

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By: Commissioners
Transcribed By: Courtney Palmer

Date, Time: 01/02/24, 5:30 PM
Location: Tilton Town Hall
Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main Street
Tilton, NH

Call to Order

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

Attendance

Commissioners Paul Auger, Eric Pyra, and Tim Sattler; Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson, and Deputy Chief Sean Valovanie.

UNH Survey Center Representative: Zachary Azem

Fire Station Building Committee Members: Paul Blaisdell, Kevin Waldron, Nathan Langione, Lisa Martin, Dennis Manning

New Business

Chief Sitar reached out to the UNH Survey Center to get options for a survey that the Fire District could give to residents to find out how they feel about a new fire station.

Zachary explained the question design process and receiving input from the Commissioners on what they would like to ask the public. He added that the most common way of sending out surveys is to send one to every household. He mentioned that the average response rate is about 15%. Discussion ensued about the response rate and the demographics of the survey takers.

Discussion ensued about the creation of the questions and the Commissioners reviewing the questions before the survey would be sent out.

Deputy Robinson asked if there was any follow-up on the outcome of the surveys. Zachary responded that he could look into that. Discussion ensued about the format of surveys.

Commissioner Pyra commented that the cost of the surveys would be around \$11,000-\$14,000, depending on options. Discussion ensued.

Fire Station Building Committee

Paul explained that the Building Committee needs clear direction from the Commissioners.

Lisa summarized that the direction they started with was based on the 2019 Building Committee, which looked at a single station at Park Street. She explained that this direction has changed several times since the start. She added that a "shovel-ready" project is not feasible.

Nate expressed that, in his opinion, it is important to maintain having a station in each town. He stated that he doesn't believe the voters would be ok with a single station in one town.

Extensive discussion ensued about the survey and the voters.

Paul reiterated that the Building Committee needs direction from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Auger stated that he thinks they should move forward with a single station. Discussion ensued about response times and what the firefighters want.

Dennis asked the Commissioners what they want the Committee to do. Commissioner Pyra responded with an example of a mission statement for the Committee:

"The mission of the Fire Station Building Committee is to investigate the issues concerning the location, specification, design, cost, and funding for a new fire station for the Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS District. It is expected that the Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners in a time frame that will allow the Board of Commissioners to present the Committee's recommendation to the voters on the 2025 town warrant. It is incumbent upon the Committee to communicate its worth to the citizens of the district.

Identifying the challenges facing the department currently, propose multiple solutions to those problems with each defined financial impacts, host educational public hearings to explain the findings, and educate and inform the Fire Commissioners of the findings as a committee."

Discussion ensued.

Correspondence

1. 12.22.23 Wescott Law: Email regarding TNFD v. TNWD
Chief Sitar explained that the attorneys are going back and forth at this time. Commissioner Sattler mentioned that TNFD was supposed to have an expert witness, but they couldn't engage one. This was not mentioned to the Water District. The timeframe is therefore off.

There is no specific date for the court trial yet.
2. 12.22.23 UNH Survey Center: Proposal for Tilton-Northfield Fire Department Survey
The Commissioners decided to discuss this later.

Chief's Report

Budget

- The 2023 audit is scheduled for the week of February 5th
- The 2023 Budget has expended 96.5%. We are not at 100% through the fiscal year.
- 2023 books will not close until the end of January
- Total Apparatus and Equipment Fund Balance through December: \$992,787.05
- 2023 Ambulance Revenue through December: \$572,677.75 - 1,056 transports
- 2022 Ambulance Revenue: \$579,012 - 1,140 transports

Pressurized Hydrant Use

- No hydrant use in December.

Fire Prevention Report for December 2023

- Report included in handout.
- For the month of December, there were 22 fire prevention inspections.
- Total inspections for 2023: 594

Run Report for December 2023

- Run report included in the handout.
- For the Month of December, we had 177 incidents.
- 104 of the incidents were EMS in nature and that equates to 59% of our total volume for the month.
- The engine responded with the ambulance to 40 EMS & MVA incidents last month.
- Total of all incidents in 2023: 2,125
- Total EMS incidents in 2023: 1,468 - 69% of all incidents

Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for December 2023

- Report included in handout.
- We had 60 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month.
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 39% of all incidents for December.

- Total overlapping incidents or 2023: 958 - 45% of all incidents
- We received 0 mutual aid ambulance responses, and 0 transported.
- We responded to 5 mutual aid ambulance requests, 2 transported.
- We received 2 mutual aid engine responses.
- We responded to 8 mutual aid engine requests.

Apparatus

- A2 accident damage while at Irwin's was repaired at Irwin's

Website

- New website is live!

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. The equipment has been installed and is operational.
- Applying for the 2024 Homeland Security grant for additional radio infrastructure improvements.

Center Street

- Nothing to report

Park Street

- Cell Tower is operational.
- Receiving monthly checks (\$1,537.50) for rent on the tower lease
 - The rent will be adjusted upward as tenants come online.

SAFER Effect

- Average response time to second or greater calls: 07:18 from 22:30.
- The cost of a single SAFER Firefighter in 2023 would have been \$0.045/\$1,000 on the tax rate in Northfield and \$0.0675/\$1,000 in Tilton.

Personnel

- 2 Call Applications are in process

Water District

- Notice of Jury Trial
 - One-day trial anywhere between January 22, 2024, and February 2, 2024.

Currently Working On

- 2024 Budget:
 - The Budget Committee has finalized its recommendations
- 2019 SAFER Grant documentation
- 2024 Homeland Security Grant Application

Old Business

The Budget Committee would like to have a public hearing on February 6th, which is the night of the regularly scheduled Commissioner's meeting. Kathy would like direction from the Commissioners on this. The public hearing is scheduled for 6 PM.

The Commissioners decided to have their meeting directly after the Budget Committee public hearing on the Budget and their hearing on the Warrant. If the hearings go late, the Commissioners will meet on February 13th.

Minutes

12.05.23 Public

Discussion: Commissioner Sattler requested “at this time” be added after “Chief Sitar commented that there are not.” on page two under Park Street Fire Department Radio System. He also requested 2% be changed to 2.5% in that same paragraph.

Commissioner Sattler made a motion to approve the 12.05.23 minutes with the changes as discussed. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

Old Business

Commissioner Sattler questioned how they would pay for the survey.

Commissioner Sattler commented that the Building Committee could come up with some survey questions at their next meeting on January 22. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion that the Commissioners recommend to the Fire Station Building Committee and Commissioners to start formulating questions for a survey. Commissioner Sattler seconded the motion. There being no discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Kevin asked what the Commissioner’s budget number is. He asked if it was true that the Budget Committee voted for a number that was greater than both the Chief and the Commissioners. It is true. He suggested that the Commissioners should either put in a warrant article to abolish the Budget Committee or put in a warrant article to make the Budget Committee elected rather than appointed. Chief Sitar responded that they could not have the Budget Committee be elected, they must be appointed because Tilton-Northfield is a special village district.

Kevin went on to state that he does not support the survey. He wanted to know how they would pay for it. Discussion ensued.

Nonpublic Session I

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to enter nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II(I) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present. Commissioner Sattler seconded the motion.

Roll call vote to enter nonpublic session: Paul Auger, Yes; Eric Pyra, Yes; Timothy Sattler, Yes Motion passed.

Nonpublic session was entered at 7:42 P.M.

Commissioner Pyra made a motion to leave the nonpublic session. Commissioner Sattler seconded the motion.

Roll call vote to exit nonpublic session: Paul Auger, Yes; Eric Pyra, Yes; Timothy Sattler, Yes Motion passed.

Public session reconvened at 7:47 P.M.

Commissioner Auger made a motion to seal these minutes until such time as the matter is resolved because it was determined that divulgence of this information would likely render a proposed action ineffective. Commissioner Sattler seconded the motion.

Roll call vote to seal these minutes: Paul Auger, Yes; Eric Pyra, Yes; Timothy Sattler, Yes Motion passed.

Nonpublic Session II

Commissioner Auger 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 abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion.

Roll call vote to enter nonpublic session: Paul Auger, Yes; Eric Pyra, Yes; Timothy Sattler, Yes
Motion passed.

Nonpublic session was entered at 7:49 P.M.

Commissioner Sattler made a motion to leave the nonpublic session. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion.

Roll call vote to exit nonpublic session: Paul Auger, Yes; Eric Pyra, Yes; Timothy Sattler, Yes
Motion passed.

Public session reconvened at 7:55 P.M.

Adjournment

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 PM. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Palmer

Courtney Palmer
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

January 9, 2024, 5:30 P.M.
Tilton Town Hall
Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main Street
Tilton, NH