

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Budget Committee Meeting

Meeting Called By: Budget Committee

Date, Time: 1/08/2021, 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Beth Joslin

Location: Northfield Town Hall
21 Summer Street
Northfield, NH

Present: Jason Wright, Kevin Waldron, Jane Alden, Katherine Dawson, Commissioner Eric Pyra, Chief Michael Sitar, and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine. Attending Electronically due to COVID-19: Charlie Broughton, Scott Lewandowski, and Deputy Tim Joubert

Katherine Dawson called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

On behalf of the Budget Committee due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet in person and electronically.

Please note that the physical location to attend the meeting is Northfield Town Hall at 21 Summer Street, Northfield, NH if you are unable to attend the meeting in person and wish to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

We are utilizing Microsoft Teams for this electronic meeting. All members of the Budget Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone number: 1-603-370-3071 and the password is 612440994#, or by emailing info@tnfd.org for an invitation to join the meeting.

If anybody has a problem, please email: ktobine@tnfd.org. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Minutes

December 4, 2020

Jane made a motion to approve the minutes of December 4th as corrected. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes

Kevin: No

Jane: Yes

Charlie: Yes

Scott: Yes

Katherine: Yes

Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

December 18, 2020

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to approve the minutes of December 18th as written. Katherine seconded the motion. Being no further discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes
Scott: Yes

Kevin: Yes
Katherine: Yes

Jane: Abstain
Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Charlie: Yes

New Business

Chief Sitar asked if he could address the overtime that was voted on at the previous meeting. Katherine replied that she would rather come back to it later and try to make it through the budget first.

Katherine commented that after looking at and thinking about the budget she is concerned about the new hires. She stated that she went through the budget and totaled everything that was related to the grant hires. This year the grant will cover \$353,519.67 for those employees. She commented that she doesn't like to see these things in the budget, though she knows there is a grant to cover it. She stated that they have hired these people but not yet had a discussion about it at district meeting. Katherine asked if the money budgeted for the grant employees could be removed from the budget and proposed as a Warrant Article.

Chief Sitar replied that the grant stipulated that the hires must start by February 20, 2021 which is before district meeting. Discussion ensued regarding how to address the grant and the hiring of four additional people. Discussion ensued regarding separating the grant related expenses out into warrant article.

Chief Sitar explained how it is he figures the overtime amount. Talked about training and other events and certifications that requires overtime not related to someone taking time off.

Jason asked how it was they overspent that line in 2020. Chief Sitar replied that it was a few things. There were a few incidents of people using FMLA outside of the normal sick time, an employee left due to personal reasons, and there were some COVID-19 related as well.

Kevin stated that with these new employees they could pay less in overtime if they were to cover shifts. Kevin asked why some of the training they are covering for cannot be done on shift. Chief Sitar explained that some of it can but that it is difficult to respond effectively if they are doing something like swift water training in the river. Discussion ensued regarding the effect of the new hires on overtime.

Katherine asked the Committee if they wanted to reconsider the amount they had voted for overtime in the previous meeting?

Charlie asked Chief Sitar how the \$215,000 they voted for overtime affects him as it is less than then what had been requested. Chief Sitar replied that if that was all he had he would look to limit training related overtime. Charlie commented that with a good deal of training canceled in 2020 and for one year that is okay but if it continues it is bad for everybody.

Kevin commented that it is a bottom-line budget so the line isn't limited if they don't want it to be. Discussion ensued regarding sticking to the line items.

Scott asked if the department had looked into receiving any funds to cover COVID related absences. Chief Sitar replied that because they are a district and not part of the town, they do not qualify for much of the assistance. Chief Sitar explained some of the funding that they have been able to apply for.

100 Salaries & Wages - \$1,474,202

Chief Sitar explained that he had requested a COLA and a Step Increase, the Commissioners had approved only the Step Increase, which is why there is a difference in the budget lines.

Katherine made a motion to fund line 110 Career Salaries & Wages for \$1,089,382. Jane seconded the motion. Kevin commented on the increase. Jason replied that it includes the four new staff that will be offset by the grant. Jason discussed level funding with last year and forgoing the step increase since they are hiring the additional staff. Discussion ensued.

Katherine commented that she feels they have highly trained staff who should be rewarded for the work they do. Other agencies such as state and federal are giving raises and thinks they are worth it. Discussion ensued regarding department step increases. Being no further discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes
Motion Passed.

Kevin Made a motion to approve the operating budget in its entirety for \$2,355,894. Jason seconded the motion. Charlie commented that they have already voted changes to the Commissioner's budget. Scott commented that there were items coming up that he wanted to discuss. Discussion ensued regarding funding the budget as a whole or taking it line by line. Being no further discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: Yes Jane: No Charlie: No
Scott: No Katherine: No Commissioner Pyra: No
Motion failed.

341 Telephone - \$7,862

Charlie made a motion to fund line 341 for \$7,862. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes
Motion passed.

342 Information Technology - \$25,954

Jane made a motion to fund line 342 for \$25,954. Katherine seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes
Motion passed.

350 Medical Services - \$15,200

Katherine asked why there were 8 new employee physicals in the budget. Chief Sitar explained that 4 are for grant hires and the other 4 are for call members, as they try to recruit throughout the year. Discussion ensued regarding call staffing and recruitment.

Scott asked if the price went up for annual physicals, because the total is up from last year. Jason noted that a good portion of the line was not spent last year. Chief Sitar explained that they had not completed most of their physicals in 2020 due to some changes related to Covid-19.

Scott commented that some of the overages in the budget are things that they were not able to complete in 2020 due to the pandemic. Is there a possibility to carry over some of that money to 2021? Kathy replied that it was too late and that it needed to be done before the end of the year.

Katherine made a motion to fund line 350 for \$15,200. Jane seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

390 Other Professional Services - \$1

392 Background Checks - \$520

550 Printing - \$500

Commissioner Pyra mad a motion to fund line 390 for \$1, line 392 for \$520, and line 550 for \$500. Jane seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion Passed.

560 Dues & Subscriptions - \$4,581

Kevin asked why need to be members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs? Chief Sitar replied that it was in his contract. Discussion ensued regarding the benefits of the membership.

Katherine made a motion to fund line 560 for \$4,581. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

620 Office Supplies - \$3,150

625 Postage - \$500

Katherine made a motion to fund line 620 for \$3,150 and line 625 for \$500. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

630 Equipment Maintenance & Repairs - \$12,685

Chief Sitar explained the bigger items in the budget such as the OptiCom system. Discussion ensued regarding the responsibility to maintain the OptiCom system.

Kevin made a motion to fund line 630 for \$6,685. Jason seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

631 Service Testing - \$18,879

Charlie made a motion to fund line 631 for \$18,879. Jane seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

Jason commented that he would be more supportive if they weren't under spending so much more than last year without any dialog as to why.

635 Gasoline - \$4,000

636 Diesel - \$14,000

Charlie made a motion to fund line 635 for \$4,000 and line 636 for \$14,000. Jason commented that he thinks that is good as he expects prices to rise. Being no further discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

660 Vehicle Repairs - \$66,096

Chief Sitar talked about the vehicle repairs. Scott asked when the new Engine will arrive and if Engine 1 will be gone after that? Chief Sitar replied that yes, Engine 1 will be gone and as of right now he believes Engine 2 will be in service in October. Discussion ensued regarding the maintenance for 21E1 and the possibility of cutting that down.

Discussion ensued regarding repairs and where they are done.

Katherine asked Commissioner Pyra if the Commissioners were planning on having a warrant article for the contingency fund. Commissioner Pyra replied that they have not gone over warrant articles yet but he believed they were. Katherine asked if the Other Vehicle Repairs line could be fit into the Contingency Fund Warrant Article. Discussion ensued.

Scott made a motion to reduce line 660 to \$60,000. Jason seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: No
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: No

Motion passed.

670 Books & Periodicals - \$100

680 Departmental Awards - \$2,500

Katherine made a motion to fund line 670 for \$100 and line 680 for \$2,500. Jane seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion Passed.

685 Uniforms - \$16,450

Charlie made a motion to fund line 685 for \$16,450. Katherine seconded the motion for discussion. Jason expressed concern in the difference of what is budgeted versus what was spent in 2020. Chief Sitar replied that part of it is new uniforms and the bills for 2020 were not all in yet so the total for 2020 is not accurately shown. Being no further discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: No Kevin: No Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes
Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion Passed.

690 Miscellaneous - \$300

Kevin made a motion to fund line 690 for \$1. Katherine seconded the motion for discussion. Katherine asked what is Miscellaneous? Chief Sitar replied that its things that usually don't fit anywhere else. Kathy replied that the spending last year on the line was for porta-potty rentals

to be ADA compliant for meetings. Being no further discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes

Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion passed.

775 Dry Hydrants & Cisterns - \$5,275

Katherine made a motion to fund line 775 for \$5,275. Jason seconded the motion. Being no discussion, vote was taken.

Jason: Yes Kevin: Yes Jane: Yes Charlie: Yes

Scott: Yes Katherine: Yes Commissioner Pyra: Yes

Motion Passed.

Adjournment

Katherine adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Joslin

Beth Joslin
Office Clerk

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: January 15, 2021 at 5:30 PM.
Northfield Town Hall
21 Summer Street, Northfield, NH