

**Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS District
Budget Committee Public Hearing
Meeting Minutes February 10, 2020**

Commissioners Present: Paul Auger, Jon Cilley, Eric Pyra

Budget Committee Members Present: Charles Broughton, Dennis Manning, Jason Wright,
Paul Blaisdell, Kevin Waldron

Also Present: Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Tim Joubert, Kathryn Tobine, Stephanie Giovannucci,
Gretchen Wilder, Wayne Crowley, Kaitlin Lounsbury

Jason Wright opened the public hearing of the proposed 2020 budget at 5:59pm at the Tilton Town Hall upstairs meeting room.

Commissioners took turns reading the warrant articles and answered any questions from the public.

Article 4 – Operating Budget

Mrs. Wilders asked if the operating budget included the two new personnel members. Chief Sitar confirmed that the amount did include them and added that in 2014 calls were at 1400 and not they are up to 2000 without increasing personnel, these two new positions will assist in during the hours that the calls are at the highest level.

Discussion ensued in regards to taking the two positions out of the budget and creating a warrant article instead to accommodate the budget request. Both the Budget Committee and Commissioner discussed at length and decided it is best to be placed in the budget as presented.

○ Article 5 – Apparatus & Equipment Fund Usage

No questions

○ Article 6 – New Fire Engine

Mrs. Wilders asked if the amount being presented included everything the engine needs to get it on the road. Chief Sitar confirmed that it does.

○ Article 7 – Change the Purpose of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund

Mrs. Wilder asked if the name of the fund will be changed, Chief Sitar stated that it would not, just the use of the fund.

○ Article 8 – Health Insurance Deductible

Mrs. Wilder stated that this fund was created when health deductibles were high. Chief Sitar added that this fund is used to reimburse some of the out of pocket expenses that the employees have to pay.

○ Article 9 – Fire Prevention Fund

Mrs. Wilder asked what kind of balance is maintained in the fund, Mrs. Tobine replied that they like to keep at least \$16,000 in the fund. Chief Sitar explained how the fund is used, and how funds are received.

○ Article 10 – Fire Prevention Budget

No Questions

○ Article 11 – Design, Engineering and Architectural Fees

No Questions

○ Article 12 – Add to Land and Building Fund

No Questions

- Article 13 – Communications Tower

Mr. Waldron asked why the Commissioner are the agents of this fund and not other funds? Chief Sitar explained that the intent to use this fund is for repairs, additions if needed, bond payoffs, etc. Mrs. Tobine added that the fund is being set up the same as the Fire Prevention fund.

- Article 14 – Establish Contingency Fund

Mrs. Wilder asked if this is the same as what is listed in the budget and is it used for unexpected expenses. Mrs. Tobine explained that this is yearly housekeeping. Chief Sitar added that this is only used for catastrophic events and if most of the budget has already been expended, such as at the end of the year. The dollar amount comes from 1% of the previous years appropriated budget.

No adjustments were made to the 2020 Warrant Articles. Session adjourned at 7:17pm

Budget Committee asked the public to review the presented 2020 proposed budget and ask questions.

Mr. Crowley asked why the increase on Information Technologies. Mr. Wright stated that this included software upgrades, Chief Sitar added that a new server was also needed.

Mr. Crowley asked what the merit increase in planned for in 2020. Mr. Wright stated that there was a 2.5% step increase and a 1.5% COLA, however the Budget Committee only approved the 2.5% step. Chief Sitar added that the department has to remain competitive to other departments.

Mrs. Wilder asked about the increase in department awards, Chief Sitar replied that this year they are looking to do a more formalized award ceremony with food brought in, instead of pot luck. Mr. Manning added that not all of the cost of the function will fall on the district, the union and other agencies will also assist in funding to have a nice program.

Mr. Crowley inquired about working with the School District and Lakes Region Planning Commission for the heating fuel and electricity. Chief Sitar stated that he would look into it.

Mrs. Wilder inquired about insurance claims for \$3,300. Mrs. Tobine stated that if we have insurance claims it's usually an in and out with revenues and expenses for repairs.

Mrs. Wilder questioned how much of the ambulance services are not being collected. Chief Sitar stated that they have collected around 75% of insurance allowable funds, which came to about \$430k last year. Chief Sitar added that 6 ½% of the money collected goes to Comstar for their billing services.

No adjustments were made to the proposed budget.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 7:38pm