

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Special Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	March 22, 2007
Note taker:	Janine Vary	Place:	Center Street Station

Attendees: Comm. Tom Gallant, Comm. Bob Watson, Kevin Waldron, Chief Steve Carrier, Dep. Mike Robinson and Clerk Janine Vary. Absent: Treasurer Roland Seymour

At 6:03 called meeting to order by Comm. Gallant. Welcomed Kevin Waldron as new fire commissioner. Next order of business is to select the chair of the fire commissioners. It had been tradition that the senior member (3rd year member) would be chair. Most years, however, has been given to Comm. Gallant. Bob motioned to keep Tom as chairperson. Kevin seconded. Vote taken and Tom voted to continue as Chair of the Fire Commissioners.

Make a motion to ratify all warrant articles that have been approved, thereby authorizing the payment of said items. Bob seconded. Increases of payroll for full time members is therefore approved. This is a matter of formality. Vote taken and unanimously agreed to ratify all warrant articles passed at the annual district meeting.

Janine provided a copy of the MS 32 that needs to be filed with DRA with explanation of the numbers that were taken from the MS 37 and the warrants that were approved at District meeting. Tom commented that the \$1,853,205 is not the amount that will be raised through taxes. This is strictly gross appropriations. If it reflected the revenues then it would net out to show what the real taxation will be. MS 32 copies were distributed to all fire commissioners and they signed the original so it can be sent to DRA in a timely manner. Tom will review the numbers before we send to DRA.

Tom addressed issue with the clerk's position. Janine had emailed everyone a copy of the clerk's duties which are rather extensive. To draw some parallels - the clerk's duties for the district are same as municipalities. Slightly different but close. In the setting of a municipality, their clerks are full time employees and have ability to draw on the town administrator to complete parts of their duties, for instances the DRA forms. The town administrators did the MS37's for both towns. The clerk would fill out that portion of the MS 37 for the commissioners. Tom said there was a time when the clerk's position was compressed. Only minutes at a meeting. No elections at polls. Duties have broadened and Janine has supplied us with this list. Need to have an amount of money to offer this position to someone. He feels comfortable with Janine's doing of this work and moderator has been satisfied. He believes it should be a flat rate commensurate with duties. Somewhere between 60 to 80 hours at \$15.00 an hour is \$1200. 60 hrs at \$15.00 is \$900. We need to find money in the budget to pay this person. He has a problem with electing a clerk but that isn't the issue tonight. He would like a compromise between \$1000 and \$1200. We are paying the treasurer \$2500 for his services. Many of the things we look at under secretarial duties the treasurer used to do. He feels we should look at that at another time. Wanted discussion from the other commissioners. Kevin went to the annual meeting with a pre-printed amendment to the budget to bring the clerk to the same as the commissioners. We need a good clerk. He feels pay should be at least same as commissioners. Bob asked what line item we would take money out of seeing only \$50 is currently in budget. Bob has no problem with paying the clerk more money. Tom: the fact that we didn't include it in a particular line item isn't a problem. Where we will pull it from, there are areas, paid \$16,000 in penalties, it can come from overtime, he just doesn't believe we have any choice but to hire someone. On another note, Tom mentioned that in every regard with working with DRA, we have not put any documents out there that were not reviewed by DRA. However, there was a motion put on the floor at the district meeting and with that amendment the wording did not include the amount certain to be budgeted for the payments on that note. Jamie Dow of DRA has said we have to have a "sum specific" in that article. So no amount was budgeted. We have worked out a way to pay for it through the budget.

We need to appoint a permanent clerk for this year. He believes we should research and structure a warrant article that would take the clerk's position and bring it in house and have it as an appointed position, not elected. It would not be totally unheard of to have an administrator in the fire district. He feels that the commissioners who are responsible for the overall affairs of the district need to control the quality of the person who acts as clerk. In the town, the administrator is hired.

(in response to the "sum specific" comment Tom made earlier) Mike commented: The disappointing part is that the commissioners performed the will of the people 3 times and each time we were so close to an error

that could have kicked it out again. He questioned why the clerk's position is a separate position. Tom explained that the RSA for village districts state a clerk is required. We need to find out the legalities to make it a non-elected position. Can it be appointed? He wouldn't intend to do but would ask counsel first. The attorney could defend the choice of the commissioners. Eventually if we can do it, it will require a warrant article and that warrant article would be crafted by the commissioners and attorney and then to DRA before going to the body. There are roles of commissioners – what are responsibilities of sitting commissioners and chair, same thing with all elected positions. Chief mentioned that the clerk's responsibilities over the past year have had an impact on the department. Who is Janine working for at what time? At first he felt the job could be handled by one person but after all that we went through last fall, he doesn't feel so. It shouldn't be a surprise seeing we talked about a part time person before. He felt it should be easy to do both and to manage at times. We need to do the commissioners' responsibilities and yet we've lost the secretarial support at times. Tom commented much of what has to be done by the clerk needs to be done during the work day. DRA and Sec. Of State questions, etc. can only be asked during the day. Tom fully supports a part time position. It would be great to have someone on board to perform the answering the phones and all the interruptions. Chief: if you look into most towns, they have an administrator and admin. secretary and then a receptionist. This position also administers the human resources responsibilities and the payroll duties. Tom agreed and we need to explore, when looking at the secretary duties, how can it be done in a more controlled environment. Tom would like a regular part time person with structured periods of time to come in. Kevin clarified as a secretarial person. Tom thought that if we could use that person to assist Janine, if she chose to assume the clerks' position, then it could work. Tom has full confidence that Janine can do all the duties listed here but not within 40 hours. Chief stated even without the clerk situation there is a level of activity in the secretary's office that results in Brad and Chief having to write all their own letters, etc. It is the day to day activities that are going on and then put the clerk's job on top of it and it adds a lot of weight. If we had someone here some hours to take those interruptions away, it could work. Tom: The administration of the department is the responsibility of the commissioners. How we pay for it does come before the body. If the commissioners felt it would jeopardize the effectiveness of the organization, he doesn't feel we would be required to get the approval of the body to hire someone. A part time person would have to come out of the present budget. Chief doesn't see spending money out of this budget as it was set. The part time position should wait until next budget session. The \$1000 or so for a clerk's position this year, we can do that. Even if we had the money this year, we will have to have justification as to why we need that position. Tom made a motion at this point to set the clerk's pay at \$1,200. There was no second by the commissioners. He amended his motion to \$1000 for the clerk's position and seconded by Bob. Discussion: Kevin, if we need someone to answer phones, etc. so that it frees Janine to do the rest of these duties then that needs to be done. He doesn't want to lose Janine as clerk and if we have to do something to get a part timer in even before district meeting, let's look at it. We could have another person as clerk that could cost us more problems in the end. Tom and Bob agreed totally. Chief has indicated that it will be difficult to do now. Tom our responsibility is to fill the position of clerk. Chief stated in future we should have a line that shows administrative cost of the district, advertising, etc. then you could see the cost of running the district verses the cost of running the fire dept. We are running a \$1.5 mil business, it could be interesting to look at that. Chief offered another suggestion, that is, maybe look to the town for support in certain areas, like payroll. No comment from the commissioners. Tom feels it is secretary's work to take the minutes of these meetings. She can answer the questions for the treasurer's reports, can answer the manifests of invoices. This transcription is the work of the secretary, not the clerk. Look at the towns. Chief commented that most elected boards do create their own "secretary" position of one of their members. Tom agreed but felt this is different. Chief stated if proposed position started in October through March, quick figuring at \$12.00 an hour, approximately comes to \$8,000. He thought it would be interesting to call the tech college to see if we could get an internship. We do have a number of months to make a decision on that part time position and if we could get an intern then there wouldn't be any cost. Tom asked if any more discussion. Voting on attaching a value to the clerk's position of \$1000, vote taken and accepted unanimously by commissioners. Tom motioned to offer position as an appointment to Janine Vary. Kevin seconded. All in favor, motion passed. Janine accepted appointment. Tom asked Janine to see if DRA needs of letter of appointment.

Regarding the draft of secretarial duties, Tom feels we have to do these reviews in meetings other than our monthly meetings. Can come focused to resolve that issue. Tom asked commissioners if they felt ok with setting up other meetings for review of positions. They agreed. If we met every two weeks, Thursday is a

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good evening for us. First Thursday regular monthly meeting and third Thursday, 19th of April and 17th of May. Kevin won't be here on the 17th of May. Decided to just schedule the April 19th date to review the secretary's duties. Time would be at 4:00. Tom asked for it to be posted as a personnel meeting and will be a nonpublic session.

Tom motioned meeting to adjourn, Kevin seconded and vote taken. Meeting adjourned at 7:42.

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:	Thurs., April 5, 2007 at 6:00PM at Center Street
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