

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Budget Committee Meeting

Meeting Called By: Budget Committee

Date, Time: 7/23/2021, 5:00 PM

Transcribed By: Beth Joslin

Location: Northfield Town Hall
21 Summer Street
Northfield, NH

Call to Order

Katherine Dawson called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Attendance

Committee Members: Jason Wright, Katherine Dawson, Scott Lewandowski, Jane Alden, Kevin Waldron, Commissioner Eric Pyra

District: Chief Michael Sitar & Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine

Meeting Minutes

April 16, 2021

Kevin made a motion to accept the minutes of April 16th as amended. Jane seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding changes to the minutes. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Old Business

Expenditures-to-Date

Chief Sitar commented that he has held back on some spending this year as they see what repairs come up.

Katherine commented that the Repairs & Maintenance was high and asked if that was because most of the regular maintenance has been done. Discussion ensued regarding unexpected repairs. Katherine asked for a description of the vehicles and their condition. Chief Sitar replied that he could put together a packet.

Apparatus & Equipment Fund – Replacement Vs Actual

Chief Sitar explained that the report shows what they budgeted for and what has been spent so far. Discussion ensued regarding expenditures from the fund.

New Business

Budgeting Process

Katherine proposed different ways of looking at the budget.

Discussion ensued regarding the largest part of the budget, wages and benefits and how the district compares to other areas.

Katherine said her biggest concern is repairs. Discussion ensued regarding the wear and tear on the vehicles and why an engine sometimes goes to medical calls and how it can be avoided.

Katherine asked if there was any information that anyone needs to work on the budget at the next meeting. Discussion ensued regarding how they wanted to approach making the budget and what information they will need.

Tilton Northfield Water District

Chief Sitar introduced the committee to what has been happening with the water district and reviewed the timeline to date.

- District Meeting did not approve the Water District Warrant Article.
- Fire District requested to continue domestic water and fill line services at both stations and to renegotiate an agreement for hydrant service to bring to a Special District Meeting.
- Water District sent a revised bill with new tariff rates.
- Fire District paid the domestic portion of the first quarter water bills.
- Water District sent out a disconnect notice for Park Street (Water District included the fill lines & pressurized hydrants with the Park Street water account) Also stating that they were not inclined to renegotiate.
- Water District requested access to fire stations to make disconnects and declined to negotiate new agreement.
- Fire District requested twice for 91-A on all correspondence and a copy of the Water Districts rate study.
- Water District provided requested information and stated that the nonpayment threatened the continuation of domestic service at the Park Street Station.
- Water District shut off water to the Park Street Station (domestic, fill line & fire hydrant)
- Fire District filed a petition with the Belknap Superior Court to have water services restored.
- Water District put hydrants out of service in downtown Tilton, on Park Street, W Main Street, and streets off W Main Street.
- The court issued a temporary order to have disconnected services restored and set a hearing date. Water services were restored to Park Street station.
- Water District filed a motion to dismiss the Fire District's petition.
- Fire District requested the fill lines be turned into domestic service lines, to have the pressurized hydrants separated from the domestic accounts, and to renegotiate a new agreement.
- Court made the temporary order permanent.
- Fire District filed an objection to the Water District's request for dismissal.
- Fire District received a notice to appear on 9/27/21 on the motion to dismiss.

Katherine asked if the water district was still not willing to negotiate new contract. Chief Sitar replied that they have not received a reply to the most recent request, but felt it was unlikely as they have denied all earlier requests. Katherine asked what the water district's wishes are. Jason commented that the old contract is void but there has been no new offer and the fire district was billed for an offer that doesn't exist.

Chief Sitar commented that according to the water district's tariff they only have procedures for shutting off services to residents. There is nothing regarding turning off services to municipalities.

Chief Sitar stated that they would need to petition the court to have a special district meeting to address the problem with the water district. The commissioners will create a warrant article with a dollar amount for the water district. The budget committee will then need to weigh in on it, they do not need to agree with it. The Warrant Article will then go to special district meeting. Discussion ensued regarding what will be involved in holding a special meeting and the costs.

Scott asked if the water district had explained anything when they raised the rates. Commissioner Pyra explained that the water district had done a rate study and raised their rates, the new bill to the fire district was at that rate. Discussion ensued regarding water rates and meters.

Katherine stated that there had been talk at a previous district meeting regarding a rate study on the fire hydrants in other areas. Chief Sitar commented that the water district has not put a number on what it costs to install and maintain the hydrants. Discussion ensued regarding the water district costs to install & maintain the hydrants as well the limitations of public participation in water district meetings.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

Jason made a motion to adjourn. Jane seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:23 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Joslin

Beth Joslin
Office Clerk

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

October 1, 2021 at 5:00 PM.
Northfield Town Hall
21 Summer Street, Northfield NH