

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By: Commissioners

Date, Time: 10/06/2020, 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Beth Joslin

Location: Tilton Town Hall
Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main Street
Tilton NH

Call to Order

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

Commissioner Auger read the following:

Tonight's meeting may be attended by the public either in person or by joining at <https://www.uberconference.com/lrmfa> or by calling 1-885-887-3318.

Public comments may be made either in person or via email.

If you are present at the meeting, please wait to be recognized by the Chair. Once recognized, speak into the microphone, state your name and address then make your comment.

If you are joining the meeting by conference call and wish to comment, please email your comment to comments@tnfd.org. For your comment to be read during the meeting, be sure to include your name and address in your email.

Attendance

Commissioners Paul Auger, Jon Cilley, Eric Pyra; Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine

Correspondence

From: kate@hooksettrentatool.com <kate@hooksettrentatool.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 3:19 PM

To: Jon Cilley <jcilley.tnfd.fire.commissioner@gmail.com>; Kathy Tobine <KTobine@tnfd.org>

Cc: Kevin Waldron <kevin1waldron@gmail.com>

Subject: 9/1/2020 Commissioners Meeting

Commissioners Auger, Pyra and Cilley

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the above referenced Fire Commissioners meeting. However, I have some concerns and questions that I respectfully submit for inclusion.

- 1. Why is the duly elected Clerk not at regularly scheduled meetings performing the duties and responsibilities of her office in accordance with Article III Section 3 of the Tilton-Northfield Fire District by-laws? RSA 41:16 States that the Clerk shall record all votes. This is not being done contrary to the RSA.*

Commissioner Auger commented this was addressed. Chief Sitar commented that it was addressed and that her duties are in regards to district meeting and doing the minutes for district meeting. Kathy commented that the bylaws are on the district website and can be found under the "District" tab.

- 2. Why is Kathy Tobine, an employee of the District, attending meetings and providing advice regarding warrant articles, meeting structure and applicable RSA's?*

Commissioner Auger commented that the Board thought it would be best for Kathy to be at the meetings. Chief Sitar commented she handles all the HR. Deputy Robinson

commented she is part of the administrative team. Commissioner Cilley commented he received another email from Kevin C. asking if Kathy was paid to be at the meetings. Commissioner Auger replied that she is.

3. *Regarding the FEMA Grant for funding additional full time fire fighters.*

- a. *Having watched the videos of the Commissioners meetings as well as reviewed the written minutes of said meetings, from 3/3/20 to 7/21/20 the first discussion of a grant was on 3/3/20. At this time, Chief Sitar informed the three commissioners that grant money was available and outlined the parameters of use of said money. To summarize, Commissioner Cilley stated that it should not be applied for if the budget was approved and not to discuss it prior to or at the annual meeting as it would muddy the waters. Commissioner Pyra stated in no uncertain terms that the grant should not be discussed until the results of the district meeting were known. Commissioner Auger stated that if other cut backs were made, such as over time, he would support it. The Chief stated that if the grant was approved and the budget for additional personnel was not, then the grant should be declined. There was no further discussion regarding this grant until 7/21/20 at which time a member of the public asked the Chief if there were going to be new hires and the Chief stated that there would not be as the public did not want additional hires.*

Commissioner Cilley commented he listened to the audio. It was on 3/3/20. They did discuss it briefly on 3/12/20. The intent was to put the SAFER grant on hold until after district meeting. If they did not receive the two then we would apply for the grant. He asked Chief Sitar when we applied for the grant. Chief Sitar commented that he believed it was in May. Commissioner Pyra commented that they believed that they would be meeting in March. They then postponed it several times and the meeting didn't happen until July. Commissioner Auger commented he doesn't believe they did anything they said they wouldn't do. Commissioner Cilley commented that he is pretty clear that it was voted down at district meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the vote at district meeting.

- b. *Given that the 1 yr cost for a single fire fighter is approximately \$90,000 plus equipment and uniforms and that the grant only covers, 75% of this cost in the first two years and 35% in the third year, the tax payers would need to fund an additional \$111,500 per fire fighter over the course of the three years at a minimum. At the end of the three years, the tax payers would be responsible for the entire cost of each of these fire fighters, or they would be terminated. The likelihood of their termination is close to zero.*

Chief Sitar commented that the only the last two statements are correct. There is no match for this grant. Last year's application required you keep them on board, this year you don't have to keep them.

- c. *Given that the by-laws clearly state that the Commissioners hold fiduciary responsibility as well as responsibility for developing and maintaining a Department/District Employment Policy to the governing body, and that it does not appear as though the Chief was ever given direction by the Commissioners to apply for this grant, the grant award must be refused as the Chief's application for said grant was beyond his purview having not been directed to do so by the commissioners. Additionally, the governing body to which you are responsible has clearly stated that it does not approve of additional funding for additional staff. Even the Chief recognized this fact in his answer to the public question on 7/21/20.*

Chief Sitar commented that it is in his job description and the by-laws that he is to apply for grants as they become available. If a grant is awarded the

Commissioners may choose to accept or deny the grant. Discussion ensued regarding when the Commissioners gave the okay to apply for the grant.

- d. Given that the fire fighters must be hired within 180 days of the awarding of said grant and that the 2021 District Annual meeting may not be held prior to the expiration of said 180 days, thus not providing the governing body it's opportunity to approve or disapprove of this expenditure, the grant must be refused.

Chief Sitar commented it is 180 days from the award date which is February 20th.

- e. Lastly, I have deep concern with regards to what appears to be the lack of transparency, withholding information from and manipulation of the governing body to which you are responsible by not informing the public of the availability of these funds.

Commissioner Cilley stated it was discussed in two properly noticed meetings, is on video and minutes. Commissioner Auger commented he believes they did whatever was right. He was not here for the meetings. Deputy Robinson commented that transparency is not an issue of this Board.

I respectfully submit these questions and concerns.

Deo Gratias

Kevin Cate

Hooksett Rent A Tool LLC

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Allentown NH 03275

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Mobile: 603-674-0668

Tilton-Northfield Water District sent a letter informing TNFD that prior authorization needs to be obtained from John Chase prior to using any private or public hydrants for training purposes.

Commissioner Cilley commented that he understands their concerns. Commissioner Auger commented that they pay for the service they should be able to use it for training but understands that the water department could charge more if they did. Discussion ensued regarding the use of hydrants for training.

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

Commissioner Pyra commented on the article on Chronicle last night.

Chief's Report

Budget

- The audited Unassigned Fund Balance is \$562,058.
- Apparatus & Equipment Replacement Fund balance through September: \$670,355.50
- 2019 Ambulance Revenue through September: \$318,360.81. We have collected \$10,425.28 more than this time last year.
- We are 75.07% through the budget year and have expended 74.1% of the voted budget.
- The voted budget for 2020 is approximately 10% less (\$255,313) than the voted budget for 2019.

Deficits vs. Offsets were extensively discussed. Commissioner Pyra made a motion to meet with the Budget Committee to recommend overspend the Operating Budget \$25,000 at 6:00 pm on October 27th prior to be their budget workshop. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Fire Prevention Report for September 2020

- Report included in handout.

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- For the Month of September, there were 45 Fire Prevention inspections.

Run Report for September 2020

- Report included in handout.
- For the Month of September, we had 163 incidents.
- 112 of the incidents were EMS in nature and that equates to 69% of our total incident volume for the month.
- The Engine responded to 35 EMS and MVA incidents last month.
- We are 53 incidents above where we were this same time last year.

Commissioner Cilley commented on the fire alarm activations where an engine and ambulance respond. He commented on the engine responding to ambulance calls.

Commissioner Pyra wanted to know why a POV responded on September 13th at 15:26 to a call. Kathy explained that it was due to multiple calls during a building fire.

Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for September

- Report included in handout
- We had 29 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month.
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents account for 18% of all incidents for the Month of September.
- Of the 29 simultaneous incidents TNFD responded to 24.
- We received 6 mutual aid Ambulance responses.
- We responded to 1 mutual aid Ambulance requests.
- We received 3 mutual aid Engine responses.
- We responded to 1 mutual aid Engine requests.

Commissioner Pyra commented that he thought they had responded to 2 Mutual aid calls with an engine. Chief Sitar replied that if it wasn't entered correctly it wouldn't show on the report. Discussion ensued regarding the reporting process. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the vehicles responding to scenes and use around town.

Apparatus

- Car3: The rocker panels have been replaced. Car 3 passed inspection.
- A2: CO problem was addressed with no further problems.
- A1: New tires have been installed on the front.
- E3: Out of service due to cab lock being broken. Parts have been ordered.

Commissioner Cilley asked if they were able to find the cause of the CO problem. Chief Sitar replied that there was a clamp loose in the exhaust system.

Training Burn

- Conducted on Sunday, September 20, 2020.
- Planning to burn in 3 houses on Main Street and Morrison Ave.
- Franklin, Sanbornton, Belmont, Laconia, Gilford, Canterbury and TNFD all participated.
- WMUR was on scene to film a segment that will air on NH Chronicle during Fire Prevention Week. The program will air on Monday, October 5th.
- State Fire Marshall Parisi was very complimentary of the event.
- Deputy Joubert did a tremendous job coordinating the event.

COVID-19

- No employee unprotected exposures.

Center Street

- Nothing to report.

Park Street

- Working on getting the contractors in to do the work.

New SCBAs

- The new compressor has been installed and is working properly.

Fire Department Radio System

- Park Street
 - Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing for proposed tower has been continued.
 - Next meeting is Monday, October 26, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Personnel

- Probationary FF Remick has resigned. His position has been posted.
- A process will be conducted with the hope of having a new employee by mid-November.
- One Call Company application in process.

Fire Station Committee

- No money appropriated for any fire station engineering or design in the 2020 Budget.

Currently Working On

- SAFER Grant Implementation
 - Hiring process
 - Center Street Station modification
- 2021 Budget
- Call Company recruitment
- Capital Improvement Plan
 - New Ambulance – 2021 Budget
 - New Engine – 2021 Budget
 - New Car 3 – 2021 Budget

Old Business

Warrant Article/Bylaw Process Review and 5 Member Board

Chief Sitar commented Kathy did the research on this. Per RSA we can only have 3 commissioners.

District Website

Commissioner Cilley commented they had brought up the District Website before highlighting different information. He would like to see more updated information and photos on the website. An example would be the Chronicle report or photos from fire prevention events. Commissioner Pyra commented he would like to see more on a FB page. Discussion ensued regarding Facebook posting and new content for the website.

New Business

Disposition Reports

The Disposition Reports were discussed. Commissioner Cilley suggested that they look at the reports as a group rather than only the chair. Commissioner Pyra made a motion for the Commissioners meet twice monthly to deal with the Disposition Reports. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

It was unanimously agreed to meet on October 14th at 6:00 pm. Location to be determined.

Additional Firefighter Funding Committee

Commissioner Cilley commented they had talked about looking at options to keep the firefighters after the SAFER grant expires. Discussion ensued of who should make up the committee and the purpose of the committee.

COMSTAR

Chief Sitar announced that we went out for bids on our ambulance service. COMSTAR came in with the lowest bid at 6%. Commissioner Auger made a motion to authorize Chief Sitar to sign

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the new COMSTAR agreement to take effect October 1, 2020. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Donations

Commissioner Cilley commented we have received donations to our training center and live burn training. We are behind being ADA compliant at Center Street and Park Street. He feels donations should be for fixing our current deficiencies. Commissioner Pyra asked if there was a certain dollar amount at which donations must be publicly accepted by the Commissioners. Chief Sitar replied that there was, donations of \$5,000 or more needed to be accepted by the commissioners. Discussion ensued regarding the acceptance and spending of donations.

TNWD Hydrant Rental

The hydrant rental agreement is expiring on December 31st. Chief Sitar commented he would like to see changes made. He would like to be able to use the Park Street Station hydrant for training purposes. The Board unanimously agreed to meet with the Water District Commissioners to discuss the agreement. Kathy will contact John Chase to set up the date.

Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2020

Commissioner Cilley made a motion to accept the minutes of August 4th as written. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

September 1, 2020

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to accept the minutes of September 1st as written. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

September 8, 2020

Commissioner Cilley made a motion to accept the minutes of September 8th as written. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Other Business

Chief Sitar reviewed the memo he had sent to Board regarding the SAFER grant hiring process. Commissioner Cilley asked when the Board would find out who is being hired. Discussion ensued about the pay.

Adjournment

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 PM. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Joslin

Beth Joslin
Office Clerk

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: October 14, 2020 at 6:00 PM.
Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room, 257 Main
Street, Tilton NH