

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	March 12, 2014, 17:300
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM.

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Patrick Clark, Les Dolecal; Chief Michael W. Sitar, Jr., Deputy Chief Michael Robinson, Treasurer Roland Seymour, Fire Prevention Captain Timothy Joubert, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine.

Also Present: Kevin Waldron, Northfield Selectman

Minutes

February 26, 2014

Commissioner Clark made a motion to accept the minutes of February 26, 2014. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Clark had two comments. The bonuses are subject to retirement. The other was the wording on page 5 to do with Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid. He wants to clarify that they were talking about article 9 of the warrant articles. He wanted to clarify that article 9 is advisory only. If it 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. There being no further discussion vote was taken. Motion passed. Minutes accepted as amended.

Correspondence

An email was received from Resident Power regarding the District's electrical rates. Commissioner Auger made a motion to switch to First Point Power for seven months. Commissioner Dolecal seconded the motion. There being no discussion vote was taken. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Kevin Waldron commented that with the power it is necessary to watch them for their rates. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Clark asked that we keep an eye on the rates. Kathy explained we have had Resident Power for over a year. They have been very good about managing our account. When the rates increased with our prior power company they switched us back to PSNH. They then found that First Point Power was cheaper than PSNH so they switched us again.

Commissioner Clark requested Selectman Waldron facilitate a change for the Town of Northfield to make their payments monthly to the Fire District rather than quarterly. Kevin explained that will come up for discussion at their next meeting.

Kevin questioned the sign on the island for the Tilton-Northfield Professional Firefighters seminar. Deputy Robinson explained TNPFF held a training session at Tilton School. They organized the training session. Kevin asked if the TNPFF was allowed to conduct business while on duty. Chief Sitar explained that the seminar took place today and there were three firefighters on duty. Kevin asked if it was a fee based seminar and who gets the money. Chief Sitar explained that the instructors get paid. Kevin wanted to know if the firefighters are collecting fees in addition to being

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paid by the taxpayers while on duty. Deputy Chief Robinson explained that the TNPF sponsored a training held at Tilton School. Commissioner Clark explained that this was not union training. This was firefighter related training that was open to everybody. This has to do with work. Captain Joubert commented that over 100 people from throughout NH and VT that attended the training. There has been a lot of research done lately by the Underwriting Labs and other testing agencies. A Chief and Lieutenant from FDNY came to present their findings. It was an awesome day and everybody got a lot of training from it.

Kevin asked if they were going to look at changes to the current shifts to reduce training overtime. Chief Sitar replied he has not looked at that. He is not looking to change anything at this time. Things appear to be working well. He is not looking to change anything unless he sees something he feels we can improve. Commissioner Clark commented that the District has a training budget and will do its best to stick to that. Kevin commented about the shifts. When a shift is training other people come in on overtime to train with them. He said this is an unacceptable use of overtime. He would like to see rotating shifts. Chief Sitar explained there are new challenges, new ways of doing things. They are not always working with same people. If people are on vacation or out sick that shift has to be covered. Discussion ensued. Captain Joubert explained they conduct daily shift training. Call firefighters are allowed to come in and train. They get paid for that. Career people do not come in when off duty to participate in that training. If training is held outside the department, they get paid overtime. Deputy Robinson explained on Monday night they have company trainings and career personnel do come back for that. Very seldom does a career person come in at their leisure to attend shift training.

Kevin commented he is looking to change what goes on. Nobody seems willing to do anything with the budget except inflate it. Commissioner Dolecal explained they have talked at length about the budget. The budget that was put together was a very responsible budget and they minimized increases wherever they could. The staff in place at that time did a good job helping us work through that. There was an increase that was driven by items out of their control. The firefighters took a hit on their healthcare plan. Commissioner Dolecal stated she "takes exception to his comment". Kevin commented he would have done the budget differently. He does not believe in uncontrolled costs. He can control any cost. Discussion ensued about personnel costs.

Kevin commented that an arrangement has been made for someone within the fire department to hold a CPR course for Northfield PD. Captain Joubert stated there has been a request by both Tilton and Northfield PDs for a CPR class. There are people on staff certified to teach. They are arranging that now. Discussion ensued about the class including the cost and possible overtime. Chief Sitar will oversee this. Commissioner Clark requested the Chief work with the class instructors to minimize overtime. If there is any, levy that on the people they are training. Commissioner Dolecal suggested the Chiefs work this out with the instructors and Captain Joubert. The Board does not want to micromanage this. Chief Sitar commented they will minimize the cost as best they can but they want to be an efficient operation. Efficiency isn't just a dollar. It's time as well.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Seymour presented his report. The balances are through March 12th after some checks were issued.

Apparatus & Equipment Fund collections are \$45,000 to date.

Operating Account revenue is from Tilton. Miscellaneous is the fees for permits issued and includes the return of surplus from HealthTrust. The retiree and employee portions will be returned from that. Discussion ensued about the breakdown of the return of surplus between the employer and employee.

Roland commented that we underspent our budget by approximately \$80,000. Discussion ensued about the unreserved fund balance. Roland explained that after the auditors have completed their audit we will know the amount being added to the unreserved fund balance for 2013.

Discussion ensued about warrant article 7 which is requesting to add \$30,000 to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund from the Unreserved Fund Balance.

Fire Prevention Report

Captain Joubert presented his report. He reported things have slowed down a little. The Town of Tilton had a blood pressure cuff donated to them so he gave them an 1½ hour training on it.

Captain Joubert reported he is reviewing the Fire Prevention fees with the Chief.

Captain Joubert reported that the Fire Marshall's Office released a report today on fire deaths in NH. In 2013, NH had four fire deaths. There have been 11 so far this year not including those from carbon monoxide. Cold weather and increased snow contributed to this.

Chief's Report

Chief Sitar thanked everyone for having him here. He is very excited about the opportunity to be their Fire Chief. He is very impressed with the men and personnel of the Fire Dept. They are highly trained, very professional, very well organized department. He is spending a lot of time reading trying to get caught up on the policies, the budget and how things operate. He thanked Mike Robinson, Tim and Kathy for their help in getting him up to speed.

Chief Sitar reported there were 104 incidents in February; 65 medical, nine of those were simultaneous incidents and two were when we had three at one time. Most of the simultaneous calls were medical, one was a car fire and one carbon monoxide call. They were all handled through call firefighters or mutual aid.

Chief Sitar reported a trainer came in last week that did chain saw class. The first half of the day was classroom and the second half they were out in the woods cutting trees down and working with limbs. Twelve to fifteen people participated. It was an excellent course.

Commissioner Clark requested Chief Sitar present them with a printed report each month containing all this information.

Commissioner Auger commented it is an unfortunate situation the District is in that we cannot hire more people. We have to work with what we have. The District is a small community.

Commissioner Clark commented we are fortunate to be in fantastic mutual aid system. It is one of the best in New England. The advantage is we can rely on other departments to come in. It is nice to have in place. It helps pick up the slack.

Chief Sitar reported they are discussing increasing the size of the call company. Captain Joubert reported the Department had a busy night one night where Belmont had fire and Laconia had a four alarm fatal fire. The duty crew went to Belmont. The engine got out right away with four or five call members. They went to the Laconia fire. There were also five people at the station ready

to go to the next call. The ladder has been getting used quite a bit. There has been great response from the call company on the fire side. We still struggle on the EMS side. Over the past month we have had a really good response from the call personnel.

Discussion ensued about contacting employers regarding employees being able to leave for calls. Deputy Robinson reported they are looking at reclassification of positions. This reclassification would allow people who are not certified to join and hold other positions, i.e. drive. They have been talking about the explorer program. One of the call firefighters stepped up and expressed interest in it. Discussion ensued. Chief Sitar explained this is not just a problem here, it is a nationwide problem.

New Business

Deputy Robinson reported that that appreciation night is April 10th at the Pines Community Center. Chief Sitar presented the Board with a list of equipment. He reported he has been going over a list of surplus equipment with some of the men. They developed list. A determination was made of keep, what to dispose of, etc. The list was discussed. Chief Sitar requested direction from the Board.

Discussion ensued about grants and how they work. It was explained that grants are separate from the budget and are for a specific reason. Those funds can only be spent on what the grant was written for.

Commissioner Clark requested Chief Sitar provide them with a report on what is decided about each item. They will then let the public know that this equipment will be disposed of. Commissioner Auger would rather put the items on eBay than hold an auction. Commissioner Dolecal commented she would like to be more proactive about the inventory of equipment. Captain Joubert explained they do have that information. Commissioner Dolecal requested when the items are gotten rid of it that it be taken off the inventory. Deputy Robinson explained most of the inventory is in FireHouse. Commissioner Clark made a motion for Chief Sitar and the men to come up with a plan to dispose of the equipment appropriately and share it with the Board. The Board will figure out how to share it with the public and the District on how to access this information. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion vote was taken. Motion passed.

Kathy reported she had attended a Benefits Administrators Workshop at NH Interlocal Trust. She learned, among other things, that the District's health care plan for its employees is not considered a Cadillac plan so the District will not be subject to the 40% Excise Tax on amounts over a "high cost plan" limit which begins in January 2018.

Old Business

Captain Joubert asked the status of the paramedic education policy. Commissioner Clark gave an update and stated this will be dealt with next month.

Other Business

Handouts for District meeting were discussed.

Chief Sitar commented that the CIP has a new pumper scheduled to be purchased next year. He asked the Board if it was okay to start a committee working on this. The Board explained they do not get involved with that. They leave that up to the Chief.

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Adjournment

Commissioner Auger 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 19:05

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: April 9, 2014 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.