

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By: Commissioners

Date, Time: 05/03/2022, 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Kathy Tobine

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

Call to Order

Commissioner Cilley called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM.

Attendance

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

Public: Kevin Cate, Lisa Martin

Correspondence

05.02.22 Email

Paul Blaisdell expressed willingness to be a member of the Fire Station Committee to fill the vacant position.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to appoint Paul Blaisdell to the Fire Station Committee. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Auger asked how many people are currently on the committee. Kevin Cate commented they currently have seven members. The by-laws state there should be equal representation from both Tilton and Northfield so they are short one member from Northfield. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Kevin commented he did not include the Chief in that number so there are eight. Chief Sitar commented that he does not have a vote unless the Board gives him one.

Chief's Report

Budget:

- The 2022 Unassigned Fund Balance is: \$271,159 after District Meeting action. (Estimated pending final report.)
- The Operating Budget is expended at 33%. We are at 33% of the Fiscal Year.
- Total Apparatus and Equipment Fund Balance through April: \$289,420.76.
- 2022 Ambulance Revenue through April: \$184,443.20.
- 2022 Ambulance Revenue is up \$21,340.83 compared to last year during the same period.

Commissioner Cilley commented that the Budget vs. Actual reports have negative numbers in the dollars Over Budget and wanted to know if this was due to the formula. Kathy replied it is.

Commissioner Pyra wanted to know if there are any big things that are going to jump out. Chief Sitar commented the only misnomer is that we are 33% through the year and we have expended 33% of the budget. Part of that is due to the ventilators. We will be getting reimbursed for the ventilators and disinfecting lights. Once we receive the final invoice, we will submit to both municipalities for reimbursement.

Fire Prevention Report for April 2022

- Report Included in handout.
- For the month of April, there were 42 Fire Prevention inspections.

Run Report for April 2022

- Run report included in handout.
- For the month of April, we had 141 incidents.
- 103 of the incidents were EMS in nature and that equates to 73% of our total incident volume for the month.
- The engine responded with the ambulance to 38 EMS & MVA incidents last month.

Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for April 2022

- Report included in handout.
- We had 36 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month.
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 26% of all incidents for the month of April.
- We received 3 mutual aid Ambulance responses, 2 transported.
- We responded to 1 mutual aid Ambulance request.
- We received 1 mutual aid Engine response.
- We responded to 2 mutual aid Engine requests.

Commissioner Cilley commented on the overlapping/simultaneous incidents. We had 36 and were only able to respond to 26% of those. Chief Sitar explained that 26% of our calls were simultaneous. We responded to all of them with at least one person on scene.

Commissioner Cilley commented about the three mutual aid ambulance responses we received with two transports and the lost revenue. Commissioner Pyra asked for clarification on the transports. Chief Sitar replied that one was transported by Sanbornton and one by Franklin. Commissioner Cilley commented it's nice to get the billing; but, keeping people alive is more important.

Apparatus

- L1: New front springs installed.
- New A2: In service.
- New E1: Chassis inspection in late June.
- New E1: Final inspection scheduled for July 2022.
- New C3: Has been ordered. Dodge Durango Pursuit from MHQ. Late July delivery expected.

Commissioner Cilley commented that L1 had new springs installed and those were the original springs. Chief Sitar explained the vehicle is a 2013. The springs lost their tension and they had problems with the front clanking. They took it to be inspected and were told the steel in the front springs was bad. That is why they needed to be replaced.

Commissioner Cilley wanted to know if a media push had been done with the new A2; photos of the new apparatus and getting the information out there. Chief Sitar commented that he has taken a photo of it but haven't put it anywhere. Commissioner Cilley requested that a photo be placed on the website and get the information out so people will know that it's there.

Commissioner Pyra asked if there had been a press release about the disinfectant lights. Deputy Joubert commented that the staff had put it on their website. They are pretty good about that stuff.

Commissioner Cilley commented that the Chief is going out in June about the chassis on the new engine. Chief Sitar explained that Captain Powell is going with him to Ohio in June to inspect the chassis. The chassis will be driven to Pennsylvania where they will put the body on,

the pump house and finish the vehicle. Once that is completed, they will go to Pennsylvania to do another inspection.

Commissioner Cilley stated that he had heard there was a recent hold on vehicles and wanted to know if this affected the Dodge Durango. Chief Sitar explained the vehicle is MHQ. They can't get the chips for the light bars and controllers. They have delivery dates for those. We should have the vehicle in service by mid-July. Commissioner Auger asked what is being done with the old vehicle. Chief Sitar commented it is being traded in.

COVID-19

- Operating under the revised state COVID EMS Protocols.
- Door to the Fire Station is locked to the public.
- Entry protocol in place for visitors.
- GOFFER has approved the COVID Equipment Grant that was applied for in collaboration with Tilton and Northfield for two ventilators and two UV disinfectant lights. The UV lights have been delivered and are in service. The ventilators have been delivered. Training on the new ventilators will take place soon. The units will go into service after the training.

Commissioner Pyra wanted to know if we have been seeing an increase in cases. Chief Sitar replied there are new variances out there. We haven't really seen an increase in call volume. It really isn't a pandemic anymore. It is more of an endemic. Most people in the US have either had it or been vaccinated. Commissioner Pyra commented he got notification that he is eligible for another booster and was wondering if the fire department was doing them again. Chief Sitar explained that the public health network our supplies came from is not doing that anymore. If you need another, you need to go to your pharmacy to schedule that.

Center Street

- Researching a method of redundant internet service.
 - Fiber – approximately \$450/month plus installation.
 - Cellular – approximately \$40/month plus equipment cost approximately \$2,200.

Commissioner Cilley commented that last month Chief Sitar was looking at Fiber. Chief Sitar explained that since they are bringing Fiber to the tower, he is exploring how he can leverage that to be less expensive than some of the other bids received.

Commissioner Pyra commented with Comstar is coming to Tilton and wanted to know if that would be the redundancy needed. Chief Sitar explained that as long as it comes in on a different route it would be. He will explore it when they get here if we don't already have a solution.

Commissioner Cilley commented that last year money was put aside for siding and rails on Center Street Station. Chief Sitar replied that we contacted the gentleman that provided the bid to Commissioner Auger. We are on his schedule.

Park Street

- Bathroom project underway.

Commissioner Cilley stated that the project was underway last month. Chief Sitar commented it was and still is. Captain Ames, who is in charge of it, was out for a while with an injury. He came back and then went on Spring vacation with his family. It should be finished moving forward.

Fire Department Radio System

- Tower construction has started.
- Repeater

- I have been contacted and am having discussions on the possibility of collaborating with Tilton PD and Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid to add a receiver to FD system, a simulcast radio for the PD and a backhaul link for LRMFA.
- A grant for this project has been submitted.
- Tilton PD radio system is fully operating out of Shedd Road as primary.

Commissioner Auger inquired when the tower would be completed and if they have run into any problems. Chief Sitar reported they struck water during drilling. They have taken care of that issue. When they got down a few feet they ran into 15 to 20 feet of soil conditions that were like jello. They changed their foundation design to accommodate that. Commissioner Auger asked about the completion date. Chief Sitar replied one hole is complete and they are drilling the second hole. There are three holes that need to be drilled. They drill 68 feet into bedrock, install a rebar cage and fill that with cement. That needs to cure before they can start erecting the tower. He does not have a completion date. Once the cement is cured and they can place the tower, the tower will go up in one day.

Commissioner Cilley requested the status of the Repeater grant. Chief Sitar explained the grant committee is scheduled to meet shortly.

SAFER Effect

- Average Response time to second or greater calls: 07:58 from 22:30.
- Average monthly Mutual Aid Transport: 1.2 from 6.5.
- SAFER Committee is continuing to meet. Next meeting is May 23rd.
- The cost of a SAFER Firefighter in 2021 would have been \$0.09/\$1,000 on the tax rate.
- Proposed warrant article included.

Commissioner Cilley wanted to know the staffing of the SAFER Committee. Chief Sitar replied that the members are himself, Commissioner Pyra, Paul Blaisdell, Matt Gilman, and Scott Lewandowski.

Commissioner Cilley requested more information on the proposed warrant article. Chief Sitar explained that the SAFER Grant Committee is looking at ways to help offset the cost of the SAFER firefighters once the grant ends. They have come up with a proposal to change the purpose of the Apparatus & Equipment Fund by adding expenses incurred to repair, service, and maintain the equipment. They are proposing moving them from the Operating Account to the Apparatus & Equipment Fund thereby taking it off the tax roll and using that to help offset the cost of the additional employees.

Discussion: Commissioner Cilley commented that his thought on it is looking at the overall cost of operating to see what the potential savings would be. He is very nervous about making the budget go up. If this is a way of reducing areas of the budget, he would be open to look at it. Chief Sitar explained that would be one of the ways. They are looking at several things to help offset the cost. He doesn't believe there is anything the Committee can come up with that will offset 100% of the cost. Further discussion ensued.

Personnel

- Two Call applications awaiting action by applicants.

Currently Working On

- New Dry Hydrant & Water Cistern Location
 - Making appointments with landowners to discuss
- SAFER Grant implementation.
 - First quarter reimbursement has been requested.
- 2021 AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) requesting all new LDH (large diameter hose). Submitted.
- Implementation of new Records Management System.

- Reports have a new look.
- Still a work in progress.
- 2023 Budgets

Commissioner Pyra commented he went Lancaster Hill Road to avoid Exit 20. The fire department was parked on the road. There was a vehicle coming the other way and the driver was on their phone. He asked if the police department ever go to the calls for traffic. Deputy Joubert explained they do if they are requested. Sometimes they will just show up if they hear the call. Chief Sitar commented that he is exploring the HAN System. It is a device in the emergency vehicles that connects to the cellular networks and notifies vehicles with cell phones that there are emergency vehicles up ahead or behind you responding to an emergency. Commissioner Cilley requested more information on the system. Discussion ensued about grants, installation, costs.

Old Business

Report of SAFER Grant Committee

Commissioner Cilley commented that this was discussed during the Chief's report. Discussion ensued about covering the cost of the personnel.

District Clerk

Commissioner Cilley asked if we had heard anything from the Clerk. Kathy replied we have not heard from her. DRA has emailed us regarding the minutes of District Meeting being overdue as well as the MS-123, Report of Town/City/Village Officials. Discussion ensued about the minutes. It was decided that if we do not hear from the Clerk, Kathy will ask Beth to start transcribing the minutes of District Meeting and the Public Hearings. Once completed the Board will review, sign via SignNow and send to DRA with a letter explaining the situation.

Discussion ensued about the Clerk's position. Kathy explained since no one ran for the office, she remains the Clerk until she resigns. Since she is not responding to our attempts to contact her, the steps involved to remove her from office were discussed.

Water District Mediation

Mediation is scheduled for June 10th in Laconia. All three Commissioners stated they are available that day. Chief Sitar will let the Board know what time the mediation will start as soon as he is notified.

New Business

Fire Station Contractor Proposals & Purchasing Policy

Chief Sitar commented that the Building Committee decided to contact contractors by telephone. Several contractors were asked if they were interested in building a fire station with the design build method. He believes that's all the information they were given. Five submittals were received. There was different information provided by each. The purchasing policy of the department is that we advertise the RFP/RFQ and wait at least 30 days prior to their opening. When it is in the best interest of the District, the Commissioners will allow the Chief to waive the process. It is now up to the Commissioners to decide if the process was fair to the proposers and in the best interests of the Fire District or to either advertise or move forward with what we have. Lisa Martin stated it was a fair process. Kevin Cate explained how the process worked. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the purchasing policy and the process used to obtain the proposals. Commissioner Cilley commented the issue before the board tonight is whether they move forward with the proposals or step back and post the RFP/RFQ. Discussion continued about the proposals and the interview process. The importance of public hearings and getting the community to buy into the project was discussed. Commissioner Pyra questioned how far out it would push it if they decided to advertise. Chief Sitar commented that if the Board decides to advertise, they will have to write the RFP/RFQ, advertise for 30 days, have a date receive the proposals, a date to publicly open them, review, them, score them, then

hold interviews. He believes it would take two to three months. Lisa recommended they contact the contractors and let them know there was a procedural error, they need to advertise and request they submit their proposal again. Commissioner Cilley commented his concerns is putting it back a year and losing the momentum. Commissioner Auger commented it should be done the right way. Commissioner Pyra commented if the Committee can come up with the RFP/RFQ, the Chair can call a special meeting and the can get it out.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion for the Building Committee to follow the Purchasing Policy and present the Board with an RFP/RFQ to advertise for proposals. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, motion passed.

Kevin Cate asked the Board if they were to contact the five contractors that submitted information to the Station Committee to let them know it is being advertised. The Board agreed that the Committee Chairman should contact the contractors to let them know there was a procedural error, and they need to go through the advertisement process.

Elected Officials Salaries

Kathy commented that she forwarded an email from the Treasurer to the Board. Commissioner Cilley commented that there was concern on a budget line that was reduced by the Budget Committee during the budget process and was approved by the people. It was asked if the Commissioner's are willing to increase the amount or leave it as the approved budget line. Chief Sitar commented that in the budget process the Commissioners set the amount for each elected position. The Budget Committee adjusted it which raised some and reduced other elected position salaries. It is not the Budget Committee's job to set salaries for elected officials and that is essentially what they did.

Commissioner Pyra asked what the previous salaries were. Kathy responded: Commissioners - \$4,500 for all three or \$1,500 each; Clerk - \$1,000; Moderator - \$500; Treasurer - \$1,500. Commissioner Cilley asked what the change the Budget Committee made. The Clerk and Treasurer were reduced to \$750 each and Commissioners increased to \$6,000 for all three or \$2,000 each.

Discussion ensued about the budget and elected officials' salaries. Commissioner Pyra stated that in a regular municipality and there is an elected position, that number is suggested. It is not set by the Budget Committee. Where these are elected positions, are they not set by the Budget Committee. Whoever is in that position puts in their recommended number and it is up to the voting body if that gets approved or not. Should this not fall under that same category. Kathy replied it should as all elected positions are treated the same as if it was a municipality. There is no difference between a municipality and district in that respect. Chief Sitar commented that it is in the RSA. The Commissioners have the same authority as Selectmen. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to \$500 from Line 130.02 Commissioners and move it to Line 130.04 Treasurer. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Auger wanted to know why this hadn't come up before. Kathy explained that he didn't know the salary was reduced until he requested his stipend and she told him. The Budget Committee made the changes and never notified anyone. Commissioner Auger commented that he would contribute the balance. He is willing to do that. What the Budget Committee did was wrong. Commissioner Cilley commented that he is willing to contribute \$250 as well. That is showing the public they are not wasting their money as it was money that is coming out anyway. It shows they are being good stewards of their money. Commissioner Pyra rescinded his motion. Commissioner Auger rescinded his second.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to move \$750 from Line 130.02 Commissioners to Line 130.04 Treasurer. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion vote was taken. Motion passed.

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2022

Commissioner Auger made a motion to accept the minutes of April 5, 2022, as written. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Other Business

Manifests were reviewed and signed.

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine

Kathy Tobine
Office Manager

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

June 7, 2022, at 5:30 PM.
Tilton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main Street, Tilton NH