

## Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	02/26/14, 17:30
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Patrick Clark, Les Dolecal; Deputy Chief Michael Robinson, Fire Prevention Captain Timothy Joubert, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine

Others Present: Tilton Selectman Sandy Plessner, TNFD Budget Committee Member Jane Alden

### Minutes

Commissioner Clark made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of December 30, 2013, January 6, 2014, January 6<sup>th</sup> nonpublic, January 8<sup>th</sup>, January 13<sup>th</sup>, January 13<sup>th</sup> nonpublic, and January 15<sup>th</sup> as read. Commissioner Dolecal seconded the motion. Commissioner Clark commented we have come a long way in trimming the meeting minutes down and making them less volatile. He is concerned that some of them don't have a lot of meat to them. He would like to accept these the way they are and then make some points that will go into this month's minutes. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Commissioner Clark commented there is about a 4.3% increase in the Budget Committee's budget compared to what was adopted last year. That may seem high but there were a lot of sacrifices made that should be made clear to people.

- Instead of having the pay increase retroactive to January 1<sup>st</sup> it will go into effect after District Meeting the week including April 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a permanent change with a one time savings of about \$4,500 that we all agreed to.
- There was a proposal to add another full time employee to make another shift. All the Commissioners agreed not to do that. There was a comment that they were going to wait to look at doing another shift until the new Chief came on board. He wanted to make it clear that for this coming year we would not be adding another person to make another shift. The Chief, coming on board, can review that if he wants to, present it through the budget process and try to make an argument for that. One of the reasons for not adding another person to make another shift was the State pulled out of its obligation to help fund retirement. It left the Fire District picking up the tab of an almost 5% increase in retirement alone this year. That added about \$38,000 in the retirement area. Retirement for Group II, which is for all employees except Kathy, went up to 27.74% from 22.89%. Those are increases that the Fire District can't control. "The only way we can control it is by not adding more people and doing things we can control." This had an impact on their decision.
- The last thing was insurance. That was over a 20% increase. More than half of that had to do with the demographics in the department. "We went from four single policies to having just two. We went from six two-person policies to seven and we went from two family plans to four. Just those changes alone increased the cost of insurance a dramatic amount. Those are things we cannot control. Insurance companies go up in rates. The actual rate increase was 7.9%. To take care of

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that for the voters we went to a less expensive plan that had more co-pays that need to be absorbed by the firefighters.”

Correspondence

There was no new correspondence.

Public Comment

Jane Alden stated there is an increase in the stipend for the Commissioners this year that the Budget Committee voted on. She wanted the Commissioners to be aware that it may come up at District Meeting that they cut monies to the firefighters but the Commissioners are getting an increase in their stipend. Commissioner Clark commented that while cuts were made, the step increase of 2½% did go through. Jane commented that she is not questioning it, she just wanted them to be prepared should it be brought up.

Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Auger reported that Roland was not able to make the meeting tonight. Kathy commented they have a copy of the Treasurer's Report in their packet.

Commissioner Clark commented the big thing is the Land & Building Fund has \$218,307 in it right now. They are putting forth a couple warrant articles to increase that in other ways.

Commissioner Auger commented that the Operating Account balance was good as of February 19<sup>th</sup>.

Fire Prevention Report

Captain Joubert stated they have his report in their packet. Even though he was doing a couple of different jobs, inspections were still getting done. He reported nothing very major has occurred in the past month. There were some businesses that just opened, the new Tilton Collision Center on Route 140. Walmart had their grand opening although they are not done quite yet. Freudenberg's new addition is done and they are in the process of moving equipment in. Aspen Dental is up and running. A new barber shop opened on Main Street. There is a lot of commercial activity. Granite State Credit Union is going in on Route 140.

Captain Joubert reported he took part in an in-service training at Winnisquam Regional School. He worked with the nurses about three hours on a mass casualty incident. It was a positive experience for all who attended.

Captain Joubert reported his goal for this year will be to work on a new fee schedule for Fire Prevention fees. There are a few commercial properties that they have been to half a dozen times this month alone and there have been no fees associated with that. Commissioner Auger commented that he is a firm believer that if they have to go someplace eight or nine time and it takes a lot of time they should get something back from that. Commission Clark wanted to know if Captain Joubert will be reviewing what other departments in the area do or if he gets that information from the Fire Marshalls Office. Captain Joubert explained that it will be other departments in the area. He met with Laconia six months ago and got their fee schedule. We are low for a lot of them. We don't charge for repeat inspections, i.e. if he does an inspection and it fails and he has to go back, they don't charge them again. Some departments do that. There is a lot to look at and the Fire District want to be fair.

Commissioner Clark stated the question came up and asked what the distinction between code enforcement for the fire department and building inspector code enforcement for the Town is.

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Captain Joubert commented that happens quite a bit. He inspects and enforces life safety. The Town Code Enforcement Officer is building code. Although they may look at a few of the same things, his primary focus is life safety while the Code Enforcement Officer goes by the adopted building code.

Chief's Report

Deputy Robinson reported they have his final time card in front of them. The second page is year-to-date calls. Out of the 132 calls there were 22 second calls and 4 third calls.

Commissioner Dolecal asked what was meant by second call. Deputy Robinson explained that they are already out on one emergency when they get another emergency.

Commissioner Auger requested the second calls be broken down into whether they medical calls, fire calls, etc. Captain Joubert commented that can be done through FireHouse, the FD software. Commissioner Auger asked if any of the second calls were out of town or if they were all local. Captain Joubert commented that the majority of them were in town. A lot of motor vehicle accidents as well due to the weather. Deputy Robinson stated the point they are trying to make is that the duty crew is committed on one of these calls and extra help comes in to help back up these second calls.

Commissioner Dolecal asked for clarification if the 132 calls were year-to-date. Captain Joubert replied that the 132 calls were in January. Discussion ensued.

Deputy Chief Robinson informed the Board that throughout the month of January they were battling the cold weather. Shift Valovanie responded to and were the interior attack crew to three major fires, one in our community and two in others, in about a 12 hour time. "They were busy. A lot of firefighters won't see that in their career. They got themselves back into service immediately."

Deputy Chief Robinson informed the Board that a phone call from the Administrative Assistant at 3M was received advising there was money available and she had to have it by the next day. Captain Joubert was able to pull it all together and get the grant application to her. Captain Joubert explained the focus of the grant was on the training of our personnel. In the grant he put in for an airway training mannequin and fire simulation software. He explained how each can be used.

Deputy Robinson reported he met with the Chief first thing Monday morning. He gave him a little insight of what is going on in the department. He commented on the time without the Chief. He learned a lot. He already knew Kathy but he learned a lot about Captain Joubert. He learned how much he knows and respects the call forces of the department. He and Captain Joubert have some great ideas they are looking forward to working on with the Chief, i.e. Explorer program, recruitment. He has a comfort level with Captain Joubert that he never had before. They worked together and they both learned a lot.

New Business

Commissioner Clark commented it seemed the "Team" (Mike Robinson, Tim Joubert and Kathy Tobine) had everything well in hand. Everything rolled out nicely. A lot went into that. The Board had talked about bonuses for the three. Commissioner Clark made a motion that they execute the bonuses of \$1,500 each for the three for the extra work they put in. He thanked them for the work that was put in. Commissioner Dolecal thanked them for having the courage to do it. It took courage. Captain Joubert commented it was a great learning experience for him. Commissioner Dolecal seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed. Discussion ensued about which account the checks would be issued from. It was decided they would be issued out of the payroll account as a separate check from the regular payroll.

Deputy Chief Robinson informed the Board that Chief Sitar was thoroughly impressed with the swearing in ceremony. This should be done when the officers are promoted, both call and permanent. It is important to come up with a retirement process. We should have a policy in place for this.

Captain Joubert reported they are in the process of scheduling appreciation night. Retired firefighters are being contacted and asked to participate.

#### Old Business

##### Warrant Articles

Commissioner Clark stated he would like to review the warrant articles to make sure everyone was on the same page.

- Warrant Article 7. To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) for the Land and Building Capital Reserve Fund with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unexpended Fund Balance. *This article is recommended by the Budget Committee and the Commissioners. Majority vote required.*

Commissioner Clark commented this was discussed at length when they put it together. One of the things they were trying to figure out was how much money was in the unreserved fund account. They were also educated on how much money they wanted to have in there. The 2012 audited amount of money in the unreserved fund balance is \$288,441. For 2013 we have about \$25,000 available. That needs to be audited. The recommended amount is anywhere from 7% to 18% of the budget or two months of the budget. "Taking the Fire District budget of \$1,701,000, divided by 12 and multiplied by 2 yields \$283,500 plus the \$25,000 gives us the cushion we need. We are well within the comfort level to be able to out and do that" said Clark. Kathy explained that the auditors had sent a copy of Best Practice which states "GFOA recommends, at a minimum, that general-purpose governments, regardless of size, maintain unrestricted fund balance in their general fund of no less than two months of regular general fund operating revenues or regular general fund operating expenditures."

- Article 8: To see if the District will vote to amend the purpose of the Apparatus Replacement and Equipment Fund to expenditures for the purposes of Apparatus and Equipment Replacement and construction costs of either a new facility or addition to a current facility. *This article is recommended by the Commissioners. Two-thirds (2/3) majority vote required.*

Commissioner Clark commented that people have been calling him and asking him what they are doing. He explained they are not asking for any money. They will have a separate line like they have vehicles on the CIP. It will go before the voters should they decide to expend the money. It is not going from the Apparatus & Equipment Fund to the Land & Building Fund. It will stay in the Apparatus & Equipment Fund. It will be dealt with like a fire truck. The goal is to try to set up another way of saving money up to have a good down payment on any building we need to do. Something needs to be done with that 1895 building. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Auger recommended they bring the CIP with them to District Meeting. Commissioner Clark stated the goal is to get a new facility and not buy new equipment just to buy new equipment.

##### District Meeting

Commissioner Clark explained that is the Budget Committee's meeting. They may ask the Commissioners or Chief to explain something but it is their meeting.

Commissioner Auger asked Deputy Robinson and/or Captain Joubert to stand in for Chief Sitar. He explained it is not fair to the new Chief to expect him to be able to answer the questions. Deputy Robinson commented he would be happy to assist with that.

Warrant Article 9: Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Billing

Commissioner Dolecal requested they go over the spreadsheet Kathy provided.

Discussion ensued about the bills for Tilton and Northfield coming to the District for the District to pay. Tilton's bill from LRMA is \$32,779.46. Northfield's bill is \$34,396.97. If the bills come to the District rather than the towns the total bill would be \$67,176.43 which would then be split according to DRA's tax formula with Tilton paying 62.68906% and Northfield paying 37.31094%. Tilton's cost for LRMFA would then increase \$9,332.81 to \$42,112.27 while Northfield's cost would decrease \$9,332.91 to \$25,064.14.

Discussion ensued about the Towns withdrawing from LRMFA and the District joining assuming they would be voted in as a member. If this was done, the annual bill using LRMFA formula would be \$63,978.70. Tilton's portion would increase \$7,328.19 to \$40,107.65 while Northfield's portion would decrease \$10,525.91 to \$23,871.06. This would not only affect Tilton and Northfield. It would also affect every town that belongs to LRMFA by increasing their fixed cost from the current 10% being split between 35 towns to being split between 34 towns. This would increase the fixed cost \$96.90 for each town. Kathy explained that if this was what they decided to do they would need to provide LRMFA six months notification.

Commissioner Clark asked if they should take an opinion on what should be done. Commissioner Auger commented they decided not to have an opinion.

Jane Alden commented it will be brought up more at the Town meetings than at District meeting. This is a hot bed of contention all over the State. It is not wise to take a position until you see what position the selectmen in each town are going to take because that is who it is going to hit. It is going to hit each town.

Commissioner Clark commented that Article 9 is advisory only. If Article 9 passes at District meeting, it will need to be brought up by both towns at their annual meeting next year in order to be accepted. If it is passed by both towns, then it goes on to LRMFA. This could affect the District big time. It will be a \$63,000 bill coming to the District that they have not had before. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Clark explained that in order for this to pass, it will have to pass in both Towns.

**Other Business**

Jane Alden complimented everybody that was involved with the reception and swearing in. It was very well handled and very well planned. Commissioner Auger stated it was very well attended. Discussion ensued.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Dolecal 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 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine  
Administrative Assistant

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**Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:** 03/12/14 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main Street, Tilton.