not a personal agenda of win or lose because on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, if we no longer have a Chief because of a residency requirement that means nothing to most people in Tilton or Northfield. If we no longer have a Chief because of that that is going to be a very large price that every one of us is going to pay.

Eric Pyra stated an individual is paid a salary to perform specific job duties. As long as those duties are performed satisfactorily, which he believes he has performed satisfactorily according to performance reviews, the employee has earned his or her salary. The issue of where they live or pay taxes is irrelevant. Taxpayers pay taxes to obtain specific services. As long as they get those services, they are not interested in where the person performing them lives. Firefighters are professional employees who work within specific guidelines and the boundaries of accepted practices. Those guidelines remain the same regardless of where they live. The only people who shouldn't get to choose where they live are incarcerated criminals.

Pat Consentino stated she has no issue one way or the other with residency. At the annual meeting it was very clear people wanted to table that issue. Nobody has done any progress. You have taken it out of the hat and said it is going to be five miles from Center Street without any thinking. She stated her thoughts in all of this are should it be time, should it be mileage, should it be response time or mileage or should it be both and who should it be for; should it be for the Chief, should it be for the others. Do your homework. Do your research. Then implement it. When should it be implemented? How should it be implemented? None of that has been done. All of a sudden, boom done. If he's not, gone, see you later. That is where she has the problem. She wants to be very clear. She doesn't have a problem with the residency. She has a problem with how they are implementing it.

#### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Seymour was unable to attend the meeting. Kathy reported they have the Treasurer's Report in their packet.

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Chief Ober stated looks like going through the know expenses we have for December, it looks like we are probably going to come in around a \$20,000 surplus.

Commissioner Clark asked if the reports included the current manifest. Chief Ober replied it does.

Commissioner Clark asked if the call firefighters pay was included. Kathy replied it was.

Commissioner Gallant asked if there were any items they need to look at going forward. Are there any funds that we did not expend because we thought we would go over budget? Chief Ober replied no but he does have some items we need to encumber funds for and he will bring that up later.

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

### Fire Prevention Report

Captain Joubert presented his report. He stated the inspection level is somewhat down. The overall activity was up. He was Involved with the Fire Inspector II class and the transition course going on for EMT and a few other classes. November was a really big training month.

Captain Joubert talked about the fire in a multi unit apartment complex on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. There are a total of eight units in that building. Through Fire Prevention a few good things happened. When Chief Ober was the Fire Prevention Captain he worked with the property owner. There is a common area in the basement. Because it is a common area the Chief recommended sprinklers be installed. The property owner installed sprinklers off the domestic system. Because of that, the fire and damage was minimized. They only had one unit that was affected by the fire. The sprinkler heads contained the fire to one section of the building. The property owner is a pretty progressive owner and had stopped in six or eight months ago asking if there was anything that could be done to the building. They had talked about fire separation. He had complied with the recommendations to put in proper fire separation and a fire door which helped contain the fire as well. Captain Joubert showed photos of the fire. Discussion ensued about the fire. Captain Joubert stated he wanted to point out that by Fire Prevention going in there and working with property owners really makes a difference. Chief Ober stated the fire did not originate near the laundry equipment. It is still under investigation so they can't comment on it too much. Although it was in that area, it was not due to the laundry appliances.

Commissioner Auger asked how many alarms the fire went to. Chief Ober replied two. Discussion ensued about who the second alarm brought in.

### Chief's Report

Chief Ober gave his report. He is not seeing any surprises coming through the end of November. They seem to be on a steady track. They have already talked about Hurricane Sandy. They had a few extra calls but there was nothing signification to put huge blip on the radar for that.

Commissioner Clark asked about the incident numbers. Chief Ober requested Captain Michaud if he knew what that number was as he didn't have it off the top of his head. Captain Michaud stated that the year-to-date is 1,540. Chief Ober stated that December has been fairly normal other than some pretty decent fire activity.

Chief Ober gave an update on the generator. It was set today. The conduit has been run. They are working inside putting the switching in and all that. The next phase will be to get gas to the generator. Hall's Burner Service has come in. The items are on order. They will be coming in to do some work. The burner probably won't be here until the end of January. He is going to do the other work; the hot water, line the chimney, the generator and the cook stove and run all the other gas line.

Chief Ober reported they have removed the skid unit from the pick up and put the plow on it. He was able to purchase the two iPads through the 3M grant we received. We only had to contribute \$200 toward the second one. They are in, they are starting to use them and they are looking for vehicle mounts for them. One of the purposes will be to get all of the preplans electronically. They will be

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using them in conjunction with the new cardiac monitors in terms of being able to communicate with the hospital. They are real excited about doing that and moving forward.

Commissioner Clark stated that typically they run about 60% for EMS but now they are up to 70%. He wanted to know if those numbers were correct. Chief Ober explained that those figures are just for the month of November.

**New Business**

Dispatch Fees

Commissioner Clark asked if that was done for Chief Ober to clarify anything. Chief Ober stated it is there to remind them to set up a meeting. Discussion ensued about setting up a work session on either Wednesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> with both Boards of Selectmen. Kathy is to coordinate the date with all three boards.

Health Insurance Contribution Holiday

Chief Ober explained LGC provided us with a formula to figure out the percentages of each employee's insurance cost. Employees contributed a portion of that. We are recommending we pay out a total of \$520 to the individual employees. This is for the 2011 year. Discussion ensued about refunding employees. Commissioner Gallant made a motion that in lieu of giving the employees cumulatively a check for \$520.11 we offset their contribution between now and the end of the year retaining the next difference of \$4,680.75 which will be offset against our December premium. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Encumbering Funds

• Operating Budget

Tuition for Paramedic Training Program \$9,710.00

Chief Ober stated we have an invoice. The training is run through the Elliot Hospital. We are not paying this until we actually send somebody.

Commissioner Clark asked if this had been checked with DRA. Chief Ober replied the time line is fine with DRA.

Hall's Burner Service \$2,500.00

Chief Ober stated this is the remaining balance of the oil to natural gas conversion. This will be paid when the job is completed.

• Apparatus & Equipment Fund

New England Fire Equipment & Apparatus \$315,000.00

Chief Ober explained this is for the quint. There are two different numbers. \$41,000 will come out of the unreserved fund balance of the Operating Account and the remaining \$274,000 will come out of the Apparatus and Equipment Fund.

AES Electrical Contractors \$4,425.00

Chief Ober explained that this the remaining balance due on the generator project.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to encumber the funds from the Operating Budget as written: Paramedic Training \$9,710 and Oil to Gas Conversion by Hall's Burner Service \$2,500. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to encumber the funds from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund for the other half of the quint with \$274,000 coming from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund and \$41,000 out of the unreserved fund balance with another \$4,425 for the generator for AES Electrical Contractors. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. Discussion. Commissioner Gallant stated \$41,000 would be from unreserved fund balance of operating budget. He asked if the warrant article was written that way. Chief Ober stated yes. That is the grant amount through USDA. Once we pay it, we will be reimbursed that. We have to pay the whole 100% of the project first. The total amount due is \$315,000. Commissioner Gallant stated the motion should be to authorize \$315,000 on the quint and \$4,425 on the generator. Commissioner Auger amended his second. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

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Recess

Commissioner Gallant made a motion to recess the meeting at 5:32 PM. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting recessed at 5:32 PM.

Public Hearing

Commissioner Clark opened the Public Hearing on the USDA grant at 5:32 PM.

Chief Ober explained as part of the requirement in applying for a USDA Rural is to hold a public hearing, announce what we are applying for and allow for public question and comment. This year we have applied toward the total of \$81,849 and that is a combination of the cardiac monitors that were purchased, the AutoPulse and the generator project. Those were the identified projects. We are eligible for 15% of that. Once the projects are completed and you submit invoices it is a reimbursement back. We would be eligible for \$12,277 to be reimbursed. As part of this project we were required to advertise the public meeting, which we did, and the minutes of this public hearing go into the package to get submitted to USDA.

Commissioner Gallant stated we are in the final stages of the generator project. The cardiac monitors and AutoPulse have been purchased and received. Therefore we will very rapidly be in a position to apply for the 15% reimbursement.

Chief Ober stated the program actually opened back up in October of this year. You are eligible to apply several times a year and they disperse money as they have it. There is no concrete deadline. Obviously the quicker in the Federal fiscal year you get it in the more chances you have.

Commissioner Clark asked if we can submit for any equipment that we want for consideration. Chief Ober replied yes.

Commissioner Gallant stated the check for reimbursement, if approved, is received very quickly. Chief Ober stated yes, after it gets approved. It is very similar to the project we submitted last year.

Commissioner Clark stated it is a lot of paperwork. Chief Ober replied it is but he and Kathy have the process down well.

There being no further public comment, Commissioner Clark made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing closed at 5:37 PM.

New Business (continued)

Commissioner Clark made a motion to resume their regular meeting. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting resumed at 5:37 PM.

New Equipment Demo

Chief Ober stated Captain Michaud is there to provide a demonstration of the AutoPulse. The Commissioners approved the purchase of two new cardiac monitors and two mechanical CPR devices earlier this year. We have had them in service for about two months. The AutoPulse is one of two devices on the market doing mechanical CPR. If you have ever taken a CPR class or seen CPR done by compressions, this is a little bit different way of delivering that. This device doesn't get tired. This device delivers the same compression every single time as long as the battery lasts. We carry an extra battery with it. With this device the blood volume pumped is 130% greater than human chest compression CPR. Studies are now showing that blood volume being pumped throughout the body is really what is saving peoples lives in cardiac arrest. The focus is blood circulation. This device will allow us to be secured in the ambulance. We can actually be seat belted like we are supposed to. This

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will be a benefit to the provider in the back of the ambulance as well as to the patient. If we have to remove a patient from the second floor of the home or down a flight of stairs, this will deliver compressions while we are doing that. Traditionally now we have to stop while we hall them down the stairs, get to the landing, continue for a few minutes and then out to the ambulance. There is a lot of disruption including when we get to the hospital and bring the patient into the ER.

Captain Michaud stated that evidence based medicine has shown us that compressions are really what is saving lives. Ultimately defibrillation or electrical shock to the heart is what gets the heart back into a normalized rhythm but you need compressions to maintain oxygenation to the organs, especially the brain. Due to several factors regular chest compressions a minimally effective. They can deliver between 15% and 20% of what your heart normally pumps. That is very minimal when you are trying to profuse blood all the way up into the vessels of the brain. This provides consistent compression in accordance with the American Heart Association guidelines of 80 to 100 compressions per minute, compressing the chest 20% of the anterior posterior depth every time. Captain Michaud then proceeded with the demonstration explaining how the AutoPulse is deployed and works.

Commissioner Clark asked if these had been used yet. Captain Michaud stated we have not.

Commissioner Clark asked if we are the only department in Lakes Region who has one. Chief Ober stated in this immediate area we are the only one. Barnstead has one, Campton has one, Warren Wentworth has one. Laconia has demoed the other brand, the Lucas II. Captain Michaud stated many of the services in the Concord area have them. Discussion ensued.

Captain Michaud explained that the AutoPulse has the ability to integrate with the X Series monitor. It has not been FDA approved yet. They have been doing it in Europe for many years. As soon as that gets approval, we will be able to defibrillate simultaneously with compressions which will improve the chance of survival even more.

Commissioner Clark asked how many people have been trained on this. Captain Michaud stated that everyone who is an EMT has been trained on it and even people that aren't EMTs on the Call Department attended the training so they are familiar with it.

Vacation Holdover Request

Chief Ober stated he has a request from Firefighter Farrell to carry 24 hours of vacation through the end of March. His anniversary is the end of January. Commissioner Clark made a motion to allow Derek to carry the vacation time forward. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Old Business

Personnel Manual

Commissioner Clark gave an update on the status of the review by Peg O'Brien of Devine, Millimet & Branch. They have about 10 pages to go through. He will probably have that for the next meeting. Chief Ober stated if she e-mails the final copy we can print that.

Other Business

Tilton-Northfield Water District

Commissioner Clark stated he has some information that was brought to his attention today that was on pressurized hydrants. At the joint meeting they had with the Water Commissioners they had talked about whether this amount should be a warrant article or part of the operating budget. Commissioner Gallant had stated at that meeting that he has tried for three years to get it on the operating budget.

Commissioner Gallant stated he has tried for many years and DRA has always stated that although it wasn't necessary, it would be prudent.

Commissioner Clark stated that Scott Davis checked with Shelley Gerlarneau at DRA. She seems to think it is alright to put it in our operating budget. Scott would like to have that part of the operating budget.

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Commissioner Gallant stated it will be buried that way. He doesn't see any problem with it being a warrant article.

Commissioner Clark stated they can certainly talk about it. He was just bringing it to our attention that Shelley says it needn't be a warrant article. Chief Ober asked if she said why the change of mind. Commissioner Clark read *"Hi Scott, In speaking with you yesterday, you indicated that the payment for pressurized hydrants is a necessity for the Fire District to operate and is a payment made every year to the Water District, therefore the funds needed could be included within the operating budget and not shown on the warrant as a separate individual article. Hope this helps, Shelley Gerlarneau"*. That was in reply to his question to her *"Shelley, the Tilton Northfield Fire District Commissioners met with the Tilton Northfield Water District Commissioners last week and we discussed the following warrant article that is placed on the warrant for the Fire District every year. My question to you is, the pressurized hydrants are a bill that they pay for every year. Can this be placed as a line item in the operating budget rather than being in a warrant article? Thank you. Scott Davis. Commissioner, Tilton Northfield Water District."*

Commissioner Gallant stated the reason that they have always insisted is because it is such a large percentage of our budget.

Commissioner Clark stated they could look at that. Commissioner Gallant stated he would like to talk with her and give her the amount in relationship to the total budget.

Commissioner Clark asked Commissioner Gallant if he has tried to do this for years why the resistance now? Commissioner Gallant stated it has always been a bone of contention. He doubts you will find anybody who is against it being a warrant article.

Chief Ober stated they should get feedback on why did they recommend it as a warrant article for so many years before this year.

Commissioner Gallant stated as a rule of thumb if it is over 10% of the budget it be put on as a warrant article. It is not required. It is a rule of thumb.

Chief Ober stated it is the dollar amount that is driving their recommendation compared to the budget, not necessarily the topic.

Commissioner Clark read from the Water District meeting minutes regarding this.

#### 2013 Budget

Commissioner Clark stated he talked with Don Stevens about the budget meeting. The budget figures he got indicated the Commissioners had their figures filled out. It almost looked like they voted on that. Commissioner Clark stated just to clarify that he would like to move that since they have not voted for a Commissioners budget that all financial figures including the \$806,946 amount which they recommended be used with the Fire District Budget Committee on their December 5<sup>th</sup> Commissioners meeting is not to be used until they have approved a Commissioners budget and the Budget Committee comes up with a budget they stay with what they have at this time. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Gallant stated he didn't get it. The Budget Committee isn't going to come up with a budget until you give them something to look at. Commissioner Clark stated that what he got was a budget report that had both the Chief's and the Commissioners' numbers filled in. It was filled in because the Chief had gotten the okay to use that \$806,946 figure. Commissioner Gallant stated you made the motion and we voted on. Commissioner Clark stated that was just a for instance figure. It wasn't cast in stone. The appearance made it look like we had voted on that and that was not the case. He would like to clarify this with that motion. Chief Ober asked if that was the case why did they approve him to put that in that line. Commissioner Clark stated because at that meeting coming from you two, it was said they really need to have something and we hadn't and he stressed as far as the salary worksheets he would like to have both of those presented at that time which they weren't. He would also like to have pointed out that this is not a Commissioners budget. This is a temporary figure because you guys said the Budget Committee needed to have numbers to look at. He wants to erase

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any confusion. They did not lock into any numbers. Chief Ober disagreed. It seems like they went through that budget and they finished it. The numbers were okayed to be put in all those line. Now you are changing your mind. Commissioner Gallant stated that is what the votes reflect. Commissioner Clark stated there wasn't a vote taken. Chief Ober asked why weren't those numbers withheld until the Board decided. Commissioner Auger stated if you go back after the minutes it will explain what you did. Commissioner Clark stated he was led to believe they needed something to look at. Chief Ober stated your first comment is why don't we give them some options and let them decide. His reply to that was that was not how they are going to work. They want you to present a plan and they will go off the plan. They don't want options. Then you said okay let's put this money in there and it will allow the Commissioners to do one of three things. The dollar amount would allow the Commissioners to do a couple of different things. Commissioner Clark stated that had in there some money that was put in there as an example but was not cast in stone. They had not made any decision on adding an additional guy and the money was in there for that. Commissioner Ober stated you shouldn't have don't that because the budget has gone through. Commissioner Clark stated it hasn't. Chief Ober stated the budget has been filled in as you instructed and forwarded that to the Budget Committee. Commissioner Gallant stated that Chief Ober had clarified that with Commissioner Clark and he said yes, go ahead and do that. Commissioner Clark stated there has been no budget voted on by the Commissioners. Chief Ober disagreed. He stated they had two work sessions and completed the budget. Commissioner Gallant stated that is the way he felt when he left there and then he sent out an email because, as usual, and he changed his mind. Chief Ober stated the Budget Committee met and have gone through maybe almost half. Commissioner Auger agreed they have gone through half. Chief Ober stated they have meetings scheduled in January. They are half into it.

Jane Alden spoke as a member of the Budget Committee. They met and apparently there is confusion as Commissioner Auger was with us at the Budget Committee meeting and he is the one that said to go ahead and vote on portions of the budget. There was no indication that was not acceptable to do. That it had not been accepted by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Clark stated that it was his understanding that the wages & benefits portion specifically were not dialed in. They had not made any decision on that. They talked about that at great length. He was concerned when he found out from Donnie Stevens that a completed budget was filled out with Commissioners numbers that were in there that were not voted on by the Commissioners at the last meeting they had. This motion is just to clear that up to make sure they all understand that that is the case.

Chief Ober stated those numbers were absolutely approved by the Commissioners at the last work session. He asked Commissioner Clark specifically about that number that fill in to the salary line. Then they had a discussion because they didn't have all the numbers about Medicare, FICA, and would it be okay if we just filled those in appropriately off that number that you asked to put in there because it was different. Commissioner Gallant stated and the answer was yes. Chief Ober stated we adjusted those numbers accordingly, the retirement and all those numbers that go on a formula. That is why they got that budget in the fashion they got it.

Commissioner Clark stated he fully disagreed that they did not vote on it. There was discussion. There were pieces. Chief Ober asked Commissioner Clark if they were not in the same room. Commissioner Clark stated they absolutely were and there were a lot of things talked about. Chief Ober stated he asked him specifically about that \$806 number and the answer was yes, put it in there. Commissioner Clark stated for point of discussion, not for this is all. Tom had stated that there was going to be follow up meetings.

Commissioner Gallant stated it says here "*Commissioner Clark made a motion for total salaries and wages not to exceed \$806,946.80 and it will be up to the Commissioners and Fire Chief to hammer out how they are going to spend that money in that particular area. Discussion ensued.*" It doesn't say we are going to talk about cutting it back or making it more or whatever. It is how. That is exactly what the conversation was. The only change to that is the email you sent out after you slept on it.

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Commissioner Clark stated there is a whole string of comments that were made during that. There were several of them. Earlier on it says "*Commissioner Clark made a recommendation that they present both the worksheet that he developed and the most recent one from Chief to the Budget Committee. Explain that they are at loggerheads right now. They haven't taken a vote. Go in and explain what the differences are.*" Then you said you can't do it, it is not up to them to decide how we run.

Chief Ober stated Paul you have had experience with the budget. That is not what they want. They don't want to have, hey what do you guys think. Here are three options. That was his comment. They want numbers. They want you to come in with a plan. They don't want you to say how about this or how about that. That was his point. His other point is you guys gave me numbers to put in your line. That is as clear as it can be. That is exactly what the Budget Committee was given and that is exactly what that motion and vote that Tom just read was. That was at the end of the meeting after all that discussion. As a matter of fact he clarified it with him.

Commissioner Clark stated he doesn't recall that it was that way. That is what he was concerned about. They had talked about not deciding how the wages & benefits were going to be set. Not deciding whether or not they were going to put on an extra shift.

Chief Ober stated he knows they talked about a lot of stuff. At the end of the meeting that was the motion that was made.

Commissioner Clark stated that was a temporary figure for them to look at. Tom had stated they were going to have future meetings we could clarify it again.

Chief Ober stated then he was not clear in his instructions to him. Commissioner Gallant stated he was clear. Chief Ober stated he knew he was clear. Commissioner Gallant stated if the tape were there it would prove that he was clear.

Commissioner Gallant then quoted from the minutes "*Commissioner Gallant stated the Chief's narrative should cover the Chief's budget and needs the Commissioner's budget. The only thing that is going to differ in the whole thing is salary & wages and benefits. Discussion ensued about year end actuals.*"

Commissioner Clark stated salary, wages and benefits is a big part of that whole discussion. Commissioner Gallant stated that is referring to the narrative because you gave him a number. Chief Ober stated that your number that you instructed me to put in your column is different than the number he had presented them with. Commissioner Clark stated that is right. They were within a couple thousand dollars. Chief Ober stated what he was referring to was that the budget narrative needs to address that there is a difference there. Commissioner Gallant stated that is what he said. He referred to the narrative. Chief Ober stated that is exactly what he was talking about.

Commissioner Clark stated he stands firm on how he believes the whole thing went down. He has a motion on the floor, it has been seconded. If there isn't any further discussion he would like to call for a vote. Commissioner Clark and Commissioner Auger for, Commissioner Gallant opposed.

Chief Ober stated you need to be very clear on your instructions. He is finding it very difficult to work with the Board. You were clear once and you are changing your mind less than two weeks. This is not easy to work with. Maybe you want to just figure out the budget and work with it from here on out. He doesn't know what to tell him, Pat.

Commissioner Clark stated it was really clear to him that they were going to come back and talk about the budget again in January.

Chief Ober disagreed. It is in the minutes they just approved. He doesn't know how that is not clear to him. He needs to instruct him now on what to put in there. The Budget Committee has the budget. They have started it. They need direction. He needs direction because apparently every two weeks this is going to change.

Commissioner Clark stated he doesn't think it will. He asked Commissioner Auger what his feelings were on the meeting they had.

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Chief Ober stated it doesn't matter what your feelings were. It matters on how the minutes were reflected. Commissioner Gallant stated they just approved them. Chief Ober stated and then you changed your mind. He doesn't know what they want to happen here. He doesn't know what direction you want this to go in. He can tell him right now that this is not a good direction, not at all. A lot of work goes into that budget. In two weeks you have completely turned that thing around. You might as well just shred it and throw it in the air.

Commissioner Clark stated a very small part of it, wages & benefits. Chief Ober stated a very small part of it, I beg to differ. Commissioner Clark stated it is a big dollar amount and they hadn't decided how they were going to treat that.

Chief Ober asked when the Board was going to decide where they want to go with this. Commissioner Clark stated right after the first of the year. Chief Ober responded, right after the first of the year.

Commissioner Clark stated they are not going to do anything. He asked in the memo he sent out the very next day if they could meet in December and both of them said they could not.

Chief Ober stated that is a good time to start scheduling meetings, two weeks to the end of the year.

Commissioner Clark stated well, it was the very next day after our meeting.

Chief Ober stated you can probably tell by his tone how disruptive this is. How are you going to fix it? When are we going to know from the Board where we are going?

Commissioner Clark stated right after the first of the year. You guys can't meet before then so I guess we will have to do it right after the first of the year.

Chief Ober wished him good luck.

**Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine  
Administrative Assistant

**Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:** January 16, 2013 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.