

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	09/11/2018 at 5:30 PM
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Blaisdell called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Paul Blaisdell and Eric Pyra; Chief Michael W. Sitar, Jr., Deputy Chief Michael Robinson and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine

Public: Bill & Diane McKenna

Public Comment

Bill McKenna explained they live on Beach Street in Lochmere. Today being 9/11 is a good time to talk about this. They take firetrucks and ambulances for granted.

His mother is 94. One night, they thought she had a stroke, so he called 9-1-1. They live on a dirt road. He went outside and saw someone walking down the road with a flashlight. It's a dirt road and pitch black. It was a fireman from TNFD. It emotionally got him that someone would walk down the road to his house. He went in to the house, got his mother stable. Within a matter of 10 minutes the ambulance came. Two EMTs came in. His mother didn't want to go to the hospital. They had such bedside manner. They talked her into going to the hospital. Thank God, she did as she is still here.

He heard a rumor that the District is looking at not keeping the ambulance service and going to a privatized ambulance service. He doesn't think that should happen. He has a neighbor who is really bad. The ambulance was called. They saved his life. He couldn't make it tonight as he is travelling for business. Again, his other neighbor the same thing.

You are not going to get that, what he saw that night. When he saw him coming down with a flashlight, you are not going to get that from a privatized company. The bedside manner, on the several times they have been down our road there were different people, has all been the same. Just the way they were with the people.

He grew up in Boston. When you call for an ambulance it might come an hour, hour and a half later. It doesn't happen like it does here.

Now when he sees a firetruck or ambulance, the first thing he thinks of is the people. They put their lives on the line for us. We take it for granted that they are just going on a call. Until it happens to a member of your family or one of your friends, that guy with the flashlight could save you or your family. The guys are super. This place is a special place. You will lose a big thing if you privatize.

Chief's Report

Chief Sitar presented his report.

1. 2018 Budget:

- Account balances ending August 31st are included in the packet.
- Operating Budget: We are 66.66% through the calendar year and at 63.7% in expenses.
- Total Apparatus & Equipment Replacement Fund: \$1,404,510.83.
- 2018 Ambulance Revenues: \$278,882.76.

Chief Sitar commented that he is concerned about fuel costs. The cost of gasoline is up 24% over

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last year and diesel prices are up 30%. We are going to go over on those line items in the budget. Gasoline will probably go over by approximately \$500 and diesel will probably be over by about \$2,000.

Commissioner Blaisdell questioned the other expenses in vehicle maintenance. Chief Sitar replied that we should be able to cover these in the budget. These are his concerns right now. Everything else seems to be on track.

Commissioner Blaisdell questioned line 660, Vehicle Repairs. There is \$22,500 and they have spent \$50 out of that. Chief Sitar explained they should look at the line items for each vehicle. The vehicles used the most, Ambulance 1, Ambulance 2, Engine 3, are way over budget. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Blaisdell asked where ambulance revenues are in respect to last year. Chief Sitar explained they are down a little bit. He believes we will collect between \$420,000 and \$440,000.

2. Fire Prevention Report for August 2018:

- Report included in handout
- For the Month of August, there were 59 Fire Prevention inspections

Commissioner Auger asked what 884 Complaint was. Chief Sitar explained someone had called in about a possible violation. Deputy Joubert had gone to investigate it. When you see a complaint in the report, it is not someone complaining about us. They are complaining about a property.

Commissioner Auger wanted to know if the commercial site, 10,000 square feet, and commercial site, 5,000 square feet, were new commercial properties being reviewed. Chief Sitar explained these are plan reviews.

3. Run Report for August 2018:

- Report included in handout
- For the Month of August, we had 176 incidents
- 112 of the incidents were EMS in nature and that equates to 63.6% of our total incident volume for the month
- Our call volume is up 11.1% over what we had last year at this time
- The engine responded to 28 EMS and MVA incidents last month

4. Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for August 2018:

- Report included in handout
- We had 37 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 21.1% of all incidents for the Month of August
- We received five mutual aid ambulance responses
- We responded to four mutual aid ambulance requests
- We received no mutual aid Engine responses
- We responded to two mutual aid Engine requests

5. Grant Update:

- 2016 AFG: The final piece of the project will take place when the renovation is completed September 12th.
- 2018 NH Forestry: The grant has been announced. We have applied for some hose and a backpack blower.

Commissioner Blaisdell wanted to know if Captain Hall had already determined forestry equipment needs so we were prepped and ready. Chief Sitar explained that once the grant is announced they review what is eligible and what is needed. The grant is then written and submitted. If approved, they will purchase the items.

Commissioner Blaisdell questioned the status of the forestry truck. Chief Sitar reported it is in

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Marlboro, MA this week. They need to install the flatbed, radio and lights, etc. He will be inspecting it on the 20th. We should have it by the middle to end of October. Discussion ensued about the truck and items we are providing.

- Attended the 2018 AFG grant workshop at the NH Fire Academy on Friday, August 31st. They indicated that the grant application period should open in early October as long as the government passes a continuing budget resolution.

Discussion ensued about the workshop.

- The 2018 Safer grant application period will probably be in the beginning of next year.
- The 2017 AFG grant scored very well, but we still have not heard if we will be awarded the grant.

6. Training Burns:

- Rusty's Old House on East Main Street: Postponed with a future date to be determined.

7. Park Street Communication Tower: Nothing new to report. No activity.

8. Center Street Renovation: Mostly complete. Some minor paint touch-up needs to be done.

Commissioner Blaisdell asked who was going to do the completion. Chief Sitar explained that it would be our guys.

9. New Training Facility: Work on the interior is progressing.

10. Currently Working On:

- Call Company Recruitment
 - One applicant is in process, waiting on their interview
 - Probationary student EMT, Emily Decormier has started
 - Probationary EMT, Rose Therrien has started
- Management of 2016 AFG Grant Project
 - Installation of Center Street base station will take place September 12th
- 2018 AFG: SCBAs
- Fire Department Radio System
 - Renewed negotiations with the owner of the tower on Bean Hill
 - ❖ May have to pay monthly rent
 - Looking at power alternatives for Bean Hill
 - Bean Hill will be the site #1

Discussion ensued about the towers. Chief Sitar explained that until they come to mutual agreement with the property owners, the project will not be moving forward.

- Fire Station Maintenance Projects

The final projects are the sign island and paving at Park Street. Commissioner Blaisdell requested the trim on the eaves be painted above the side entry door on the highway side

Commissioner Blaisdell commented that the offer of the ladder for the inspection of the Arch is very much appreciated. He is speaking for himself. The fact the Department was able to do that for the Town is fantastic. Chief Sitar commented we always try to work together.

- 2019 Budget
 - Operating
 - Apparatus and Equipment
 - New Station
- Capital Improvement Plan
 - New C1 – 2019 Budget
 - New E2 – 2020 Budget

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- o SCBAs – 2020 Budget if not awarded 2018 AFG
- o New A2 – 2021 Budget

Commissioner Blaisdell commented about the large maintenance issues on A2. He wanted to know if it was realistic to think we will get four more years out of it. Chief Sitar replied probably not. Commissioner Blaisdell would like to review the CIP to adjust it as needed for an earlier replacement.

New Business

FMLA

Chief Sitar reported we have two personnel who will possibly be taking FMLA. It will affect this year's budget. How Family Medical Leave works and the budgetary impact it will have were reviewed. Extensive discussion ensued regarding coverage for the potential FML and the Call Company.

Old Business

Fire Station Land Engineering

Chief Sitar reported he talked with Kyle Barker. We have to hire an engineer to do an assessment and preliminary plans, so we can figure out where we are going to go with the property and what it will take to develop it. That will cost \$7,500. He has found enough funds in the budget to cover the cost. We need to do this to move forward. We, also, need to put out an RFP for a construction manager. The money for that can be in next year's budget. The construction manager is the person to give us the not to exceed cost. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to hire an engineer for an amount not to exceed \$7,500 for the new fire station. Commissioner Blaisdell seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Personnel/Safer Grant

Chief Sitar commented that in the budget he is asking for four additional personnel. He presented the Board with a spreadsheet that compares us with other fire departments in the area to show where we stand amongst them and to show that we are busier than any other fire department per person. He then read the following

Additional Personnel Justification

1. *Since 2014 our call volume has increased by 6.8% per year. Our overall call volume has increased by more than 500 since 2014. Our percentage of incidents between fire and EMS calls has remained in the 30% to 35% for fire and 65% to 70% for EMS.*
2. *Our average patient transport time is 60% greater than other area fire departments. This means that our ambulance is unavailable for other calls more often than other area fire department ambulances.*
3. *Our simultaneous incidents have been at 20% or greater every month. This means that for every call we have, there is a 20% chance that another incident will require a response at the same time.*
4. *We require more mutual aid from neighboring fire departments than we provide, especially EMS incidents. That means that patients in Tilton and Northfield are waiting longer for medical treatment and transport.*
5. *Over the past 18 months we received 91 mutual aid ambulance responses while TNFD provided 15 mutual aid ambulance responses. TNFD uses mutual aid ambulances 84% more than TNFD provides mutual aid ambulances. In 2017, we transported 905 patients with an average collection rate of \$518 per transport. This means that the District had a loss of potential revenue in the amount of \$47,138 over that time period.*
6. *The average response time for a TNFD ambulance is 6 minutes whereas the average response time for a mutual aid ambulance during that time period was 9 minutes plus additional dispatch time of 2 minutes. This means that when we have to call for a mutual aid ambulance, the patient must wait, on average, an additional 11 minutes for*

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an ambulance. There were 100 incidents where the patient had to wait more than 12 minutes for an ambulance and 13 incidents where the patient had to wait longer than 20 minutes for an ambulance.

- 7. During times when we have simultaneous calls or emergency recalls, the response from the Call Company has not met the needs of the Department. Simultaneous calls and emergency recalls have resulted in Call Company response only 14.8% of the time.*
- 8. We currently have 19 persons in the Call Company. Of those 19, only 5 are EMTs of which 2 are expected to resign shortly. Another 5 are on probationary status. Of those 5 on probationary status, two are fresh out of EMT school.*
- 9. There have been 13258 building permits issued in the last 5 years.*
- 10. Adding an additional FF/AEMT to each shift would allow the department to respond in a timelier manner to most simultaneous calls for an ambulance.*

Commissioner Auger commented that he listened to the guy that was here and if you were in Boston you would have waited an hour and a half. That's a city. Chief Sitar explained that Boston EMS runs the ambulance service in Boston, not the fire department.

Chief Sitar told the Board he would like to apply for an AFG grant but he can't give them the specifics for the grant yet as the notice of funding opportunity is not out, and he doesn't know what the requirements would be from us. It probably won't be out until the beginning of the year.

Commissioner Blaisdell commented that his opinion pertaining to paying for staff using grants hasn't changed. He is not for it at all. He does not like the idea of someone else paying for our staff and then for us to decide after three years as to whether we keep them on full time or lay them off. We are taking a gift that is going to cost us a tremendous amount of money in the long run. He feels that if we truly need four more people then we should be willing to pay for it ourselves. It's great to have the grant. We shouldn't be asking for people because the grant is available. We should be asking for people because the necessity is there. This is a perfect opportunity to further the discussion of a cooperative effort between the three regional fire departments so that we can get some of this coverage without hiring full-time people and we can offer similar coverage to them without them having to hire full-time people. He is not disputing what Chief Sitar read. What he is saying is this a perfect opportunity to transfer the same information to the cooperative committee and determine if this is a good basis to continue moving faster toward a cooperative effort with the other departments. This is great data. His feeling is that the District cannot support \$400,000 per year of additional personnel costs. They are they highest part of our budget now. If there's one thing we need to reduce, it's personnel costs. He is willing to discuss this further; but at this time, he does not support hiring four more people or pursuing a grant that will help pay for that.

Chief Sitar commented that ultimately the Commissioners and Budget Committee decide what goes before the District to be voted upon. His job is to let them know what he thinks they should be operating at, at a bare minimum. What he would really like to see is something totally different but that is far more expensive than what he is proposing. Ultimately, he is going to ask for the bare minimum of what he feels we should be operating at and District will decide if they can afford that. The District meeting will take the information provided and make their decision. He wouldn't be doing his job if he didn't present what they should be operating at, at a bare minimum.

Commissioner Blaisdell commented he is all for having further discussions. He cannot support four more guys right now; especially trying to build a new fire station. If we propose both, there is a good chance both will be voted down. He welcomes further discussion on it.

2019 Budget

Chief Sitar presented the Board with the first draft of the 2019 Budget. We were notified today that the retirement contribution for the District is going to go down 1.8% starting July 1, 2019. The next time they receive the budget proposal, those figures will be adjusted.

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Chief Sitar requested they set up some budget workshops, so the budget can be forwarded to the Budget Committee. Discussion ensued about available dates. It was decided they would meet October 16th, 30th and November 20th. Kathy will email the dates to Commissioner Pyra for his availability and confirm with the Board.

Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2018

Commissioner Blaisdell commented that under adjournment the motion was 6:59 PM and the meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM. Kathy will verify the times and correct the minutes. They will be voted upon after the correction is made.

Other Business

The Board reviewed and signed the Manifests of August 31st and September 11th.

Adjournment

Commissioner Blaisdell made a motion to adjourn at 6:59 PM. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Meeting adjourned at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: 09/11/18 at 5:30 PM. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.