

## Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	02/04/2020 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 5:30 PM.

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger and Jon Cilley; Chief Michael W. Sitar and Admin. Assistant Kathy Tobine

### Public Comment/Members of the District/Employees of the District

No public was present.

### Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

### Chief's Reports

#### 1. Budget:

- Operating Budget: We have expended 88.2% of the budget and are 100% through the 2019 fiscal year. The 2019 books are not closed yet.
- Total Apparatus & Equipment Fund through January: \$1,505,596.33
- 2020 Ambulance Revenue through January: \$35,858.83. We have collected \$4,928.64 at this same time less than last year.

Commissioner Pyra asked if we had received revenues for the January calls. Chief Sitar replied we have not.

#### 2. Fire Prevention Report for January 2020:

- Report included in handout.
- For the Month of January, there were 37 Fire Prevention inspections.

Commissioner Cilley asked if the shift officers are going to be involved with inspections. Chief Sitar replied they did not do any in January.

#### 3. Run Report for January 2020:

- Report included in handout.
- For the Month of January, we had 173 incidents.
- 120 of the incidents were EMS in nature which equates to 70% of our total incident volume for the month.
- The engine responded to 51 EMS and MVA incidents last month.

Commissioner Cilley asked what the incident type was on the first line of four incidents as there is no description. Chief Sitar commented it is probably 100 which is Fire, Other.

#### 4. Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for January 2020:

- Report included in handout.
- We had 24 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month.
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 14% of all incidents for the month.
- Of the 24 simultaneous incidents, TNFD responded to all 24.
- We received five mutual aid Ambulance responses.
- We responded to two mutual aid Ambulance requests.
- We received one mutual aid Engine responses.

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- We responded to four mutual aid Engine requests.

Commissioner Auger questioned the number of Recall Tones on page 4 of the report. He wanted more information on what it means. Chief Sitar replied the number of people show up under # of Emergency Recall Personnel. If it says zero, it means nobody showed up.

Commissioner Auger commented there a couple of others on the last page. It has the # of Emergency Recall Personnel 2 and the Number of Recall Tones 1. Chief Sitar replied that they only retuned it once for that incident.

Commissioner Auger asked if any of the full-timers came back on the retone or is it just call personnel. Chief Sitar explained it doesn't break it down that way. He would have to look at each call to find out that information.

5. Center Street:

- We have materials to replace worn out items but have not completed any additional work yet. Most of that work will be done by in-house labor.

Commissioner Cilley asked what the expected completion date is. Chief Sitar explained that it was when they can get to it. He doesn't have a project date on when to do things as they must squeeze it in between when they are doing things.

Commissioner Auger asked if they were doing the work while on shift or off and charging us. Chief Sitar explained that it is mostly on shift. The only time he hired someone to do any of it was when they blocked the windows under the fire escape. They couldn't get it done on shift as it would open us up to the weather. He wanted to make sure that when they opened it up to the weather that it was being closed at the same time. The rest will be done in-house, on duty.

6. Park Street:

- The process of obtaining a building permit for the communication tower from the Town of Northfield will be taking place. The application should be submitted this month to the Town of Northfield from Wireless Edge.
- The stainless-steel slop sink has been delivered but is not installed yet. They will hold off installing that until they have funds to put a shower in the bathroom and do both at the same time to try to keep costs down.

7. Engine Committee: The Engine Committee reviewed all the vendors submittals yesterday. They will talk with each vendor one more time to clear up some questions before a recommendation can be made. He did receive a letter today from the Engine Committee recommending that we go with the Sutphen engine with a couple minor changes to what Sutphen had recommended. He is waiting for the final cost on that. The Sutphen engine was the least expensive of the three submitted.

8. SCBA Committee: An order has been prepared and once District Meeting votes the funds, the order for the new SCBAs and compressor will be placed. These are being purchased through the Massachusetts State Fire Bid.

9. Fire Department Radio System

- Construction of the Communication Tower has begun at Spaulding.
- The communication shelter has been installed.
- The base of the tower has been installed.
- The electrical and data conduits from across Shedd Road to the communication shelter have been installed.
- The rest of the tower is scheduled to be installed this Thursday, but it is expected to snow and will probably be postponed.
- Much of the radio equipment has been installed within the shelter.
- It is expected that the project should be completed within a month or so depending on weather.
- The final part of the project will probably be the installation of the fence around the compound. That probably won't happen until Spring.
- Eversource replaced two poles on Shedd Road that were rotting. The power is underground from

the new pole to the tower.

- When we obtained the building permit from the Town of Northfield, the Road Agent did not see it. We had to get a driveway permit and trench permit. Andy says we need to install a culvert along the driveway. The Town will provide the supplies. We need to supply the labor.

#### 10. Personnel

- Chief Sitar will be interviewing the two finalists for the open career position this Friday. He will make a conditional offer of employment shortly thereafter.
- We have hired two new Call Company Members. Neither has any experience or certifications at this time.
  - Connor Vaughn
  - Christian Ferre

#### 11. Currently Working On:

- Fire Station Project Committee.
- Call Company Recruitment.
- Capital Improvement Program
  - New Ambulance – 2021 Budget

Commissioner Cilley asked if the Board has delegated the hiring and firing to the Chief.

Commissioner Auger explained it is the Chief's discretion on who he hires. The employee answers to the Chief and he answers to the Board. Commissioner Cilley wanted to know what the By-Laws state. Chief Sitar explained that it is the law, Section 154:2. Commissioner Cilley comment that if someone appealed it, they would go to the Board to appeal it. Chief Sitar explained we have an appeal process. If he was to terminate a career person, he would inform the Board prior to that taking place. All the hiring and terminations go through him. Commissioner Cilley asked what he would be looking for. Chief Sitar explained that firewards and fire engineers are old terms for fire chief and then read the following *Firewards, fire engineers and fire chiefs shall have the authority and the control of all firefighters and officers and all fire apparatus and other equipment designed or used for the extinguishment of fire or the control of other emergencies in the town or city, and of all persons whose duty it is to aid in extinguishing fires.* He then stated that it has been the policy of the Commission since he has been here. Kathy explained that this is covered in the By-Laws and read Article V, Section I *The Fire Chief shall hire qualified staff within budget and policy guidelines and review their qualifications with the Commissioners. All terminations are the responsibility of the Fire Chief bur for legal considerations to protect against wrongful termination, they will be reviewed in advance with the Commissioners.*

Commissioner Cilley commented on the SCBA and engine committees. The committee put out to bid what we want for an engine. He wanted to know why the Fire Station Committee doesn't go out to bid for what they want like the engine committee did without the Commissioners input. He would expect that prior going out to bid it would be brought before the Board to let them know what their intent would be. Commissioner Auger commented they had talked about this already. Commissioner Pyra commented that Article VI regarding committees in the By-Laws seems to be representative of a building committee. Chief Sitar reiterated that he has the authority and control of all fire apparatus and other equipment. Extensive discussion ensued.

Commissioner Cilley commented that he didn't realize how low the membership in the Call Company is. Chief Sitar explained that the priorities in life on the younger generation is different now than what it used to be. They value family time much more than community service time. Fighting that is difficult. It is an on-going battle. Commissioner Pyra asked about training for the two new call members. Chief Sitar explained they won't be sent to training until after their probationary period is over. Further discussion ensued.

Commissioner Cilley requested that, before big ticket items go out to bid, it is brought before the Board. Discussion ensued.

Budget Committee

Chief Sitar passed out the latest copy of the budget showing his request, the Commissioners recommendation and the Budget Committees recommendation.

Commissioner Pyra reported the Budget Committee recommended \$5,000 less on Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs than the Commissioners as they feel the big repairs have been completed and they won't have them in the future. They cut it by \$5,000 even though we went \$10,000 over budget. Chief Sitar noted that the Budget Committee's recommended budget is 7.35% less than last year.

Commissioner Cilley asked how they were able to cut the budget by 7.35%. Chief Sitar explained that at last year's District Meeting \$200,000 was added for design & engineering fees. Only about \$35,000 was spent out of that fund. Even with the addition of two career personnel starting after July 1<sup>st</sup>, it is still a reduction in the actual budget because of that. That is the main difference. There are other small cuts here and there that they made. That is before any other warrant articles. Commissioner Pyra commented that the Budget Committee did not approve the \$500,000 for the land. Chief Sitar stated that last year we appropriated \$2.581 million, almost \$2.6 million. This year the Budget Committee is recommending a \$2.404 million budget. Discussion ensued about the cuts.

Chief Sitar commented that at District Meeting they will amend W/A 6 for the new fire engine down.

Fire Station Committee

Commissioner Cilley commented that he was not at the last Fire Station Committee meeting. From the minutes there seem to be a lot of questions on the State property between the fire station and the on ramp. Center Street was a large part of the discussion. They are meeting again next Tuesday. They should have a presentation for the Board of Commissioners on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Old Business

Chief Sitar commented the Budget Committee approved everything except Warrant Articles 11 and 12. They did not approve W/A 12 and they proposed a change for 11.

Warrant Article 11

Commission Pyra commented that of the \$200,000 that was raised through taxation for design and engineering fees for a new fire station only approximately \$12,000. The remaining monies are sitting in the general fund. They were thinking that taking that remaining money and designate it for the building.

Chief Sitar explained the difference between what the Commissioners are requesting, and the Budget Committee is recommending is that the Commissioners are raising and appropriating the \$100,000 through taxation for design and engineering fees. The \$200,000 that was raised last year, we didn't spend it all and it lapsed. The balance of \$166,140.45 is in the Unassigned Fund Balance. The intent of the Budget Committee is to take the balance, designate it to design and engineering fees and make it non-lapsing. Instead of raising and appropriating \$100,000 through taxation, the Budget Committee recommends taking the \$166,140 from the Unassigned Fund Balance.

Chief Sitar commented the Commissioners have a policy of maintaining 16.67% in the Unassigned Fund Balance of the approved budget. Discussion ensued about the Unassigned Fund Balance and the policy.

Extensive discussion ensued about the Budget Committee's recommendation.

Email

Discussion ensued about how the Commissioner's new email addresses were working for the them. Multifactor authentication was reviewed.

Ambulance Transports to DHMC

Commissioner Auger commented on the transports to Dartmouth. He stated that when we do this it takes out ambulance out of service and we must bring in coverage. He does not agree with our transporting people from one hospital to another. Franklin does not due this. We are not in the transporting business.

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Chief Sitar explained they have started doing this since Lakes Region EMS has closed. We are working with Stewarts. Hopefully they will be able to move an ambulance into this side of their catchment area.

Commissioner Auger commented that if he had his way, we would not do any interfacility transfers. They have private companies that do this. If they are that critical, the helicopter can fly.

Chief Sitar commented that when we transport from Franklin to Concord or Dartmouth, we are their last resort. We do it to save a life. Commissioner Cilley agreed that we should be a last resort. Chief Sitar stated we are the last resort. We have a policy that covers this. He will email the policy to the Board. Extensive discussion ensued.

**New Business**

Public Hearings

Kathy reminded the Board the Public Hearing on the Budget and Warrant are at 5:30 P.M. on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Due to RSA in order the change the purpose of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund, we must have a public hearing on that as well. There are different time constraints regarding this so that hearing is February 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 P.M.

Commissioner Cilley asked why the warrant article to change the number of Commissioners from three to five was not on the warrant. Kathy explained that it must be by petition per RSA. The Board of Commissioners cannot put it on the warrant. The Budget Committee knew that as the Chief provided them with that information at their meeting. Commissioner Pyra asked if it could be done on the floor. Kathy replied that it cannot. Chief Sitar commented that the only Commissioners in the State of NH that can put something forward are in Merrimack or Hooksett as there was special legislation enacted to do that. Kathy explained that she had put the warrant article in the warrant but when DRA did their pre-review they explained we cannot do that.

**Meeting Minutes**

January 7, 2019

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to approve the minutes of January 7<sup>th</sup> as written. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

**Other Business**

The manifests of January 31, 2020 were reviewed and signed.

Commissioner Pyra asked who had signed up for elections. Kathy commented that Commissioner Auger signed up for Commissioner and Kent Finemore has signed up for Moderator. No one else did.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Tobine*

Kathy Tobine  
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: 03/03/20 at 5:30 PM. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton.