

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Fire Commissioners Meeting

Meeting Called By: Commissioners Date, Time: 03/12/2020 at 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Beth Joslin Place: Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main Street, Tilton

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

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Eric Pyra, and Jon Cilley; Deputy Chief Tim Joubert, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine, Captain Jon Powell, Fire Station Committee members Kevin Waldron and Kevin Cate.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

Fire Station Committee Draft Report

Commissioner Cilley stated that the Fire Station Committee's report is still in draft form because the Fire Station Committee has been unable to have enough members present for a quorum to complete the report. Copies have been distributed to the Commissioners for informational purposes.

Commissioner Pyra asked if they would be able to finalize the report before district meeting.

Commissioner Cilley replied he didn't believe they would be able to because it would be hard to get people together on the weekend.

After looking at the draft report Commissioner Auger stated that he feels it should be emphasized that Tilton or Northfield does not matter, they are one community, one district. He stated that he does not know where the idea that there could be a 2 minute longer response time came from but he believes it is irrelevant. Commissioner Cilley commented that with a new station they could build it with features to help cut down the response time in comparison to what is done now in the current station. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Cilley shared that in talks with the architect they found that they could fit a 14,000 square foot building at Park Street. They will have the ability to add 4 double deep bays to the left and it will be one floor so it will eliminate the need and cost of two staircases and an elevator. They know that it can fit, though he doesn't believe it will be the solution for the next 50 years.

Commissioner Auger expressed concern regarding the Chief's letter to the station committee, stating that he was disappointed and he thought that Chief Sitar agreed with their recommendations. He stated that he is concerned the letter could harm all the effort the committee put into the project as well as their credibility. Commissioner Cilley replied that many of the committee members expressed disappointment as well, himself included. Commissioner Auger stated that he is not saying that Chief Sitar doesn't know what needs to be done but they are trying to get a station and with a letter like the one Chief Sitar wrote, it is never going to work.

Commissioner Cilley stated that the ideal to cover the district is multiple stations. Commissioner Auger agreed. Commissioner Cilley added that a con to multiple stations is additional manpower, they will need to weigh the pros and cons of what they can do to meet the needs of the district adequately, knowing that some day they will need to build a substation. Commissioner Cilley stated that he was surprised when he found the letter because he was under the impression that Chief Sitar was onboard with the recommendations though was aware, he had reservations because he is trying to cover all sides. Commissioner Cilley stated that they also have to consider the needs and resources in the community. Commissioner Auger commented that small communities are not able to afford a multi

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building project like this, many are having trouble paying their taxes as it is. You'd like the best of the best, but you have to get what you can afford and sometimes you need to settle for that. Discussion ensued regarding cost.

Commissioner Auger asked Waldron for his opinion. Waldron agreed with the commissioners' sentiments and stated that the decision had been unanimous amongst the committee. He stated that they did not discount anything and were trying to get the biggest bang for the buck. Their recommendation does not completely exclude a substation but it excludes a sub station right now. Waldron continued stating that the people are only willing to spend so much money. He feels the committee is on the right track but if the commissioners would like to get a no from voters again, then discard the committee's recommendation and do something different.

Commissioner Auger commented that they have received a lot of no's over the years, expressing that this will be his last term as a commissioner and he would like to see it completed. Commissioner Pyra expressed that he is concerned about the amount of money they have already spent on plans that never come to fruition. Commissioner Auger commented that they have spent a lot of money on plans. Commissioner Pyra commented that he feels it is important to get something for their money at this point.

Waldron asked the commissioners if the committee was still presenting at district meeting as they have not chosen a presenter and that person has had no time to prepare. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the committee's presentation.

Commissioner Pyra asked if there was a possibility the district meeting will be canceled due to concerns of corona virus. Discussion ensued.

New Fire Engine

Commissioner Cilley stated that they had chosen to go with the bid from Sutphen but the amount of the bid recently changed. Captain Powell replied that the most recent bid after some minor changes was \$703,677 for the truck and did not include the additional equipment being added. Commissioner Cilley asked if something was added to make the price go up. Captain Powell replied yes and explained that though the price is now about \$4,000 higher than E1, the truck is about foot shorter and has much more compartment space. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the truck specifications.

Commissioner Cilley commented on the other bids and that with the alterations the Sutphen was no longer the least expensive option coming in at \$4,000 more than E1. Captain Powell noted that neither of the other bids included the upgrades that they made on the Sutphen.

Commissioner Pyra asked what amount was in the warrant article. Captain Powell commented that the amount in the warrant article was for the truck by Seagrave. Commissioner Cilley stated that the amount was \$811,450.00. Tobine commented that amount would be amended on the floor. Tobine stated that the amendment states \$732,127.00 but she believes that it needs to be revised but it does include the new equipment being added. Commissioner Cilley asked if they were utilizing as much of the old equipment as they could. Captain Powell replied that they were pieces they would be adding such as rescue jacks. Commissioner Cilley asked if the jacks would need to be moved between the trucks when they swap the first due truck. Captain Powell replied that they would but it was his understanding that they would not be rotating the trucks when the new one arrived. Commissioner Cilley asked if they would be using the new truck as much as possible to save some life on Engine 3. Deputy Joubert replied yes, that they are concerned with it holding up in the long run. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Cilley expressed that he feels future committees such as for engines or SCBAs should keep minutes or at least give periodic updates throughout the process. Commissioner Auger agreed that he would like updates from the committees through their process.

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Additional Personnel

Deputy Joubert stated that at the last meeting Chief Sitar had spoken about the SAFER Grant and additional personnel. He shared with the Commissioners that Gilford Fire Department just put out a flier to hire 3 additional firefighters giving them 4 per shift, and they currently go on about 400 less calls than Tilton-Northfield. He stated that Chief Sitar wanted the Commissioners to be aware of some of the changes other communities in the area were making. Deputy Joubert noted that there is not a large pool of firefighters looking for work and several departments are hiring this year. Discussion ensued regarding how other local departments are staffed.

Commissioner Auger stated that for him the biggest thing is the cost. \$90,000 per year to add a member to the department is a lot of money. He asked what is going to be given up for that, are they going to give up more insurance? Eventually they will take benefits away.

Deputy Joubert stated that his opinion is the calls are not going to stop and the demand is going up. Something needs to be figured out because the demand is beginning to outpace what they can provide. Commissioner Auger agreed that it does continue to grow and stated that somewhere, maybe down the road there is an answer. Maybe regionalization or maybe not, but there has to be something. Deputy Joubert agreed that they need to look at all avenues. Discussion ensued regarding staffing and coverage.

Adjournment

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Joslin

Beth Joslin
Office Clerk

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: April 6 at 5:30 PM.
Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main Street, Tilton