

**Village District of Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS
New Hampshire
2021 Meeting Minutes**

Polls were opened on the 9th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-one at the Pines Community Center, Dearborn Road, Northfield at seven o'clock a.m. by Moderator Scott McGuffin. The polls were closed at seven o'clock p.m. with 325 votes cast. Polls were opened on the 9th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-one at the Winnisquam Regional High School, Main Street, Tilton at eight o'clock a.m. by Moderator Charles Mitchell. The polls were closed at seven o'clock p.m. with 279 votes cast.

Article 01 To choose a Fire Commissioner for the ensuing three (3) years.
Eric Pyra.....296
Jason A Wright109
Kevin Cate143

Article 02 To choose a Treasurer for the ensuing three (3) years.
Timothy F Pearson.....490

Article 03 To choose a Clerk for the ensuing three (3) years.
Write In – Position to be appointed by the Commissioners for one year.

The 2021 Fire District annual meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on the 15th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-one at the Winnisquam Regional High School, Main Street, Tilton, by Moderator Kent Finemore to act upon the following subjects.

Moderator Kent Finemore introduced the members of the Budget Committee, Commissioners, Clerks, Assistant Moderators Paul Blaisdell and Kaitlin Lounsbury and Attorney Paul Fitzgerald. Read the rules of the meeting.

Moderator Finemore read articles 1, 2 and 3 with the results.

Article 04 To accept the reports of the Treasurer and the Fire Commissioners and pass any vote relating thereto.

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Kaitlin Lounsbury.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

There being none, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 05 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Kevin Waldron, seconded by Pat Consentino.

Commissioner Paul Auger spoke to the article explaining that this is a yearly occurrence and the current fund balance.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding utilizing Unassigned Fund balance in a lot of articles to come and referenced that this money usually comes from taxation.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Chief Sitar presented a slideshow outlining Fund Balances, mutual aid, responses in 2020, types of incidences, locations, times of day, age and arrival time. He added that the second call time has been down since adding a fourth person to each sift.

Kaitlin Lounsbury presented the Fire Station Committee report which outlined five directives the committee looked at and the pros and cons to each directive. The committee decided to recommend the use of Park St station with a possible substation in the future.

Article 06 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for the purpose of design, engineering, and architectural fees associated with the construction, addition, and/or renovation of a fire station or fire stations. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the building(s) is completed. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Jon Cilley, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Jon Cilley spoke to the article stating that to move forward with the Fire Station Committee's recommendation they need to have engineering done for site work and building expansion, adding that there were funds set aside before by they lapsed.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

There being none, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 07 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) for the purpose of purchasing a piece of land adjacent to 149 Park Street in Northfield labeled as New Parcel A on a plan drawn by Joseph M Wichert LLS, Inc Land Surveyor from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioner and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Kaitlin Lounsbury, seconded by Paul Blaisdell

Commissioner Auger spoke to the article stating that during the study it was determined that the District does not own the piece of property we are looking to purchase, the State is willing to sell this property to the District.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the size of the lot and the potential use allowing for snow storage, possible drainage needed, easements and other future uses. The price came from the State which was determined to be the assessed value.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 08 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Four Hundred Ninety-Nine Dollars (\$10,499) for the purpose of adding to the existing Fire Prevention Expendable Trust Fund with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Kaitlin Lounsbury.

Commissioner Eric Pyra speaks to the article stating this is a yearly article where money is raised by fire prevention fees and deposited into this fund.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued stating the dollar amount is determined by the money spent in the prior year.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 09 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Thousand Eighty-Five Dollars (\$7,085) for the purpose of purchasing materials, tools and equipment related to public education, code enforcement, training, etc. with said funds to be withdrawn from the Fire Prevention Expendable Trust Fund. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Eric Pyra speaks to the article stating that this is another yearly article where these funds are set aside to purchase equipment and supplies for fire prevention training at schools, elderly facilities, etc.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued questioning the balance in the fund balance being \$22,766.22, which the goal in the future will be to replace the trailer.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 10 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000) for the purpose of adding to the existing Health Insurance Deductible Expendable Trust Fund with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Paul Auger spoke to the article stating we are requesting to replenish funds that were withdrawn from last years expenses.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the current fund balance being \$3,116.30.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 11 To see if the District will vote to establish a Communications Tower Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, where fifty percent (50%) of the tower revenue from the previous year shall be used to offset the operating budget in the following year and fifty percent (50%) of the tower revenue shall be used to offset costs for repairs, maintenance, construction costs and bonds of fire stations, radio communication infrastructure and to raise and appropriate One Dollar (\$1.00) to put in the fund, with this amount to come from Unreserved Fund Balance; further to name the Board of Commissioners as agents to expend from said fund. Future funding will come from the Communication Tower income collected. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Eric Pyra spoke to the article stating that the tower is proposed to be constructed this year, and that it is going before the Planning Board in the coming month seeking approval. The tower will be located on the property of the Park Street station.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the agreement with the cell tower company, equipment needing to be purchased, opening a fund before the tower is constructed. Chief Sitar explained that the cell tower company will be leasing the land from the District and giving us space on the tower and ground to house the Districts equipment. The tower company is also providing a generator.

Amendment 1: To see if the District will vote to establish a Communications Tower Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, where seventy percent (70%) of the tower revenue from the previous year shall be used to offset the operating budget in the following year and thirty percent (30%) of the tower revenue shall be used to offset costs for repairs, maintenance, construction costs of fire stations, radio communication infrastructure and to raid and appropriate One Dollar (\$1.00) to put in the fund, with this amount to come from Unreserved Fund Balance; further to name the Board of Commissioners as agents to expend from said fund. Future funding will come from the Communication Tower income collected.

Moved by Kevin Waldron, seconded by Katherine Dawson

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued requesting clarification of changes form original article to amendment request, timeframe of construction and the use of a bond to construct the fire station. Chief Sitar pointed out the differences and stated that the tower is set to be built by the end of this year, he added he is not aware of the District not needing a bond to do the construction work needed for the station.

There being no further questions, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote on Article 11 Amendment 1. **Article Fails.**

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion on the original article.

Discussion ensued with explanation of the funds as written in the article, and that the Districts responsibility to the tower is that of their own equipment.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 12 To see if the District will vote to establish a contingency fund per RSA 31:98-a and raise and appropriate Twenty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Seventy-Four dollars (\$23,274) to put in the fund. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Eric Pyra spoke to the article explaining that this is money set aside for the current year to cover any short comings in the budget and that the money is returned to the General Fund if not used.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued asking for clarification of short coming being unexpected repairs to buildings, vehicles, etc., the requirements set by NH Department of Revenue if you need to go over budget.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote.

Moderator Finemore is in doubt and asks for a hand count. Yes 20, No 17 **Article Passed.**

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Kaitlin Lounsbury to protect the vote. Motion Passed.

Article 13 To see if the District will vote to authorize the Commissioners to enter into a five-year agreement (beginning January 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2025) in the amount of Six Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Forty-Two Dollars (\$629,942) for the purpose of providing pressurized hydrant services necessary for fire suppression and raise and appropriate the annual cost of One Hundred Twenty-Five Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty-Eight Dollars (\$125,988) for this year. This agreement contains an escape clause and is a special warrant article. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is not recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Jon Cilley, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Jon Cilley spoke to the article explaining that this is a five-year contract, and it is requested to raise and appropriate the first year. He added that there is an escape clause in which if the budget is not approved, the District does not have to pay, and the contract is voided.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued about repercussions if the article fails, which the Water District will have to make up the cost and could charge the Fire District a usage tax at whatever rate they feel. Other options would be to purchase a tanker which comes with added expense of personnel, storage, maintenance, insurance, etc. Further discussion about how often we utilize the hydrant, Chief Sitar stated about five times per year. He added that if there is not a contract the Water District plans to use a rate study of \$400 (+, -) per hydrant per quarter and if we do not pay that they plan to take us to court.

Attorney Paul Fitzgerald confirmed that yes, they can take the District to court, but the laws of the State of NH and PUC are clear they can charge the access fee. Concerns from the public continued that if there is not money in the budget to even cover the access fees or usage fees then how will they be paid for, and if shut off where water would come from. Commissioner Cilley explained that Cisterns are an option but will not be in place this year same with purchasing a tank truck.

Moved by Chuck Mitchell, seconded by Helen Hanks to call the question. Motion Passes

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote.

Moderator Finemore is in doubt and asks for a hand count. Yes 18, No 19 **Article Fails.**

Moved by Kevin Waldron, seconded by Jason Wright to protect the vote. Motion Passes

Article 14 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate One Hundred Twenty-nine Thousand One Hundred Eighty-five Dollars (\$129,185) for the purpose of purchasing Fire, Rescue, EMS Equipment and Ambulance Charges, with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue Fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 7, 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Eric Pyra spoke to the article stating this is to purchase turnout gear, supplies, ambulance equipment and supplies.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

There being none, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 15 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Hundred Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$720,000) for the purpose of purchasing a new fire engine and equipment with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue Fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 7, 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Paul Blaisdell.

Commissioner Jon Cilley spoke to the article explaining that last year the District voted to replace one apparatus with two trucks being down. This article is to purchase the second truck. He added that the District has had to call for assistance through Mutual Aid which cannot always be relied upon. The cost of the truck includes the need to be manufactured to fit into the small garage, but this is the same cost and engine as purchased last year.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Amendment #1: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) for the purpose of purchasing a refurbished fire engine and equipment with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue Fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 7, 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate.

Moved by Kevin Cate, seconded by Greg Hill.

Kevin Cate spoke to the amendment, stating the District could get a refurbished one and the purchase a new one when we do not have to fit it into an old structure.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the fund as it cannot be used to purchase refurbished vehicles, and that the Engine 3 which is set to be replaced has been refurbished over the years and the constant work is costing more money, this year it has already cost \$5,000 and the truck has 120,000 miles on it.

Chuck Mitchell calls for a point of order, stating that if the article states to draw from a fund that you cannot draw from based on how it was set up, then this is not a legal motion.

Moderator Finemore agrees that the funds cannot be used for this purchase, but we are going to vote on the amendment.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Amendment 1 to Article 15 Fails.**

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion on the original article.

Discussion ensued regarding the length of vehicles usually being 10 to 20 years, maintenance has improved within the District, and the company we are purchasing from has been very good about standing behind these vehicles if we have had issues.

Moved by Kathy Mitchell, seconded by Hellen Hanks to call the questions. Motion Passed.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 16 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Eighty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$285,000) for the purpose of purchasing a new ambulance and equipment with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue Fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 7, 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Jason Wright

Commissioner Eric Pyra spoke to the article stating that the vehicle to be replaced is the 2011 and has 93,000 miles on it and required service every month, in addition it is maxed out on all its equipment.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the same type of vehicle and the reasoning behind 4-wheel drive is the road conditions and there is no guarantee all calls are going to be on Class V or better roads. Commissioners confirmed that the purchase request went out to bid, and these were the best prices.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 17 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of Two Million Five Hundred Eighty-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixteen Dollars (\$2,589,216) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Kaitlin Lounsbury.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the FEMA grant for the four new fire fighters and what the cost is in the budget for the District, overtime, concerns about the water and no money in the budget. Chief Sitar explained that the grant is a reimbursement grant.

Amendment 1: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate sum of Two Million Six Hundred Thirty-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixteen Dollars (\$2,639,216) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Moved by Pat Consentino, seconded by Chuck Mitchell.

Pat Consentino spoke to the amendment stating that she feels there needs to be additional funding in the budget in case the District receives an invoice from the Water District for usage.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the additional \$50,000 and that agreement that the Commissioners need to find other ways to receive water. In addition, the vote already cast to not sign the contract is sending a clear message to the Water District.

Discussion regarding the RSA that protects the District when using the hydrants without a contract or agreement.

Chief Sitar stated that the District received a letter from the Water District that they will charge a rate of \$493.73 per hydrant per quarter, so for 99 hydrants that is over \$195,000 for 2021 which is a 4% increase.

Pat Consentino withdrew her motion to Amend the article, Chuck Mitchell seconded.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion on the original article.

Moved by Kevin LaChapelle, seconded by Kathy Mitchell to call the question.

Mark Hebert called a point of order as the original article has not been discussed. Moderator Finemore agrees and does not pass the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding the FEMA grant and the four fire fighters as this is a three-year grant, and the funding covers everything except approximately \$7,260.

Moved by Chuck Mitchell, seconded by Helen Hanks to call the question. Motion Passes

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 18 To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Commissioner Eric Pyra stated that they are forming a committee for Volunteers for Safer Employee Sustainment.

Paul Blaisdell thanked the Commissioner and Budget Committee for all their hard work.

Commissioner Jon Cilley informed everyone that on April 13th the Water District will be holding their annual meeting at the Pines Community Center.

Moved by Jason Wright, seconded by Pat Consentino to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;



Stephanie Giovannucci, District Clerk