

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	September 29, 2014, 17:30
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Northfield Town Hall, Upstairs Meeting Room, 21 Summer Street, Northfield

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

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Patrick Clark, Les Dolecal; Chief Michael Sitar

Needs Assessment

Chief Sitar reported he put a committee together to review our current facilities, what our needs would be and what our limitations would be due to the limitations of our current facilities. They met twice a month and gathered data. He produced this report.

Chief Sitar highlighted the report. The Fire District has two buildings; one built in 1986 on Park Street and the other on Center Street which was built in 1867 and then doubled in size in 1895. It is comprised of 40 square miles and approximately 9,000 people. The fire stations are eight tenths of a mile apart. ISO regulations do not want the fire stations that close together as it extends your response time to a larger area of the District than if they were spread out. The limitations are numerous. The Board requested the Chief review each limitation.

Limitations:

- We are unable to house student firefighters, which not only limits the number of responders, especially at night, but also inhibits our ability to evaluate students in our work environment for possible future employment. Discussion ensued about the benefits of live in students.
- Our staff is at one station and is restricted as to what apparatus that they can choose from initially to respond to an emergency. There are times when an emergency is better suited with a response of one of the vehicles stationed at Park Street. In those cases the on duty crew or a member of the on duty crew has to first respond to Park Street to get the most appropriate vehicle before they respond to the emergency scene.
- The travel path from the living quarters to the apparatus floor at Center Street is very poor. The members must go down a relatively steep set of stairs, duck under the second floor header, take a left at the first landing, and then must descend three more stairs to the apparatus floor. If it is an engine response, you must work your way around the ambulance to get to the engine.
- We are unable to wash the apparatus at Center Street as there are no floor drains. We wash them outside in the winter and the apron becomes slippery. The apron is actually Center Street. When a vehicle is pulled out to park on the apron, they are actually parked on Center Street and are blocking Center Street.
- There are no maintenance bays for our vehicles. Any maintenance done at Park Street on a vehicle now blocks access and possible a response of other vehicles in that station. Each station should have a dedicated maintenance bay.
- There are no wash bays. The undercarriages of the engines have corrosion problems due to the road chemicals used during the cold weather which does not get washed off. Each station should have a dedicated wash bay.

- All our apparatus bays are full and there is no room for additional apparatus. We keep one vehicle outside right not. If and when the department obtains an additional engine or ambulance, there is no garage space left to store the vehicle out of the weather.
- Access to and from Center street is very poor both physically and visually. The sight lines when exiting Rescue Road are blocked by vehicles parked on Main Street; which makes for a dangerous exit. The Center Street Station cannot be easily seen from Main Street.
- The size of the Center Street station doors limit the size of apparatus that can be stationed there. Modern apparatus bay doors are 14 feet high by 14 feet wide.
- The apparatus bays are too narrow. They should be 20 feet wide. This allows for proper access and egress to and from the vehicles. Additionally this allows for proper inspection of the vehicles and equipment.
- There is no emergency back-up power at Park Street. When commercial power is lost, there are no lights, no heat and the doors must be raised and closed manually.
- Park Street has no area within the station to have a private conversation. There is no office space. The EMTs must go to Center Street to fill out incident reports after returning from a response.
- There is no adequate area at either station to test, clean, or dry hose. If hose comes back dirty, you have to lay it out in the street to wash it. Most fire stations just build a tower to dry it.
- The floor drains at Park Street do not comply with current environmental standards. There is no water/oil separator.
- Neither Park Street nor Center Street is ADA compliant for members and especially visitors.
- The exterior lighting at Park Street is inadequate. This makes for a dangerous situation when members respond to the station in the night time hours.
- There are no living quarters at Park Street. It is a garage and a bathroom.
- There is no separation from the public access area and the members living area at Center Street. Living quarters to a firefighter should be like someone's home. It is where they live for their 24 hour shift period and they should have some private space available to them during that time.
- The fitness area at Center Street is not separate from the apparatus room. The apparatus room is where vehicles are stored and is not an area designed or clean enough for a fitness area. Park Street has no fitness area.
- There are no public rest rooms at either station.
- Both stations lack appropriate space for storage of firefighting and rescue equipment, EMS equipment, cleaning and other supplies, and file archive storage.
- There is inadequate space and facilities to store member's turnout gear. Firefighters should have 2 sets of gear and we should have enough gear storage for 50 members.
- There is inadequate turnout gear washing and drying facilities. We do have a turnout gear washing machine at Park Street but there is no dryer. Discussion ensued about a dryer.
- There is no clean area to fill and maintain the SCBAs. The SCBAs provide our firefighters with the air they need to breathe in a hazardous environment. Chief Sitar explained you should have a separate room for cleaning and maintaining this equipment. It is imperative that this equipment be maintained in the best environment possible as our firefighters lives depend on this equipment.
- There is no area for equipment and personal cleaning or decontamination. Every fire produces hazardous chemicals and soot. This equipment and our personnel must be cleansed of these materials immediately after every fire to limit their exposure to these hazardous materials. Male firefighters are two times as likely to get prostate cancer and women firefighters are two times more likely to get breast cancer than their counterparts.
- There is no area to display our antique hand tub currently displayed at AutoServ or any of the department's historical memorabilia.

Commissioner Dolecal asked if there were any strengths at the two firehouses. Chief Sitar explained that the Park Street Station is located near the center of the District. Commissioner Auger explained when they purchased the property it was with the purpose to expand over time. It is close to 93. The only disadvantage is you can't go north.

Chief Sitar commented that the majority of the calls are in the Village District with 60% of the calls being in Tilton and 40% in Northfield. Discussion ensued on the study that the Firefighters had done on response times. Commissioner Clark has the study and will return it.

Apparatus Bays: Chief Sitar reported that we currently have place for 12 pieces of apparatus. In future design we should have place for 16 to 18 pieces of apparatus. We should have a maintenance bay and a wash bay.

Auxiliary Spaces: There are auxiliary spaces off the apparatus bays that should be attached to the apparatus bays; hose storage areas, gear washing and drying, decontamination and cleaning facilities, SCBA filling and maintenance, equipment and storage as well as areas for technical training that don't cost a lot of money but is highly valuable. Discussion ensued about training areas. Chief Sitar added another auxiliary area would be EMS supplies. This would be a room that would need to be secured.

Appropriate Living Areas:

- Kitchen with commercial grade countertop and appliances. They looked at using residential grade but basically for a little more money they last three times as long. As many surfaces as possible including the countertops should be stainless steel.
- A dining room where the firefighters could sit down and eat a normal meal like at a kitchen table situation.
- A day room where the firefighters could sit down and relax in some off time.
- There should be separate dorm rooms for each firefighter. They have discovered that bunk rooms promote poor sleeping and the spread of germs. Individual dorm spaces are recommended for every firefighter on shift. If you house students, they should have their own dorm space. There should also be a couple extra spaces like when call guys come in to man the station at night when everyone is on a call. They should have a space to lie down and rest as well. Discussion ensued about providing sleeping quarters for call firefighters. Commissioner Dolecal asked what the industry standard is for gender. Chief Sitar explained that it is separate everything by gender. Discussion ensued about gender specific requirements.
- Locker room facilities are needed. There are different options. You can have the lockers in the dorm rooms, the hallway or a rocker room.
- A laundry room is needed for uniforms. You do not wash contamination from the turnout gear.
- A fitness area should be provided. That should be a room designed to be appropriate for fitness equipment.
- An outdoor patio with barbeque equipment should be provided for cooking and eating outdoors when weather permits.

Public Space:

- ADA compliant bathrooms for the public. No building can be built or rehabbed today without that. That is the way the law is.
- There should be a lobby area so when people come into one of our buildings they are captured within a lobby. They are out of the weather and somebody can greet them and direct them to the appropriate area.
- We should have a training room which can also be used as a community meeting room. It should be sized to hold the entire staff of the fire department as a minimum. If you want it to be larger that is

okay as well depending on what other uses the community would like for that space. Chief Sitar gave several examples of uses for a community room. Discussion ensued.

Administrative Area: Chief Sitar commented they will need a Chief's office, Administrative Assistant office, Deputy Chief's office, Fire Prevention office, EMS office and an office for the Duty officer. A small conference room large enough for 10 to 12 people will be needed in addition to the training room. A space will also be needed for IT/communications equipment, a file storage area and an area for office machines.

Outside:

- An employee parking area with parking enough so everyone on duty has a parking spot and everybody who is coming on duty has a parking spot.
- There should be visitor parking with handicapped accessible parking.
- Exterior lighting has to be appropriate and ADA compliant.
- The landscaping should be attractive but not high maintenance. Asphalt works well.
- The exterior drainage should be appropriately engineered so the water runs away from the facility and is captured and complies with environmental laws.
- Vehicle access to and from the facility so emergency apparatus has its own egress and ingress separate from visitor ingress and egress.

Additional Systems: You will need an automatic fire alarm protection system, fire alarm system, HVAC system, hood and duct system in the kitchen, diesel exhaust removal system, IT network, phone intercom system, emergency generators, UPS or uninterruptable power supply systems which is a system that bridges the time between losing commercial power to the time the emergency generator kicks on. You need an air compressor for tools in the shop area and to plug the trucks in to, a breathing air compressor for SCBA, communications tower for the antennas a fire station. An alerting PA system so when you get a call the lights automatically come on and you hear the emergency. An access control system will be needed for interior and exterior with swipe cards that allow you into the building and certain other areas where you need the correct card to enter. A closed circuit tv system so you can monitor certain interior and exterior spaces.

Options:

The Committee discussed possible options. One option included building a new facility at a location to be determined and sell the two current fire stations. Another possibility is to construct an addition and renovate the Park Street station and sell the Center Street station so everything moves to Park Street. Another option would be to construct an addition to and renovate the Park Street station, close and sell the Center Street station and build another fire station on the other side of Route 20 in Tilton. Discussion ensued about staffing and equipment. Partnering with the Town of Tilton to construct a new public safety complex in the eastern portion of Tilton and partnering with the Town of Northfield to construct a public safety complex at the Northfield station are options.

Commissioner Clark believes that the first priority is to determine what the public wants them to do as to what option they present. They need to figure out what people want and move ahead with the design. They need to decide on how a committee should be formed. Commissioner Dolecal wanted to know what they are going to charge the committee with. Discussion ensued. There will be two charges. The first will be to determine what option they want to go with as a general public. The next option will be to come up with a final plan on what they want to do. Commissioner Clark commented that they need to have costs. They need to know what the cost will be for the options and what the cost will be for any additional staffing. They also need to know what the effect on the tax rate will be.

Commissioner Auger does not believe they can sell Center Street. Discussion ensued about who owns Center Street.

Discussion about the possibility of buildings within the District that may be retrofitted for the fire department.

Chief Sitar commented that the next step would be to form a committee to decide what path they are going to take. Discussion ensued about the square footage cost of the different options. Discussion ensued about response times within the District.

Discussion ensued about bringing a consultant or architectural firm on board to help with this. The Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire the consultant/architectural firm was discussed. Commissioner Clark commented that Lakes Region Community Planning can do forward planning. They can project what the build out will look like 50 years from now. Based on that, they can predict what the need is. Chief Sitar remarked that what they should be looking at is what makes the most sense the long range whether it be a brand new facility, an addition at Park Street and a newer facility in East Tilton, just a whole new facility somewhere else or a little bit of this, a little bit of that. The educational process is us educating the general public on what our needs are, what our limitations are, what this option is going to cost, what that option is going to cost. We shouldn't give the public multiple options. When we go to District meeting for a vote, it should be what we have come up with. This is what it is going to cost. It was agreed that Park Street was going to be a factor in this.

The Board requested Chief Sitar draft an RFP for the next meeting.

Other Business

Discussion ensued about setting Kathy up at the Water District when she returns to work. Wireless via microwave was discussed for the phones and computer system. Commissioner Dolecal made a motion to authorize the Chief to go ahead with the phone line system to get Kathy set up at the Water District in the near future at a price between \$600 and \$800. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. There being no discussion motion passed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Dolecal adjourned the meeting at 1915 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: 10/15/14 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Northfield Town Hall, 21 Summer Street, Northfield.