

# **Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting**

Meeting Called By: Commissioners

Date, Time: 02/06/24, Immediately  
following the Public Hearings

Transcribed By: Courtney Palmer

Location: Tilton Police Department  
Community Room  
45 Sanborn Rd.  
Tilton, NH

## **Call to Order**

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 8:02 PM.

## **Attendance**

Commissioners Paul Auger, Eric Pyra, and Tim Sattler; Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Sean Valovane, and Administrative Manager Kathy Tobine

Public: Kevin Waldron

## **Chief's Report**

### Budget

- The 2023 audit is scheduled for the week of February 5<sup>th</sup>
- The 2023 Budget has expended 97.6%. We are at 100% through the fiscal year.
- 2023 books will not close until the end of January
- Total Apparatus and Equipment Fund Balance through January: \$1,035,138.75
- 2023 Ambulance Revenue: \$572,677.75 - 1,056 transports.
- 2022 Ambulance Revenue: \$579,012 - 1,140 transports

### Pressurized Hydrant Use

- No hydrant use in January.

### Fire Prevention Report for January 2024

- Report included in handout.
- For the month of January, there were 52 fire prevention inspections.
- Total inspections for 2023: 594

### Run Report for January 2024

- Run report included in the handout.
- For the Month of December, we had 155 incidents.
- 112 of the incidents were EMS in nature and that equates to 72% of our total volume for the month.
- The engine responded with the ambulance to 46 EMS & MVA incidents last month.

### Overlapping/Simultaneous Incidents for January 2024

- Report included in handout.
- We had 56 overlapping/simultaneous incidents for the month.
- Overlapping/simultaneous incidents accounted for 36% of all incidents for January.
- We received 1 mutual aid ambulance response, and 0 transported.
- We responded to 9 mutual aid ambulance requests, 5 transported.
- We received 2 mutual aid engine responses.
- We responded to 8 mutual aid engine requests.

### Apparatus

- Hydraulic Rescue tools have been moved to the ladder

Chief Sitar explained that both engines are fully equipped with almost everything they need, but for larger extrications, they need the bigger hydraulic tools on the ladder truck. Commissioner Auger asked how often they would use the ladder truck with that tool on it. Chief Sitar responded that this is the first time the heavy tool has been used in around 2 years. He explained that it is used for accidents when a smaller tool isn't enough.

Deputy Chief Valovane explained that the heavier tools aren't being used as much during rescues anymore. Discussion ensued.

### Website

- New website is live!

### Grants

- SAFER Grant is up to date on reimbursements. The end date is 2/7/2024.
- A 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. It has been submitted for reimbursement.
- Chief Sitar applied for the 2024 Homeland Security grant for additional radio infrastructure improvements.

### Center Street

- We must pave the back parking lot behind the Center Street Station lot this year. I will get estimates this spring.

### Fire Department Radio System

- 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.
    - 2.5% annual escalation in September
- The emergency generator has been replaced.

### 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.
- 2024 cost four employees \$271,809 in salaries and \$174,319 in benefits totaling \$446,128.

### Personnel

- 2 Call Applications are in process

### Water District

- Moderated Agreement was signed and ordered by the judge.
- The reimbursement check (\$400,000) has been sent.

### Currently Working On

- 2024 District Meeting Preparation
- 2019 SAFER Grant documentation
- Tyler/Image Trend time stamps for incidents
  - Current time stamps are pulling from the wrong fields, therefore providing inaccurate times for incident responses.
  - Trouble ticket has been initiated.

## **New Business**

### Ambulance Billing

Chief Sitar stated there is no official written policy for ambulance billing. He created bullet points as a discussion starter, so a policy could be drafted. Discussion ensued about ensuring policy fairness. There were concerns about residents not being about to afford to pay ambulance bills and therefore not wanting to call for help in an emergency. Discussion ensued about balance billing.

Chief Sitar stated that he would prepare a policy and give it back to the Commissioners next month.

### Rescue Truck

Chief Sitar discussed what to do with the rescue truck as they await the new ambulance in the next 2 years. He asked if they should trade it in, put it up for auction, or put it out for bid. He said the last pickup truck went out for a bid, and the last ambulance was traded in. Commissioner Auger asked if they could find out how much it is worth before they traded it. Chief Sitar stated he could ask.

Chief Sitar stated that if it goes out to bid they could set a minimum bid for it. He stated that he would find out how much it is worth first.

Discussion ensued about whether the money from the sale of the truck could go into the Apparatus and Equipment fund. It cannot.

### Fire Watch

Commissioner Auger asked who the Greenside Restaurant is paying for the fire watch. Chief Sitar responded that they are paying the Fire District. Commissioner Auger clarified that if a full-time firefighter is doing the fire watch, then he will have to be paid overtime. Chief Sitar confirmed. He stated that they still make money from the fire watch. Deputy Chief Valovanie explained the "disco-tech" code that requires a fire watch.

## **Public Comment**

Kevin asked if there is a cash management policy regarding ambulance billing. Chief Sitar explained that the ambulance billing policy would be for possible revenue, so it's not the same thing.

Chief Sitar explained that what residents have already paid for is the readiness, they haven't paid for the service. Kevin questioned why the residents who have already paid for the people and the equipment must pay to be able to use them. Discussion ensued.

Kevin commented on the cost of inspections and fee structure. Deputy Chief Valovanie explained inspection fees for residential and commercial properties.

Kevin suggested getting rid of the rescue truck now.

Kevin expressed that he felt TNFD quit because they settled with TNWD. He commented that the settlement will do nothing but cost the department more money. Commissioner Sattler commented that he didn't think they would have gotten a better deal from the court because they couldn't get someone to argue TNFD's side of the case. He explained why TNFD didn't have a leg to stand on, in his opinion. Discussion ensued.

Kevin asked what the end result will be since Chief Sitar has moved out of the District. Commissioner Pyra stated he doesn't think there is one, but that pros and cons were discussed. Discussion ensued about whether the Chief should have to live in the District or not.

## Minutes

Commissioner Sattler made a motion to move the January 29, 2024, minutes to the floor for discussion. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. Discussion: Page one, under "New Business", "December 31, 2021" needs to be changed to "December 31, 2031".

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

## Adjournment

Commissioner Auger made a motion to adjourn at 9:09 P.M. Commissioner Pyra seconded the motion. There being no discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Courtney Palmer*

Courtney Palmer  
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

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