

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Special Commissioners' Meeting 2009 Budget

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	November 5, 2008 at 18:02 to 20:57
Note taker:	Janine Vary	Place:	Tilton School, Morse Conference Room

Attendees: Comm. Kevin Waldron, Comm. Bob Watson, Comm. Paul Auger, Chief Steve Carrier, Deputy Mike Robinson and Secretary Janine Vary with members of the public present.

6:02 Comm. Waldron called meeting to order. Purpose of meeting is to discuss the 2009 budget. There will be no public comment at this meeting.

Decided that we would go through wages and benefits lines without setting numbers until we got through them all. Chief said last thing discussed was the Dep. Chief stipend.

Line 120.13 Training and meetings. \$29,250 is requested. Comm. Waldron asked Comm. Watson if any questions or comments, Comm. Watson said no. Comm. Auger: asked about the 1950 hours. Comm. Waldron asked if \$15.00 average was above last year, Chief said \$1 above last year. It was 1950 hrs last year, also. Comm. Watson and Comm. Auger agreed to leave the \$29,250.

Line 120.12 Responses. 1700 incidents in 2009. Chief estimates 1550 incidents in 2008. Chief also mentioned that we will be considerably overspent in this line in 2008 probably because of a good number of call members that have taken certificate trainings. We may go over it again in 2009, very difficult to estimate. Chief feels we have had more call people coming to incidents this year. Comm. Waldron asked again about the \$15.00 average being \$1 over last year and Chief agreed. Based on what people are getting this year, a number have increased their level of training, etc. Will also have the driver operator incentive for next year. FF/EMT with driver op will be \$14.00 an hour. Comm. Waldron asked Comm. Watson and Comm. Auger if any questions. Comm. Auger asked Chief about base pay, Chief said it hasn't increased; it was \$10 this year. The Deputy's pay is also included with this amount. Chief said he is estimating \$87,838 for 2008, so we will be over that budget line. Dep. Chief does come out of this line but when Chief is estimating the average call pay per hour, he does not include the Dep. Chief's hourly pay in the average.

Line 120.17 Special Events. Comm. Waldron asked Comm. Watson if any questions, no. Comm. Auger asked what "special events" are. Could be fire prevention, football games, etc. This line is overspent this year, already, at \$6100. The offsetting income goes into the general receivables. We could budget the revenues if we wanted but if we didn't take in that revenue, then we would have to make it up elsewhere.

Last line in 120. bottom line for 2008. No amount decided upon by the commissioners at this time in the meeting for line 120. Comm. Waldron suspects that there will be numbers changed.

Line 130. Elected officials. Comm. Watson recommended that since we are cutting everywhere else maybe we should volunteer our portion. Comm. Auger felt he would give his share to someone who needs it. Comm. Waldron said we can do what we want with the money given. Comm. Watson said he feels we should volunteer and not take any money out of that line. Comm. Auger said it is our choice to do with the money as we want.

Line 210, Group health: request based upon LGC's presentation. Represents \$6,000 in reduction from 2008. Comm. Waldron asked Comm. Watson and Comm. Auger for comments. Comm. Waldron stated we were given 5 alternative options for health coverage. With changes so does the cost change, a range of \$109,750 to the \$133,651. Wages, overtime, retirement and group health ins, he would like to see some savings. Mike asked if the same program we are enrolled in is projecting a \$6,000 decrease, why do we need to cut down the benefit? Chief corrected the math for that line to \$126,155. He had calculated more 2-person plan coverages than needed. There are 10 single, 2 two-person and 1 family plan and one that opt outs. Comm. Waldron commented there is more than one way to save money in this group of expenditures. Mike again brought up that if we are saving 13000 over this year's number. Comm. Waldron asked if we are willing to pay the \$126,155 in health insurance. He is hesitant to say yes because he is still looking at the package. He asked if there is any interest in looking at a lesser number. This would be accomplished by having a different co pay. There are 2 different co pays, one goes from \$5 to \$20 and a change in prescription from \$3 to \$10 preferred. MTB 20 with same prescription is available. Then MTB 20 with 10/20/45 prescription. Chief said a change in prescription or co pay is a reduction in benefits. Comm. Watson does not want to cut their benefits. Comm. Auger said medical insurance is a big expense. Some people pay a portion for their medical benefits where he

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works. Chief said the guys appreciate the benefits they have. There are many places that offer family and 2 person plans. He feels this is a minimal expense for health insurance. Comm. Watson felt if we offered the family plan they would be willing to pay a part of it. Chief said that would raise this line incredibly. He feels this is a minimal health insurance and the amount is very low. Mike said we need to remind our employees what it costs but recommends not to cut back at all, maintain what we have now. Comm. Watson also commented that as the members grow to having families then they won't have adequate health coverage. Comm. Waldron asked again from the board, do they want to approve the proposed budget as far as wages and benefits. Comm. Watson would like it approved the way it is. Comm. Auger asked for clarification. Comm. Waldron said wages and benefits: line 110 right through to line 260 (would stop at 300). Comm. Waldron stated if there is no interest in changing, then we can stop discussing. Comm. Auger said we aren't going to give a raise and have the insurance also. The insurance company cut the cost back, not us. Make the deductible higher. Chief said in the wages, you have cut \$25,000 out and that will affect retirement as well. But you have saved \$13,000 in health insurance. All the lines like Medicare, social security and retirement will be affected. Comm. Auger requested to go line by line. Comm. Waldron asked to discuss line 215: group disability and life. Comm. Waldron asked about the coverages for those insurances as he felt that there was duplicity. Chief said the NH FF Association insurance and the Greene Insurance gets more insurance to call firefighters. Comm. Watson felt it was cheap money to have the coverage. Comm. Waldron feels that a lot of this is "cheap money" until you add it all up. Chief said the death benefit only pays a limited amount of money. Greene Insurance depends on what your injury is and its extent. Comm. Auger said he didn't have a problem with those amounts in line 215.

For the record, Comm. Waldron asked Comm. Watson if he is in favor of the request as presented. Comm. Watson is in favor of the lines as presented in Chief's budget. Comm. Waldron asked Comm. Auger if he was in favor of 110.01 career salaries and wages. Comm. Auger said no. Comm. Waldron asked for an alternate number. Comm. Auger said he believed we came up with \$595,506 – keep everything the same except for the Chief. Comm. Waldron calculated \$14,432 less than requested by Chief. Comm. Waldron asked for a motion. Comm. Auger motioned that the figure be \$595,506 for line 110.01. Comm. Waldron seconded. Discussion: none. Vote taken: Comm. Auger and Comm. Waldron said aye. Comm. Watson was opposed. Motion passes.

110.05 Holiday pay. 11 paid holidays, Comm. Waldron asked what are the 11 holidays. Asked if written in personnel policy and as a 12 hour day, Chief believed so. Comm. Waldron asked if the \$18.00 average was based on the pay rate Chief had proposed. Chief said "yes". It would be \$24,684 if dropped down to \$17.00. Comm. Auger asked if Civil Rights Day and Veterans Day were state holidays. Janine said yes. Comm. Waldron motioned, going on the belief that it is written in personnel policy and limited to the 12 hours, he sets the amount on that line to \$24,684. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: if they are not state holidays, then he would change that Comm. Auger said. Vote taken: unanimous vote by all 3 commissioners.

110.06 Overtime. The \$120,000 was based on projected 2008 numbers for those eligible to earn overtime. Comm. Waldron asked about the 08 budget amount, \$108,560. Comm. Auger remembers discussing this and that we were down a firefighter for half a year. Chief said it was 8 hrs a week for 26 weeks may come up with \$2700 – \$2800. Comm. Waldron said we need to do something with this OT line but more than Northfield PD and Northfield Highway. Chief asked how many hours of OT they worked, Comm. Waldron didn't know but with all the snow etc. Chief said that a lot of their OT is detail work which isn't on the same line. If someone is out then they run short staffed. Comm. Auger asked how much OT, Chief said as of 10/14/08 \$89,387. For the whole year in 2007, \$92,424. Chief explained that it goes up with the base pay. If you have people gain an extra week in vacation pay, then that position needs to be covered. We do not run short staffed. You can't cut overtime without cutting services. Extra duty is call backs and hold overs. Comm. Waldron asked how much vacation and personal time and sick time can Chief physically cover? Comm. Watson asked how we can ask Chief to do his job if he is covering for someone else? Chief stated he mentioned that last meeting. Comm. Waldron asked if there is any amount of people who are on vacation, can they take it in 2 weeks in one chunk, Chief said yes. Comm. Waldron asked if Chief could cover the day portion. Chief said this is going back to comm. Watson asked. If he runs shift, then he can't do the administrative duties. He doesn't see it as his job. There are 30 weeks of vacation, this could be half a year of coverage. Overtime is a necessary evil in this type of business to maintain the services we are providing. Can't do anything about the call backs, hold overs. He feels it is important for them to attend trainings and meetings with the call department is important to the membership. Chief said there are departments who hire someone to work specifically for vacation coverage. But it is very hard to manage for vacation and personal coverage. You have to give a 48 hrs notice for a personal day and 2 weeks for vacation. Comm. Waldron asked about per diem vacation coverage. Chief responded that Sanbornton does that and they hire whoever has the certifications. You don't know their credentials. If you hire per diem people there is no continuity. As far as hiring for a new position, you are looking at \$70,000 when you look at their pay, benefits, gear, they earn personal and vacation and sick time also. Mike said many employees rely on the OT. Chief said when people come in for interviews, it is a given because of the type of work they

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do. They ask what the rate of pay is and how much overtime will be available to them. Comm. Auger asked about call people filling in for these openings. Chief feels it isn't fair to the full time personnel to work with those they only work with occasionally. He has a problem that a call member meets only the minimum qualifications to work with the full time staff that are held to a higher standard of training. Comm. Waldron asked about the difference between call and fulltime. If they can come to a fire, then they are qualified to do it full time. Chief feels the call members are different from the career members. The call members do work at the fires but the extent of skills can be very different. Career have to do CPAT qualifications, C2F2 as well as other trainings. There is a huge difference. We have cross trained career personnel and if we fill in with call members, there will be a drop in the level of services being provided. Even bringing a new career member on, there is a steep learning curve during their probation time. If you have a call firefighter come in one day and they haven't been there for months, how much will the learning curve be? He'll ride on the ambulance. Chief feels it is important to maintain the level of service. Comm. Waldron asked for a motion. Comm. Auger motioned that line 110.06 total overtime come to \$100,000. Comm. Waldron seconded. Discussion: Comm. Watson said it has already been discussed. Comm. Waldron asked for a vote: Comm. Auger aye, Comm. Waldron aye and Comm. Watson opposed. Motion passes.

120 Call salary and wages. Total request \$74,375. Comm. Watson motioned to leave at \$74,375. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: Comm. Waldron stated discussion was had on Monday night for one of the lines, 120.01 Deputy Chief stipend. Comm. Waldron understands that his hourly wage is \$24 for actual hours worked which is a \$1.00 raise according to the narrative for 2009. Comm. Waldron is not in favor of the \$1 an hour raise. While we require the other members to have certifications, he wasn't sure of the deputy's qualifications. Mike responded that he is a career firefighter, a municipal instructor and hazmat certified. He did let the EMT certification expire and does not have the current FF2 certification. Comm. Auger said Mike is qualified for driving and training. Mike said he is a flat rate person and he puts in about 350 hours a year. Comm. Waldron stated that if this motion passes, there are no further wage lines and the only people who will get an increase will be the Chief and Deputy. Vote asked for: All those in favor of setting line 120 to \$74,375. Comm. Watson aye. Opposed: Comm. Auger and Comm. Waldron. Motion fails. Comm. Waldron asked for a further motion: Comm. Waldron asked to verify that Chief estimates the projected total to be \$88,000 for this year. This is based on anyone can come to cover if duty crew is out on a call. Chief stated we have already spent \$69,000 this year in 3 quarters. Comm. Waldron motioned to set line 120 to \$69,950, same as last year. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: none. Vote taken: in favor, Comm. Auger and Comm. Waldron. Opposed: Comm. Watson. Motion passes.

Line 130 Elected Officials. Comm. Waldron motioned to set Elected Officials at \$6250. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion. None. Vote taken: Comm. Auger and Comm. Waldron, aye. Comm. Watson opposed. Motion passes.

Line 210: Group Health Insurance: \$126,155 requested. This amount leaves the current plan in effect. Comm. Auger motioned that line 210 be \$126,155, Comm. Watson seconded. Discussion: none. Vote taken: unanimous vote. Motion passes. (Chief to correct the number in the narrative)

Line 215: Disability and Life insurance. Comm. Watson motioned the amount be \$7,150 by, Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: none. Comm. Waldron asked for a vote: All unanimous approved. Motion passes.

Line 219: Social Security \$6,417. Chief had already calculated with the rate changes. Medicare \$11,790. Retirement \$116,419. Retirement will increase on July 1, 2009. Comm. Watson motioned to accepted \$6,417 for Social Security line. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: none. Vote taken. All approved motion. Motion passes

Line 225: Medicare: Comm. Watson motioned to accept the \$11,790 and Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: none. Vote taken: all unanimous. Line approved.

Line 230: Retirement: \$116,419 requested. Comm. Watson motioned to accept the \$116,419 and Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: none. All accepted.

Line 250: Unemployment Comp. Comm. Watson motioned to leave at 500. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion, none. Vote taken, all approved.

Line 260: Workers Comp. Chief had put in a 9% cap on what we paid this year. Comm. Watson motioned that we leave at \$40,194 and Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: none. Vote taken. All approved.

290 Other line. Comm. Watson motioned to leave 290 at \$1.00. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion none. Vote taken: all

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approved.

340 Bank Services: has to do with TAN's, you had wanted to talk with Roland. Comm. Waldron said that Roland stated that you borrow the money as you need it at 3%, so it might be a couple of thousand dollars. Comm. Waldron said he isn't sure what Northfield will do. Comm. Waldron has a zero, so we'll be leaving at that.

760. Vehicles \$22,271 was the number approved by commissioners Comm. Waldron told Chief.

590.2 Pressurized hydrants: Comm. Waldron feels this is the only line left open and not discussed. Mike said we need to know what they will charge when the line gets improved and lets say 6 hydrants come online. What will the rate be? Chief said he feels the commissioners have the opportunity to discuss this with Water District. Can ask for a cap on the amount we pay. \$100,000 as a cap, it is lower than what we pay this year. Comm. Waldron is content to get this budget to the budget committee without this line being addressed. He personally doesn't want to pay that amount. Moved to wait on this line until after Comm. Auger visits the Water District. Comm. Watson seconded. Discussion none. Vote approved unanimously.

Comm. Waldron motioned to reconsider line 720. The building fund. Which we put \$25,000 in. Comm. Auger seconded. Discussion: Comm. Waldron just wants to be clear: Mike Summerset said we will piggy back onto whatever the highway costs will be. We don't know the price. Comm. Waldron had asked if we have an estimate or proposal from Mr. Porter. It is 18,000 sq feet, so when you plug into Pike's estimating, he came up with a . Comm. Waldron asked if there was a municipal law if we fund so much in this year's budget and then carry over funds from that line to the 2010 budget. Chief said there might be a way to do that. Comm. Waldron wants to know if it is appropriate to offer another number. Comm. Waldron motioned to remove the \$25,000 from line 720, Building Fund. Asked for a second. None. Motion fails.

Comm. Watson motioned to adjourn, Comm. Auger seconded. Vote taken to adjourn at 8:57PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janine Vary, Secretary