

**Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS District  
Warrant Article Public Hearing  
Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2022**

**Commissioners Present:** Paul Auger, Jon Cilley, and Eric Pyra  
**Budget Committee Present:** Charles Broughton, Jane Alden, Jason Wright, Katherine Dawson  
**Also Present:** Chief Michael Sitar, Kathryn Tobine, Camden Steady, Paul Blaisdell

Commissioner Eric Pyra opens the Public Hearing to discuss the 2022 proposed warrant articles at 6:30pm.

**Article 01 Choose Fire Commissioner**

To choose a Fire Commissioner for the ensuing three (3) years. (Actual voting to be by official ballot on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at the annual Town voting sessions in Tilton and Northfield at their respective polling places and times.)

No questions or discussion.

**Article 02 Choose Clerk**

To choose a Clerk for the ensuing two (2) years. (Actual voting to be by official ballot on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at the annual Town voting sessions in Tilton and Northfield at their respective polling places and times.)

No questions or discussion.

**Article 03 Choose Moderator**

To choose a Moderator for the ensuing two (2) years. (Actual voting to be by official ballot on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at the annual Town voting sessions in Tilton and Northfield at their respective polling places and times.)

No questions or discussion.

**Article 04 Accept reports of Treasurer and Commissioners**

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

No questions or discussion.

**Article 05 Add to Land & Building Fund**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Auger read the article.

Mr. Waldron asked if it was tax money, Commissioner Pyra replied that it was. Mr. Waldron asked why they are not using the unassigned fund balance. He does not have a problem with putting money aside but has a problem with the source. Commissioner Pyra replied that they do not want to deplete the unassigned fund balance too low.

**Article 06 Fire Prevention ETF**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Nine Thousand Six Hundred Twenty-Seven Dollars (\$9,627.00) 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 is recommended by

the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Pyra read the article.

No questions or discussion.

**Article 07 Fire Prevention Budget**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Eight Dollars (\$4,488.00) 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 is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Pyra read the article.

Mr. Wright asked if they were able to do more with the schools now that COVID has calmed down. Chief Sitar replied that they are not doing too much yet. Mr. Wright asked if they were building money in the Fire Prevention ETF to replace the trailer someday. Commissioner Pyra replied that that was still the plan.

**Article 08 Health Insurance Deductible ETF**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty-Six Dollars (\$2,836.00) 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 is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Auger read the article.

No questions or discussion.

**Article 09 Communications Tower ETF**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for the purpose of adding to the existing Communications Tower 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 is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Cilley read the article.

No questions or discussion.

**Article 10 Dry Hydrant/Cistern ETF**

To see if the District will vote to establish a Dry Hydrant/Cistern Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, expenditures from this fund will be used for the design, engineering, purchasing of materials, installation, and any fees or permits required to install dry hydrants and cisterns within the District and to raise and appropriate One Dollar (\$1.00) to put in the fund, with this amount to come from Unassigned Fund Balance; further to name the Board of Commissioners as agents to expend from said fund. Future funding will come from warrant articles at annual district meetings. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Cilley read the article.

Mr. Blaisdell had questions about how the fund will be funded. Chief Sitar replied that that will be in the next article. Mr. Blaisdell stated that he meant if a development is going in does the District have the ability to

encourage the developer to put in a cistern. Chief Sitar replied that it depends on the size of the development, it also depends on the density whether it would be required to be sprinkled.

**Article 11 Add to Dry Hydrant/Cistern ETF**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) to be added to the Dry Hydrant/Cistern Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Cilley read the article.

Mr. Waldron asked if there was a plan in place for cistern and dry hydrant installations for 2022. Chief Sitar replied that he is currently working on two cistern locations and two Dry Hydrant locations, but as of right now there is no finalized agreement. Mr. Waldron asked the cost of a cistern. Chief Sitar replied that fully installed it is \$70,000 to \$80,000. Minimum 30,000 gallons.

Mr. Wright asked if it was an above ground structure. Chief Sitar replied that it is usually level with the ground.

Mr. Waldron commented that he feels it's a great idea and should have been done years ago.

**Article 12 Establish Contingency Fund**

To see if the District will vote to establish a contingency fund per RSA 31:98-a and raise and appropriate Twenty-Nine Thousand Four Hundred Four Dollars (\$29,404.00) to put in the fund. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is not recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Pyra read the article.

Mr. Blaisdell asked why the Budget Committee voted to not recommend. Mr. Wright replied that he was not there for the vote but that his opinion is that there has been demonstrated history that it hasn't been used, even when there are circumstances that would warrant it.

**Article 13 Pressurized Hydrants**

To see if the District will vote to authorize the Commissioners to enter into a five-year agreement (beginning January 1, 2022 and ending December 31, 2026) in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) for the purpose of providing pressurized hydrant services necessary for fire suppression and raise and appropriate the annual cost of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) for this year. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is not recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Cilley read the article.

Mr. Blaisdell asked how they arrived at the \$100,000 value for the service. Commissioner Cilley reviewed the previous contract price of \$125,000 and the proposed new 5-year contract rate last year of \$156,000, the litigation process, the lack of agreement. He stated that they chose a number to have something budgeted should they come to an agreement.

Mr. Wright clarified that the number is not based on negotiation, it's an attempt to have something set aside.

Mr. Blaisdell asked if there was any guidance regarding what the value of a hydrant is. Commissioner Cilley replied that he believes it is \$450 per hydrant with about 100 hydrants in District. Commissioner Pyra commented that he believed it was higher than that. Mr. Wright asked it is billed quarterly. Chief Sitar replied that it was.

Mr. Blaisdell clarified that it at \$450 per hydrant, per quarter that is roughly \$1800 per year each. With 100 hydrants that is \$180,000. Where did the \$450 per hydrant come from? Commissioner Cilley replied that it is from a hydrant study documentation. Discussion ensued regarding water district upgrades, rate study, and increases. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the cost of a hydrant.

Mr. Waldron commented that with no contract, no proposed contract, and a pending court case that the warrant article should be pulled.

**Article 14 Apparatus & Equipment Fund Budget**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate One Hundred Sixty-Two Thousand Six Hundred Three Dollars (\$162,603.00) 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 is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Auger read the article.

No questions or discussion.

**Article 15 New Command Vehicle**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty-Four Dollars (\$53,984.00) for the purpose of purchasing a new command vehicle 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 is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Commissioner Pyra read the article.

Mr. Blaisdell asked if the Commissioners investigated other suitable vehicles that cost less. Commissioner Pyra stated they had Chief Sitar investigate other vehicle models, but they found that the tray for the radios would not fit. Chief Sitar commented that the Explorer itself was cheaper than the Expedition. However, the equipment used cannot be transferred to the Explorer all the consoles as they wouldn't fit.

Mr. Blaisdell asked how old the Chief's car is. Chief Sitar replied that it's a 2019. Mr. Blaisdell asked if it was the same car. Chief replied that he believed so. It is the same model number but 3 years newer with some minor differences such as the type of lights.

Mr. Blaisdell asked how many miles were on Car3. Commissioner Auger replied that it was over 150,000. It is a 2009, they did some body work on it this year but many of the gauges don't work and would cost quite a bit to fix. Mr. Blaisdell asked if it was necessary to have all the equipment in the vehicle. Chief Sitar replied it was because of how they use the vehicle. Mr. Blaisdell asked how old the equipment is being moved to the new car. Chief Sitar explained the radios were from a grant and the command console they have had since they got the vehicle. Mr. Blaisdell asked how many miles were currently on the Chief's car. Chief Sitar replied that it had 31,000.

Mr. Waldron expressed concern that the vehicles, for the most part, are nothing more than transportation and spend a fair amount of time out of the District. Mr. Wright questioned if there was a sedan that could be used to travel for business outside the District while the command car remains in the District. Commissioner Cilley talked about the delay it would cause in responding if they have to come to the station to get the command car. Extensive discussion ensued.

**Article 16 Operating Budget**

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of Two Million Eight Hundred Seventeen Thousand Nine Hundred Two Dollars (\$2,817,902.00) 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 is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Mr. Blaisdell requested the balance of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund and the Unassigned Fund Balance be available at District meeting.

**Article 17 Transact any other business**

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

Commissioner Pyra hearing no further discussion closed the public hearing at 7:27pm.

Transcribed by,

*Beth Joslin*

Beth Joslin  
Office Clerk