

## Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	05/07/2019 at 5:30 PM
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Eric Pyra and Jon Cilley; Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson and Admin. Assistant Kathy Tobine

Public: Kyle Barker, Keith McBey, Mark Hebert, Kevin Waldron, Tod Odell, Kevin Cate, Lisa Martin, Kaitlin Lounsbury, Paul Blaisdell

Firefighters: Tom Beaulieu, Dan Leathers, Matt Gilman, Derek Farrell

### Old Business

#### Fire Station Project

Kyle Barker presented the Board a packet with the results of the feasibility study done at Park Street. He explained that it is not a clear-cut decision on whether Park Street is viable or not. The structure will need a lot of upgrades. There is not a lot to work with there. He explained that it might be best to demo it and start over. They are recommending a new building set closer to the property line.

Keith McBey commented they need to put figures together to make an informed decision.

Discussion ensued about the recommendations. The Board requested Keith provide them with numbers so they can make an informed decision.

Commissioner Auger informed Kyle and Keith that they are setting up a committee for the fire station. They commented that they want to be at those meetings so everyone is kept informed.

Paul Blaisdell asked Kyle what he focus is. He wanted to know if the focus was on what is best for the District or on what is best for their pockets. Kyle replied that he is pushing what is best for the District. His fee is based on a percentage. Getting the right number means they have a job; getting the wrong number means they won't.

Lisa Martin commented that she is a structural engineer and has been for 35 years. What Kyle and Keith are saying is absolutely correct.

Kevin Cate commented about his family members who are firefighters in Massachusetts. They back in and it works very well. He also commented on how the focus has been on how horrible Center Street is. The District will not be happy to hear that Park Street has to be torn down as well. He also commented on the number of parking spaces. Discussion ensued.

Response times were discussed. Commissioner Pyra commented that he wants to do what is best for the taxpayers.

Kaitlyn Lounsbury commented she doesn't want to have to go through this again in 17 years because they cheaped out now. She also doesn't want to plan for 60 years down the road. She wants something that works.

Keith commented this has been a good conversation. They are to help make an informed decision. They will bring the numbers and help work out what works best for the District.

Kyle commented the property line survey will need to be scheduled. The size of the footprint needs to be reduced. He commented that a full two-story building might work. He will do both options so they can explore those ideas. Discussion ensued about the survey.

Paul Blaisdell commented on the previous building committee that worked on this for 18 months. This was all figured out before.

Kevin wanted to know what the direction of the committee was. Commissioner Auger commented that the committee needs numbers. Chief Sitar commented that any information is good information to help make the decision. Commissioner Cilley commented that the raw numbers are needed to help make these decisions. Discussion ensued.

Keith commented it will save money if they come up with the magic number so they can tailor the plans to that number. Kyle commented they do not have as much time as there seems to be. Commissioner Pyra commented December 1<sup>st</sup> is a very important date. They need to have this completed by then for it to be on the warrant next year.

#### Fire Station Committee Member Appointments

Commissioner Auger commented that his philosophy on the committee is the more people on it the better chance you have. You all know people; they will trust you and you can give advice.

Kevin Cate asked if there were going to be firefighters on the committee. Chief Sitar commented that there will be a Call firefighter, Tom Beaulieu, and a Career firefighter, Tim Ames, on the committee.

Kevin Waldron commented he is concerned about fear of insubordination. He knows that people from both groups did and did not support what was presented before but did not say anything publicly because of that fear. Chief Sitar replied that if members of the staff have different opinions than him and expresses them, he has no problem with that. Diversity and opinions come out with a better outcome in the end.

Dan Leathers commented on the letter he wrote to the Fire Commission due to comments made at the last Commissioners meeting addressing that fear. The consensus from the full-time employee is that there has always been an open line of communication. That is not a concern for them.

Deputy Robinson commented that he is very confident that the selection from the Call side will give them exactly what they need and what is on his mind.

Discussion ensued about voting members. Chief Sitar will not be a voting member as he is there in an advisory position. Commissioner Cilley will only vote to break a tie. The remaining members will be voting members.

Commissioner Cilley made a motion based on what was discussed to have the six letters accepted as read, a call representation, a full-time representation, the Chief as a nonvoting and one Commissioner on there that votes in the case of a tie. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Chief Sitar will contact the committee to set up the first meeting date. He will forward all the information to the committee that we have to date. All previous committee meeting minutes are on line. Commissioner Cilley will provide hard and electronic copies of all the previous meeting minutes to the committee.

#### Gear Washers and Dryers

Chief Sitar commented we received two bids; Daniels Equipment Company for \$39,695.00 and Automatic Laundry Service, Inc. for \$40,648.00. Commissioner Pyra made a motion to accept the bid from Daniels Equipment Company for \$39,695.00. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

#### Public Comment

None

#### Correspondence

04.05.19 Tilton Northfield Professional Fire Fighters  
Commissioner Pyra read the letter into the minutes.

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April 5, 2019

Board of Commissioners  
Tilton-Northfield Fire District  
12 Center Street  
Tilton, NH 03276

Dear Board Members:

*After public comments made by Commissioner Cilley during a meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners held on April 2, 2019, the Tilton-Northfield Professional Firefighters Association deems it necessary to unequivocally state that we, as a group, do not fear retribution from Chief Sitar resulting from grievances or expression of dissenting views.*

*The Local has openly disagreed with Chief Sitar numerous times during his tenure as Fire Chief. This has been made possible by the mutual trust and respect between the Local and Administration. This trust and respect is fostered by the "open door policy" held by Chief Sitar since his first day on duty with Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS. Any member of the organization is freely encouraged to come directly to Chief Sitar with any concerns.*

*The comments expressed by Commissioner Cilley do not reflect the sentiments of the Tilton-Northfield Professional Firefighters Association.*

Respectfully,

Daniel Leathers  
President  
Tilton-Northfield Professional Firefighters  
IAFF Local 4659

Chief Sitar thanked the TNPF for their comments and commented that he met with every member of the fire department after the last meeting to assure them that his door is always open. His job is to make things better, not worse and to help people, not hurt them.

Deputy Robinson spoke for the Call Company commenting that they basically mirrored what the union had stated but in their own words.

Deputy Robinson commented that since the surveys were taken the Chief, himself and Deputy Joubert have had several two-hour meetings. They have taken the information shared and reacted to it. There has been a noted change within the department in the last three months due to the information that has come to them. The survey was conducted, its purpose has been realized and it has made some changes in all of us. Communication was the big word that came out of that and that wall has been knocked down. It accomplished what it was intended to and we are a better department today because of it.

Matt Gilman commented on the survey for the TNPF Local. They fully agreed with the intent behind the survey. They agreed with having a conversation amongst their own family about how they can work within their own family to improve themselves. They asked that the intent of the survey be maintained. If those surveys become public, you can expect no participation in a survey the next time around.

Dan Leathers echoed that sentiment. He stated he encouraged members to fill them out, to voice their opinion, to try to make the changes to deliver a better service. If that becomes public, you burn that bridge of trust. You will not see any participation at least from the career staff in future surveys.

Commissioner Cilley replied that he respects the Union standing behind the Chief. He commented that he has heard otherwise. Some of what he is hearing is that there were communication areas that have now been fixed. If we have now fixed something, that means something did exist. There are concerns out there. A survey was conducted. It is public information. He wants transparency.

Dan Leathers commented the matter of the letter and contents of the survey are two different issues. He has publicly disagreed with Chief Sitar. He has told him that he disagrees with the two-station plan. The intent of the letter was to express that none of the career firefighters fear retribution from Chief

Sitar. That information may be out there. There is a lot of information out there. This is transparency. Whoever is telling Commissioner Cilley or himself is not being truthful with one of them. Both of the things they each are saying cannot be true at the same time. Commissioner Cilley commented that he has had at least one full-timer and call firefighters express otherwise separately. If he is wrong, he expects to be called out. Either he is right or he is wrong and the public will decide in the end. Dan Leathers commented that in the interest of transparency, that is why he is at the meeting.

Matt Gilman asked Commissioner Cilley if he agreed with the intent of the survey when they were initially presented to the employees. Commissioner Cilley stated that he does not agree with the intent of it. He does not agree with it being a survey conducted in silence within the department and not shared with the public. They conducted a survey and that is important information.

Commissioner Pyra spoke regarding this. He commented that he had been at the fire station numerous times and the firefighters never said anything to him. He doesn't understand why they never said anything to him. He also doesn't understand where the public is that Commissioner Cilley is talking about. They rarely come to these meetings. Extensive discussion ensued. Commissioner Pyra commented that he is dumbfounded that Commissioner Cilley is literally driving a stake between the firefighters, career and call, and the Commission. They will not get the cooperation of them again if this continues.

Dan Leathers commented that he is embarrassed because he encouraged people to complete the surveys to build communication. Exactly what the members who have been here 10, 15 years feared has happened. It is being used as a wedge. Commissioner Cilley commented that he doesn't like that it is driving a wedge. It's information that is out there. The public has opinions that were expressed at the meeting and that is why they are questioning the survey. Dan Leathers commented that this was on the agenda and they knew it. The gentleman left. He doesn't understand why they are so gun ho about this one thing. It is causing problems on the floor and in the firehouse.

Deputy Robinson cautioned the Commissioners that during one of his times serving as Chief, they did have a member of the public tell them what they were doing was illegal. It has happened two or three times. They need to be very careful. What the public told them was illegal was wrong. They had done the right thing. We are back to we need to get a lawyer; we have to pay for a lawyer; it's coming out of District funds in order to get this resolved. He would rather see the money spent differently but this is the path they have been put on. Until someone throws a gavel down, this is it.

05.01.19 Department of Revenue Administration

05.07.19 Attorney Sean Chandler

#### Chief's Report

##### 1. Budget:

- Operating Budget: We have expended 32.8% of the budget and are 26.9% through the year.
  - Total Apparatus & Equipment Fund through April: \$1,508,586.22
  - 2019 Ambulance Revenue through April: \$129,241.85
- Discussion ensued on ambulance revenues.

##### 2. Fire Prevention Report for April 2019:

- Report included in handout
- For the Month of April, there were 58 Fire Prevention inspections

##### 3. Run Report for April 2019:

- Report included in handout
- For the Month of April, we had 148 incidents
- 96 of the incidents were EMS in nature which equates to 64.8% of our total incident volume for the month
- Our call volume is up 1.6% over what we had last year at this time
- The engine responded to 41 EMS and MVA incidents last month

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4. Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for April 2019:
  - Report included in handout
  - We had 18 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month
  - Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 12.1% of all incidents for the month
  - Of the 18 simultaneous incidents, TNFD responded to 18
  - We received two mutual aid Ambulance responses
  - We responded to two mutual aid Ambulance requests
  - We received four mutual aid Engine responses
  - We responded to no mutual aid Engine requests
5. Personnel:
  - New Firefighter: James Frangelli assigned to Shift B
  - Medic School: Zack Mellett was accepted and will start in June, 2019
6. Engine Committee: Meeting to determine specifications for new engine with report to Chief in September
7. SCBA Committee: Meeting to determine specifications for new SCBAs with a report to Chief in September
8. Fire Station Conference: Chief Sitar will be attending the Firehouse Station Design Conference from May 13<sup>th</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup>. The conference is in Rosemont, Illinois. The conference is free to attend due to my membership in the Fire Department Safety Officer Organization. Plane and hotel fees are \$288 for the room and \$496 for the flight.
9. Review quotes for new 21C1  
Vehicle - NH State Bid was the lowest at \$36,308; Paint - Hanser Autobody was the lowest bid at \$3,520; Up Fit - MHQ was the lowest bidder at \$13,010.29. The total vehicle cost is \$54,923.20 plus the cost of the seals.
10. Primex/Fire Chiefs Conference: Chief Sitar will be attending the Primex/Fire Chief Conference on May 16<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>
11. Currently Working On:
  - Fire Station Project Committee
    - Career Member: Tim Ames
    - Call Member: Tom Beaulieu
  - Call Company Recruitment
  - Fire Department Radio System Center
    - Waiting for final approval from the Spaulding School Board of Directors
  - Fire Station Maintenance Project
    - Repaint interior of Park Street in Spring
    - Curbing installed at Park Street
      - ❖ Letters are to go out to the members of the community that helped
    - Repaving of Park Street to take place soon
      - ❖ Deputy Robinson commented that the Town of Northfield has become a very good neighbor
  - Capital Improvement Plan included in packet
    - New Engine – 2020 Budget
    - Replace SCBAs – 2020 Budget
    - New Ambulance – 2021 Budget

New Business

Personnel Policy: Personal Appearance

Chief Sitar presented the Board with his proposed changes to the Personal Appearance section of the Personnel Policy. Commissioner Pyra made a motion to accept the amended Personal Policy. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

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FTNS Emergency Services Cooperative

Chief Sitar explained the Franklin, Tilton-Northfield and Sanbornton (FTNS) Emergency Services Cooperative to the Board. Commissioner Pyra nominated Paul Auger to represent the Fire Commissioners on the FTNS Emergency Services Cooperative. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Other Business

Chief Sitar read an email that he received from Debbie Sobotka, Chief Operating Officer at the Center for Public Safety Excellence, congratulating him on the Commission on Professional Credentialing re-conferring his CFO (Chief Fire Officer) Designation.

Chief Sitar informed the Board that Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS is working with the Greater Tilton Area Family Resource Center through Matt Gilman who is on the Board of Directors for that organization. Matt explained more about the Resource Center, the work they do and the cards that were designed for TNFD to hand out to people they felt could use the services provided by the Resource Center.

Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2019

Commissioner Cilley made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion.

There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Nonpublic Session

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to enter Nonpublic Session made by per RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote to enter nonpublic session:

Paul Auger	Yes
Jon Cilley	Yes
Eric Pyra	Yes

Nonpublic session entered at 8:18 p.m.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to leave nonpublic session and return to public session. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote to exit nonpublic session:

Paul Auger	Yes
Jon Cilley	Yes
Eric Pyra	Yes

Motion passed.

Public session reconvened at 9:06 p.m.

Motion made to seal these minutes? Yes

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to seal the minutes because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote to seal these minutes:

Paul Auger	Yes
Jon Cilley	Yes
Eric Pyra	Yes

Commissioner Pyra reported that in nonpublic session they discussed the 91-A petitioned request regarding the survey. Commissioner Pyra made a motion to table this until the next meeting on June 4,

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2019, to hear from the public in regards to their petition in person. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn at 9:08 PM. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Tobine*

Kathy Tobine  
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: 06/04/19 at 5:30 PM. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.