

**Village District of Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS
New Hampshire
2023 Meeting Minutes**

Polls were opened on the 14th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-three at the Pines Community Center, Dearborn Road, Northfield at seven o'clock a.m. by Moderator Scott McGuffin. The polls were closed at seven o'clock p.m. with 459 votes cast. Polls were opened on the 14th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-three at the Winnisquam Regional High School, Main Street, Tilton at seven o'clock a.m. by Moderator Helen Hanks. The polls were closed at seven o'clock p.m. with 248 votes cast.

Article 01 To choose Fire District Officers for the ensuing years.

Commissioner – 3 Year Term

Kevin Cate..... 229

Paul Auger..... 391

Commissioner – 2 Year Term

Kevin Waldron 216

Timothy Sattler..... 443

Clerk – 3 Year Term

Write In – Position to be appointed by the Commissioners for one year.

The 2023 Fire District annual meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on the 20th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-three at the Winnisquam Regional High School, Main Street, Tilton, by Moderator Kent Finemore to act upon the following subjects.

Moderator Kent Finemore introduced the members of the Budget Committee, Commissioners, Clerks, Assistant Moderators Paul Blaisdell and Timothy Sattler. Read the rules of the meeting.

Chief Michael Sitar presented a slideshow outlining the year in review.

Paul Blaisdell presented a slideshow from the Safety Committee which started in 2022.

Moderator Finemore read article 1 with the results.

Article 02 To accept the reports of the Treasurer and the Fire Commissioners and pass any vote relating thereto.

Moved by Jon Cilley, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

There being none, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. **Article Passed.**

Article 03 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established and to make the Board of Fire Commissioners agents to the fund. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is not recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Gretchen Wilder, seconded by Eric Pyra.

Commissioner Paul Auger stated that there is currently \$665,000 in the fund at this time.

Paul Blaisdell asked why the Budget Committee does not support this article. Jason Wright stated that the vote was not unanimous, and that some thought it was a good year to take a break as there are other needs and currently no plan for a building. Kevin Waldron stated that in general he likes to save money to spend, however he's not in favor of making the Commissioners agents of the fund.

Discussion ensued regarding the Building Committee, plans for a new fire station, locations considered, funding needed and bonding.

Kevin Waldron moved an amendment to the article.

Amendment 1: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unassigned Fund balance.

Gretchen Wilder seconded the amendment.

Kevin Waldron explained that it spends less than the by-laws and DRA won't like it.

Gretchen Wilder asked if the \$100,000 of unreserved can wait until the end of the year to process.

Commissioner Jon Cilley stated that money has been set aside due to the litigation with the Water District.

Discussion ensued regarding the Water District litigation, additional discussion on buildings and wasted monies for architecture, and contractors and still no plan.

Timothy Pearson moved to call the questions, seconded by Jason Wright Motion Passed.

Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote on Amendment 1. **Article Fails.**

Kevin Waldron moved an amendment to the article.

Amendment 2: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

Jason Wright seconded the amendment.

Kevin Waldron explained that all this article does is removes the commissioners from being agents.

Discussion ensued regarding the commissioners being agents, and room in the budget for additional spending.

Lucinda Hope moved to call the question, Charles Mitchell seconded it. Motion Passed.

Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote. Moderator Finemore is in doubt and calls for a show of voter cards.

Yes 25, No 23 **Amendment 2 Passes.**

Eric Pyra moved, Dennis Manning seconded to protect the vote. Article Passes.

Article 04 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 Budget Committee. (Majority vote required)

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Commissioner Pyra stated that funds collected throughout the year are totaled and moved into this fund.

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion, there being none Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes**

Article 05 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Three Hundred Two Dollars (\$2,302.00) 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 effect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioner and Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Commissioner Pyra stated that spending throughout the year is asked to be replenished at the annual meeting. Most of the funds go towards education in schools and assisting elderly with fire detectors.

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion, there being none Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes**

Article 06 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Eight Hundred Eleven Dollars (\$1,811.00) 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 Budget Committee. (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Paul Auger, seconded by Jerry Davis

Commissioner Auger stated this article is replacing funds spent in the prior year.

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion, there being none Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes**

Article 07 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 not recommended by the Budget Committee (Majority vote required)

Moved by Gretchen Wilder, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Commissioner Cilley stated that two years ago the district was in a situation that we were getting our water from the Water District. Dry Hydrants was asked to be looked into and this fund was set up and approved by the voters.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued about the balance of the fund, and money that has been spent.

Kevin Waldron motioned for an amendment to the article.

Amendment 1: 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, with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unassigned Fund balance.

Seconded by Jason Wright

Kevin Waldron stated that he feels we have adequate funding and can fund out of fund balance.

There being no additional questions, Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote, being in doubt calls for a voter card count.

Yes 22, No 26, **Amendment Article Fails**

Mark Hebert asked why the Budget Committee is not in favor. No reply from the Budget Committee.

Discussion ensued regarding plans for additional cisterns, funding needed, and cost for installation.

No additional questions, Moderator Finemore called for a voice vote. Not in doubt **Article Passes.**

Article 08 To see if the District will vote to establish a contingency fund per RSA 31:98-a and raise and appropriate Twenty-eight Thousand One Hundred Eighty dollars (\$28,180.00) to put in the fund. This sum comes 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 Budget Committee. (Majority vote required)

Moved by John Cilley, seconded by Jerry Davis

Commissioner Cilley stated that these funds are held in case of emergencies, if they are not used they go back into the General Fund. The last time additional funds were needed was for vehicle repairs.

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding room in the existing budget to extra spending, spending approval process going through the commissioners. Discussion continued about unassigned fund balance can only be used by town meeting vote, and going through NH Department of Revenue for emergency spending.

There being no further question, Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote, being in doubt calls for a voter card vote.

Yes 19, No 29. **Article Fails.**

Article 09 To see if the District will vote to amend pursuant to the provisions of RSA 31:95-C (adopted March 7, 2005), to restrict the revenues from Ambulance Billings to expenditures for the purposes of Apparatus and Equipment replacement, ambulance billing services, advanced medical training, vehicle and equipment maintenance, repairs and service testing. Such revenues and expenditures shall be accounted for in a special fund to be known as the "Apparatus and Equipment Replacement Fund". This fund would be separate from the General Fund. Any surplus in said fund shall not be deemed part of the General Fund accumulated surplus and shall be expended only after a vote by the Fire District at a District meeting to appropriate a specific amount from said fund for a specific purpose related to the purpose of the fund or source of revenues. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee (2/3 Majority Ballot Vote Required).

Moved by Gretchen Wilder, seconded by Jerry Davis

Commissioner Jon Cilley stated that these funds come from medical billings and was put into another fund and used with restrictions.

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the process of changing a fund, being annual meeting vote, taking funds away from vehicle maintenance, and the need for equipment to be maintained and certified. Chief Sitar stated that there is \$68,000 in the budget for general vehicles maintenance. Discussion continued about what the funds will be used for and where the funds come from.

There being no further questions, Moderator Finemore opened the polls for vote at 8:45pm and closed at 9:00pm
Yes 45, No 5 – **Article Passes.**

Article 10 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Eighty-Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Nineteen Dollars (\$188,719.00) for the purpose of purchasing a 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 Budget Committee. (Majority vote required)

Moved by Gretchen Wilder, seconded by Jerry Davis

Commissioner Jon Cilley stated that this fund is used to purchase general equipment as needed.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

There being none, Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 11 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of Three Million Twelve Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Nine Dollars (\$3,012,659.00) 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 Budget Committee. (Majority vote required)

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis

Commissioner Pyra stated that this is all general expenses to run the department.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the four additional firefighters from the grant, requests to not use the DRA form as it's not line by line, Clerks position being cut in the budget and not being able to fill the position.

Kevin Waldron motioned for an amendment to the article.

Amendment 1: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million Eight Hundred Sixty-Two Thousand Twenty-Six Dollars (\$2,826,026.00) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Amendment seconded by Gretchen Wilder.

Kevin Waldron stated that this is a 5% reduction because he feels the money is there in the budget and will help reduce the rate.

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued questioning where the 5% came from, Mr. Waldron stated that there was many discussions with the Budget Committee and where cuts could be made.

There being no further questions, Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote. Being in doubt calls for a voter card vote.
Yes 15, No 30 **Amendment 1 Fails.**

Kevin Waldron motioned for an amendment to the article.

Amendment 2: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million Nine Hundred Thirty-Seven Thousand, Three Hundred Forty-Two Dollars (\$2,937,342.00) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Amendment seconded by Jason Wright.

Kevin Waldron stated that this is a 2% reduction.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the unused budget from 2022, additional room in the budget. Chief Sitar stated that most of the budget is salaries, repairs, utilities and insurance, the only cost that is not fixed is training and preventative maintenance, he added that they are almost 3 months into this budget and he always tries to stay within the lines of the budget and leave a surplus.

Discussion continued as to why do we need a budget committee if the majority of them approved the number coming before the voters.

Kathi Mitchell moves to call the question, seconded by Lucinda Hope.

Chuck Mitchel calls a point of order, stating that calling the question only ends discussion on the amendment article. Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote, being in doubt calls for a voter card vote. Yes 27, No 21. **Motion to call the question Passes.**

Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote to Amendment 2, in doubt calls for a voter card vote. Yes 17, No 31, **Amendment 2 Fails.**

Moderator Finemore opens the floor for discussion on the original article.

Discussion continued regarding the surplus from 2022.

Lisa Freeman moves to table the article, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote. **Motion Fails.**

There being no further discussion, Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote, in doubt calls for a voter card vote. Yes 35, No 13. Article Passes.

Article 12 To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Paul Blaisdell thanks the Budget Committee for all their work

Scott Haskins thanks Jason Wright as he likes his interaction and point of view, he finds it very helpful.

Dennis Manning encourages people to attend the meetings of the Commissioner, Facility Committee, and Budget Committee as they are all public.

Jerry Davis stated that the Fire Department does a good job for all of us.

Mark Hebert requests that the commissioners come prepared next year.

Jane Manning inquires about the financial audit being added to the website once completed.

Moved by Jane Alden, seconded by Gretchen Waldron to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie C.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephanie Giovannucci, District Clerk