

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By: Commissioners

Date, Time: 02/07/2023, 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Beth Joslin

Location: Tilton Police Station
Conference Room
45 Sanborn Road
Tilton NH

Call to Order

Commissioner Pyra called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM.

Attendance

Commissioners Paul Auger, Jon Cilley, Eric Pyra; Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson, Deputy Chief Sean Valovanie and Administration Manager Kathy Tobine

Public: Kevin Waldron, Dennis Manning, Tim Sattler, Lisa Martin, Paul Blaisdell

Old Business

2021 Fire Station Building Committee

Those not present Matt Auger, Paul Blaisdell and Derek Farrell.

Commissioner Pyra commented that the Building Committees' presence was requested at the meeting so the Commissioners could hear their take and feelings on the events of the previous building committee meeting regarding the questions that were sent to the bidders without full committee consent and actions that happened outside of that meeting. As well as discussions in the press. He commented that the Commissioners sought legal counsel in regards to what happened and were advised that there were no violations made.

Chief Sitar received a text message from Paul Blaisdell stating that he would be at the meeting in 10 minutes. The Board decided to wait from him to arrive before continuing with the meeting with the Building Committee.

Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2023

Commissioner Auger made a motion to accept the public meeting minutes of January 24th. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Chief's Report

Budget:

- The Operating Budget is expended at 96%. We are at 100% of the Fiscal Year. There are some outstanding bills and Purchase Orders. The 2022 books are not closed.
- Total Apparatus and Equipment Fund Balance through January: \$570,742.19.

- 2022 Ambulance Revenue through January: \$44,853.91.

Pressurized Hydrant Use

- No use in the Month of January 2023

Fire Prevention Report for January 2023

- Report Included in handout.
- For the Month of January, there were 39 Fire Prevention inspections.

Run Report for January 2023

- Run report included in handout.
- For the Month of January, we had 181 incidents.
- 131 of the incidents were EMS in nature and that equates to 72% of our total incident volume for the month.
- The engine responded with the ambulance to 44 EMS & MVA incidents last month.

Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for January 2023

- Report included in handout.
- We had 114 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month.
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 63% of all incidents for the Month of January.
- We received 3 mutual aid Ambulance responses, 0 transported.
- We responded to 2 mutual aid Ambulance requests, 1 transported.
- We received 0 mutual aid Engine responses.
- We responded to 0 mutual aid Engine requests.

Apparatus

- New E1 is in service.

The rotation of the Engines and the set up of the trucks was discussed.

Grants

- SAFER Grant is up-to-date on reimbursements.
- Homeland Security Grant has been awarded in the amount of \$53,853.00 for radio infrastructure upgrades. Waiting for Grants management to OK spending.

Chief Sitar commented that the SAFER Grant application period is approaching and he is inquired whether the Commissioners would like him to apply for another SAFER Grant.

Discussion ensued.

Old Business

2021 Fire Station Building Committee

Paul Blaisdell arrived. Commissioner Pyra summarized again what they were there to discuss. Those not present Matt Auger and Derek Farrell.

Lisa Martin spoke, she wanted to clarify that the three of them did not meet. She never communicated with Paul, nor did he communicate with her. She recounted the happenings in question. She had missed the Dec 5th meeting due to illness, the next day the chief called her to fill her in on what had happened. They discussed that there was missing information to score the contractors, that was how the questions came about.

Chief Sitar stated that that was essentially what had happened. After speaking with Lisa, he contacted Paul Blaisdell as he is the chair of the committee to see if he thought it was appropriate to send the questions out. Paul agreed that it couldn't hurt and would be more information to benefit the committee.

Paul Blaisdell stated that there was never any intent to circumvent or step on peoples' feet. If you read questions, they were things that they all needed to know and was going to be shared with the group.

Commissioner Auger asked if both Lisa and Paul received a list of questions. Chief stated that Lisa and he spoke about questions and he emailed it to Paul.

Tim commented that the Chief CC'd the entire committee when the questions were submitted to the bidders.

Paul B noted that Chief Sitar sent him the questions. On that same day it was sent to the rest of the committee. Commissioner Auger clarified that the rest of the committee did not see the questions before they went out to the bidders. Discussion ensued regarding the timeline of events.

Deputy Robinson thanked Paul and Lisa for being on the committee, speaking highly of both of them. He asked if these were questions the committee had asked but the contractors overlooked?

Commissioner Cilley replied that he believes that they were supplemental questions, to clarify information. He stated that he sees both sides of it and noted that legal said there was no violation RSA91. Kevin commented that they hired an attorney to defend them and that's exactly what he did. Commissioner Cilley replied that he knows that is how Kevin feels but that was not their purpose, it was to see if there was a violation. Discussion ensued regarding the legality.

Paul B commented that has always been his pleasure to participate on these committees and with the building committee in particularly to know the process of what it will take to make that happen is important. Lisa is very knowledgeable. They would not have progressed to the level that they are without her help. He shared that he was upset that she has been dragged into this and that they have been in the newspaper with borderline derogatory comments. The original questions that they asked for were not answered clearly, Lisa called them on it. Paul B read some of the questions for the group to get the nature of what was asked.

Commissioner Auger added that the committee is doing a great job. Hope it never happens like this again. It's not me, it's the public that sees it.

Paul asked where the public was tonight? Stating that it's not the public. Discussion ensued regarding the article in the paper.

Deputy Robinson commented that they are trying to get two communities together and seems like there is one person who doesn't want to see it happen.

Commissioner Pyra commented that his first reaction was to seek legal counsel because he is not an expert on 91A and wanted to be sure that they did things correctly. He stated that he is not in favor of removing anyone from the board and hopes that the committee can continue and work together towards the ultimate goal of a new fire station.

Commissioner Cilley stated that he is also not in favor of removing anyone from the board. Moving forward information should go directly to the chair, and then the chair can go to the board. Discussed his time as chair and things that were brought to the Chief rather than the chair. Also stating that would prefer to have someone who is going to be in the station working on it, adding that it would be a good growth opportunity for the deputy.

Commissioner Auger agreed with Commissioner Cilley. It should be directed right to the chair of the committee.

Paul B read from the non-public meeting minute Jan 12, 2023 of Fire Commissioner and quoted legal counsel's comments.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to not remove any members of the fire station building committee. Commissioner Cilley seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Paul B talked about other similar mistakes that could be construed as violations.

Commissioner Cilley commented that he would like the committee to move forward and find a happy place to work together.

Kevin commented for the record, he has not called any news media or been contacted by any news media.

Commissioner Pyra commented that when they send out emails where they are requesting a reply, send it bcc so the recipients cannot reply all.

Chief's Report:

Center Street

- Purchase Order for A&B Lock issued.

Park Street

- Bathroom project completed except for the floor. Paul Auger to address.

Fire Department Radio System

- Park Street
 - Tower is up and driveway construction is finished. All poles have been installed and electricity to FD shelter is working. AT&T equipment has been installed. AT&T has not hooked up to electricity. That is AT&T responsibility.

SAFER Effect

- Average response time to second or greater calls: 07:18 from 22:30.
- Average monthly Mutual Aid Transport: 1.2 from 6.5.
- SAFER Committee is continuing to meet. Next meeting is to be determined.
- The cost of a SAFER Firefighter in 2022 would have been \$0.04/\$1,000 on the tax rate in Northfield and \$0.07/\$1,000 in Tilton.
- Warrant Article to amend the purpose of the Apparatus & Equipment Replacement Fund proposed.

Chief Sitar stated they will be near or fully expended by the end of the year. Discussion ensued regarding budgeting and another SAFER Grant.

Personnel

- One Call Company application pending.

Currently Working On

- New Dry Hydrant & Water Cistern Locations
- Dry Hydrants:
 - 299 Sanborn Road, Tilton is to be installed in the Spring.
 - 15 Silver Lane, Northfield has been installed.
 - DES permits in hand.
- Cisterns

- 33 Vista Heights, Tilton. The owner backed out at the last minute. Exploring an option for a location across the street.
- No DES permit needed.
- SAFER Grant implementation.
 - Fourth quarter reimbursement has been paid.
- Implementation of new Records Management and Scheduling System.
 - Still a work in progress, but we are getting more familiar with the product.

2022 Numbers

- 2,243 Total Incidents
 - 1,152 Overlapping Incidents
- 79 Fire
- 1,645 EMS/MVA
 - 1,140 Transports
- 96 Mutual Aid Given
- 88 Mutual Aid Received

Chief Sitar asked the Board if they wanted him to apply for another SAFER grant. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Cilley made a motion to apply for a SAFER Grant. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed.

Any Other Business

Reviewed the slide show for District Meeting.

Commissioner Pyra asked if the window was closed for Fire Commissioner positions. Chief Sitar replied that it was closed. Commissioner Auger and Kevin Cate are running for the 3-year term. Tim Sattler and Kevin Waldron are running for the 2-year term. No one is running for clerk.

The Public Hearing will be Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 6 pm in the Tilton Police Department's Community Room.

Public Comment

Kevin asked if all three Chief Officers support a single station headquarters in the Town of Northfield. Chief Sitar commented that a single fire station in Northfield would increase the response time to 2/3 of the calls by two minutes.

Deputy Robinson commented he has mixed emotions, operationally would be nice having it all under one roof but is very nervous as a taxpayer. He went on to explain why.

Deputy Valovanie commented he believes a single station in the center of the village, though that would be impossible because that is where it is now. Operationally one station is better. Personally, he doesn't think the department is big enough for two stations. Discussed other locations and commented that if they chose Sanborn Road or Park Street then would have to have two stations because neither is central enough.

Nonpublic Session per RSA 91-A:3, II(c)

Commissioner Cilley made a motion to enter nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, **other than a member of this board**, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax

