

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	December 18, 2008 at 18:00 to 22:41
Note taker:	Janine Vary	Place:	Tilton School, new Academic Building, School Street, 1 st Floor 9 th Grade Classroom, Tilton

Attendees: Comm. Kevin Waldron, Comm. Bob Watson, Comm. Paul Auger, Treasurer Roland Seymour, Chief Steve Carrier, Deputy Mike Robinson, and Secretary Janine Vary. Members of the Public

Comm. Waldron called meeting to order at 6:15 PM. First order was Chief introducing Kathy Tobine the new Administrator Assistant. Chief said she has had experience with the Campton fire dept., has worked with all the software we use and has had insurance industry experience and the customer service industry. He introduced all the elected officials as well as Mike Robinson, Deputy Chief. Kevin welcomed Kathy onboard. She is looking forward to her tenure here.

Minutes from Nov. 20, 2008. Paul motioned to accept minutes and Bob seconded. Discussion: Kevin wanted to know if Chief has disposed of any of the surplus equipment, Chief said they haven't had time yet. No more discussion. Vote taken and minutes from 11/20/08 accepted unanimously as written.

Bob motioned to accept minutes of November 24, 2008. Seconded by Paul. No discussion. Vote taken and minutes from 11/24/08 accepted unanimously as written.

Treasurer's Report: operating account up to Dec. 9th was the one that was emailed out. He now has the newest updated operating budget numbers that include the call payroll that was just finished. This is the only report that was updated. The operating account income shows the town of Northfield owes \$19,222. Tilton owes \$116,803 which has been assessed by DRA. They generally pay us before the end of the year. Rev sharing the full \$13,588.77 has been received. The expenses shown on the new report include all expenses to date. Call firefighters payroll is at \$90,577. The balance remaining for this year's budget is \$40,565.87 to stay in the budget. Chief: said that 40,000 will cover the last two payrolls. We will end the year as close to zero as we ever have. Kevin asked about a projected surplus of \$24,000. Chief explained now that we are in December we can see how many payments are left for certain items so the numbers get much more realistic. There are bills listed in here that have come in this month for payment, also. Roland commented that DRA frowns on overspending the budgeted amount. Roland looked at the Apparatus and Equipment account. Feels we will be coming in to right about what we projected for income. Balance is \$140,357 in account. It shows a surplus of \$132,000 but we paid off all these notes so. Chief asked if we are being billed for auditing this month. Roland said we already paid the accountant \$1000. They may be billing us for another \$2000 for the work they have been doing. They may be able to bill us next year. Roland doesn't suspect that they will be done with it before the end of this year. He doesn't feel the review will come to a total of \$7000 next year's review of 2008 records. Roland was looking at the account balances, the operating account won't equal. He doesn't feel we will have a problem with cash because of the money the towns owe us. Bob motioned to accept the treasurer's report as printed and Kevin seconded. Vote taken, all commissioners voted unanimously to accept the treasurer's report.

Fire Chief Report: Kathy's start date is the 22nd of December and he had approximately 110 applications. Engine 3 was picked up last week. It is not back in service yet, we are waiting for the radios to be set up. Info on the storm incidents due to the ice storm. The LRMFAA has been sending strike teams to Jaffrey; we were unable to meet these requests due to not being able to find enough personnel. This is covering the stations that are straight out to give them a break. Kevin asked who went to NY to pick up engine 3. Chief said himself and FF Smith. Chief said it was done in one day, 7:00am to 4:00pm. It is over at Park St. FF Smith drove it back and said it drove very well on the way back. Paul asked about the insurance, Chief said we have a \$1000 deductible. Plus we had to add the light bar on the back and additional plumbing work done. Paul asked about the strike force if we would send someone down. Chief said we agreed to participate in the process. We try to get the people and equipment available. It will depend on the request and if we can get the people to do it.

Fire prevention report: new development at Tanger Outlet, switching out stores. No big new projects. FF Valovanie is focusing on pre-plans of commercial property. We have gotten a lot of them done. He is also doing new properties. They were able to do another training session with the fire extinguisher kit. Will wait until spring to start up again. Within one week we had to issue an order to vacate on two single home properties. These were not to be inspected according to our list. One was after a fire and the other after a family services complaint to Northfield PD. These properties have been vacated. Paul asked about the inspections. Chief said we don't charge for the inspection but do charge for the permit. There are over 50 permits we can charge for, like gas and oil equipment installation. You are supposed to have a permit to put in a wood stove. Paul asked if someone would put in a wood stove without telling us. He feels that they are paying for the service already in their taxes and we shouldn't be charging them again. Chief said the commission at the time two years ago agreed to raise revenue by instituting these fees. It was a consensus vote of the people of the body that it was agreeable, also. Paul feels we are causing more problems by charging for these items. Chief said it doesn't stop people from doing this work in their own homes and possibly ignore the permit process but we have contacted the professionals who do this type of work so that they know there is a permit process now. Brad said the insurance company of the home owner will look for an inspection of a stove to make sure it was installed properly in case there is an event. We are getting the user to pay for a service that we are providing.

Old business

The Tilton FD study. The next meeting with both towns will be Monday, January 26, 2009 at 6:00PM at Northfield Town Hall. Chief said that at last night's meeting it was commented that the only plan we had is that we "go out when the tone goes off". Chief feels it is part of his responsibility to plan for the dept. He does plan on a regular basis. Pre-buyer planning, planning for inspection work, the budget is a plan for how we operate. Chief would like to see that there is recognition that we do plan at the fire dept. He feels it was an unnecessary statement made in a public venue. He also felt that the way the room was setup was almost adversarial. He didn't feel it leant to a cooperative action. Then he was also put on the spot by the commissioners asking for information that he couldn't give at that time. He would have appreciated a call in advance to prepare for those questions. The "Cohesiveness in the fire dept." question he felt was made evident during that meeting. Commissioners made no comment.

Step and grade increases. Kevin has a comprehensive document produced for the town of Northfield by LGC that covers from general info to analysis of pay, benefit recommendations, wage schedule, benefit comparison and job descriptions. He said that he would like to have one of these done for the district. LGC said they would do it, takes 3 months. He feels biggest reason to have this done is that we are told we are behind the 8 ball. LGC did 10 towns when they looked at Northfield. Northfield uses this as a "bible" for employee benefits and payroll. It gave the employees more than what they asked for. He feels it would be a benefit to us. Bob asked for the total cost. The only figure listed in the document was \$175 per position. Kevin felt there were 8 different positions; Roland said that would be around \$1400. Mike asked if call members would be included. Kevin does not believe it does include them. Mike said if you look at career at 8 and then how many call categories would we look at. He feels it would help point us in the direction to go. Kevin asked if he had support from the board. Paul said we would have to look at the 2009 budget and what line would it go in. Chief felt it would have to come out of "Other Professional Services", line 390 which is not funded at this time. Bob said if it is something we want to do we'd have to add it to the budget. Roland felt it was a salary related item, would have to give full disclosure. He didn't feel just because the budget committee is done, doesn't mean we can't go to the public hearing and ask them to add it. Bob said you would need to have a specific number for the budget committee to put in. Kevin asked for approval from the commissioners to call LGC and ask them to start. Paul motioned to spend up to \$2000 to do the Pay and Classification study in 2009; Bob seconded. Discussion: Scott Davis asked if there was any more money that could be moved to that line so it could come out of this year's budget. Kevin said we just heard we don't have any more money this year. All commissioners voted to have Kevin proceed with this request to LGC.

21E3: Chief said it could be back in service as tomorrow afternoon.

Budget 2009: the budget committee has finished their deliberations. Final figure \$1,467,434 is their final total. They have set a date for their public hearing on Feb. 16, 2009 at 7:00PM at the N-T Congregational Church. This is President's Day holiday.

2009 Accounting review. Roland said we have contracted with John Lard & Associates. Janine and Roland will be meeting them tomorrow to finish up 2007 data. They will not do a review for 2007 but they will do a review for 2008. Chief asked about keeping on the agenda, Roland suggested to leave it on.

New business

Purchasing Requests: Chief has a service contract request for the calendar year 2009. It is the company that installed the Plymovent system in both stations and has been servicing it since it was installed. Paul asked what has to be serviced. Chief said the filters. If we break something and it was our fault, then we'd have to pay for that extra. They service the equipment to keep it maintained. Chief is not aware of any other businesses that service this equipment. Bob motioned that we sign the contract and Kevin seconded. Vote taken and all commissioners agreed. It was decided by the commissioners to have Chief sign the contract.

Janine asked about the workers comp payments for 2009. Commissioners decided to ask if LGC will accept quarterly payments: March, and if not, will they accept 12 equal payments. Janine will send the letter to LGC requesting that information from them.

Email from Gretchen Wilder. Gretchen addressed the board. On Oct. 17, 2008 she forwarded an email that she had received from State Dept. of Personnel to the commissioners, Budget Committee, Chief. She did not get any feed back from anyone. Dec 18th she sent an email regarding an unconfirmed rumor of the administrative assistant position being paid \$16 an hour. She didn't receive anything confirming or denying that. Kevin stated it is a fact that it is \$16.00 an hour. When Gretchen looked at the position historically, this position has not been paid that much in the past. She feels it is very high for a starting pay. Surprised that Chief and commissioners feel that is customary for this location. She realizes that the position is very integral to the operations of the dept. She feels that the commissioners should sit in and play an active role in the hiring of all positions. She gave the board some figures that she is requesting for the end of calendar year 2008. Kevin asked what the CIP 2008 plan is. She had asked for the information in the past. This year's budget committee did not ask for this info. She wants to use this new info to compare to her info from last year. She doesn't expect until mid January. After last payroll is done. She doesn't feel we have a "pulse on the community". Kevin commented that he knows the commission that sits right now is the most conservative set. He believes that the pay and classification study will open our eyes. Kevin looked at a 9/18/08 document increment payrolls that Chief handed out. The secretary pay was listed as low average. Chief came to the board and made a suggestion and a majority of the board supported it. He doesn't feel that doesn't mean he doesn't have a pulse on the community. Paul feels they work very hard on keeping things under control. Roland said he has worked with many town people. Tilton is looking for a bookkeeper for \$50,000. He was shocked to hear someone thought we were overpaying the position. We don't hire people with these skill requirements and caliber. This position is very responsible and he disagrees wholeheartedly with Gretchen. He stated Tilton is hiring a bookkeeper for \$50,000. Gretchen feels that Janine has worked her way up to this amount over a number of years. We are starting someone out in that position at the same rate. There was more discussion about this. Kevin again asserted that it was a vote of the majority of the board

Bylaws: Kevin feels that we are facing some issues because we don't have bylaws. Bob stated said when he came on as Commissioner he asked about bylaws and was told we were governed by the RSA's. He is definitely in favor of having a set of bylaws. Paul agreed. Kevin said there are several ways we can approach it, one is reviewing other organizations bylaws. Scott Davis said in the past the district could get by because it was mainly volunteers and more of a citizens organization. Needs have

changed in the district. We now have full time personnel, etc. We don't need to reinvent the wheel – we could establish a committee with folks from the community to do the research and bring it back to you (the commissioners). They are out there and have them come back to the commission. Would need to have a public hearing and then bring to the fire district annual meeting. Adopting the bylaws for TNFD. He believes it has to go to district meeting so that the governing body could vote on it. Everything goes before the legislative body to be formed. Pat Clark commented that it is important for the community to know what their money is going toward. It would define where assets would go if the district split up, etc. Also the composition of the commissioners. Where they come from and how long they serve. This should be spelled out so everyone is clear about it. There are many that are boilerplate bylaws. When you are entrusted to take care of taxpayers monies it is important that the commissioners are guided by principles that are voted on. He feels it could be a rather quick process. Scott had checked with secretary of state's office and they had nothing recorded in Concord. Chief said Charlie Chandler had done a letter to secretary of state saying that we didn't need to have bylaws because we were governed by RSA 52. At last year's district meeting we restated our purpose. He recommended a review of the letter. A letter from the towns to DRA asking them to recognize the district. Articles of incorporation are filed with the state, Roland said. By laws do not get filed with the state. But we are governed by the RSA's and they can't supersede the RSA. Chief is not aware of any other fire district like we are. Scott felt if a committee was formed now we could have something for this year's district meeting. Pat Clark, Scott Davis and Gretchen wilder said they would be willing to work as a committee for the bylaws. They were looking for the middle of January to have it to present to the commissioners. It could be discussed at the Jan 15th meeting. Bob motioned that we establish a bylaws committee with these three people and a second person from Northfield. Seconded by Paul. Hopefully Scott McGuffin will participate as well. Vote taken and commissioners unanimously agreed to have the committee formed.

Hiring policy: Kevin feels we need more than that but he isn't prepared to present any ideas on that tonight. Bob is not sure what Kevin is looking for. Kevin said the board would bypass it right now. Paul asked for a copy of the policy so that he could have it.

Legal opinion in reference to the fire hydrants. Kevin feels the fee on the fire hydrant and a legal opinion was sought two years ago regarding the fee. Opinion was from Charlie chandler. Kevin stated that at the time he gave the opinion, he was legal counsel for the water district. Roland and Scott Davis disagreed. Atty. Chandler did represent the Water District in a personnel issue but was never the legal counsel. Kevin felt that he had done work for that entity and issued an opinion that represents a conflict of interest for him. Kevin feels he would not have wanted to take a large case like this so close to retirement. Kevin feels it would have taken too long to be finished. Kevin is asking if we should pursue that again with someone who is not close to retirement. Roland said that the Water District has hired Scott McGuffin as legal counsel for the Water District, just for Kevin's information. Scott offered opinion with what we are facing in our communities for the WRHS litigation that is going on, when all said and done, we will spend more money on legal fees. We need to be aware at how much it will cost all of us and it won't be a savings to anyone in the long run. The school district is looking at putting in a \$150,000 warrant article just to cover the legal upcoming costs.

Calls made to Canterbury. Kevin would like to know, seeing we are being pressed by two towns to deal with response times and taking care of our own citizens, if it seems like we go to Canterbury and get nothing in return. He understands the mutual aid system and usually means we do for you and you do for us. He asked Chief to get some numbers. Chief said we went to 28 incidents in 2008 to date. Paul wants to know the amount of hours. Bob commented that if it is an EMS call we are not losing money. Kevin said yes but we are putting ourselves further away from our core. Chief said we discuss this every year. We don't get anything from Canterbury because they are completely call and a smaller community than us. They do rely on surrounding communities a lot due to that. We can rationalize it in our own heads. We get toned to incidents on the highway. The rest area is either Northfield or Canterbury. We work together with Canterbury often. Usually they do turn into money making transports for us. There is not a true downside to it. We get help from Concord for doing this. When we go to a second and third alarm, Concord comes up and covers for us and they don't complain about it. We are getting mutual aid

back in the form of Concord coming to our community but he doesn't feel that is a bad trade off either. If we call them to the scene, you get 5 people with a medic. Kevin asked if it would change if we stop going to Canterbury, Chief is not sure. He feels Concord is taking up the slack for Canterbury. Mike saw the Fire Chief of Canterbury recently and he said the help we give doesn't go unnoticed. The Chief is up against budget crunches, etc. Kevin feels they must be willing to help themselves. Paul said out of the 28 calls, anytime we are out there it does put a strain on our communities and we aren't getting anything back from it. Chief said sometimes, depending on the call, an ambulance and an engine will go to the call. Kevin asked if it is enough of a concern to the board to either keep doing what we are doing or should we do something else. Chief said we could have left them on our second alarm table so that they get toned out 4 or 5 times and then we return them because we are all set. We would be "using their services". Oak Hill Road and Intervale area. It is almost like we are shooting Canterbury in the foot because they can't give anything back to us. Chief doesn't feel it is a big issue with just 28 calls a year. We are not so busy that the two calls a month hinder us. If the commissioners feel we are having a hard time with them, then send them a letter. Kevin feels if we are at exit 18 with our men and equipment and we get a call from East Tilton, we will be caught short. Chief said we can not solve Canterbury's issue of not having a crew. They are a part of the Capital Area Mutual Aid Association. Mike would prefer to not draw a line in the sand. Bob felt we should let it go. Paul would like a letter written from the commissioners, not a harsh letter. Kevin asked if it would be too crass to invite them to a meeting or go to one of their meetings. Chief felt a letter would not be as confrontational. We realize that this takes us out of our community at least 2 times a month. Kevin does not want to cut them off. Mike feels that it might help the Chief of Canterbury in moving forward with his selectmen. Peter is his first name.

Any other business. Chief has a name to fill the full time vacancy. Matt Gilman who is a student at NHCTC who already has FF2 and EMT-I, meets all the requirements for a full time FF. He still needs C2F2. He comes highly recommended from his references. Proposed start date would be January 5th. Work two weeks of days and then go on shift. He will finish his schooling in Spring. Kevin was going to suggest postponing filling that position until we get this Pay study done by LGC to solve the problem that not having that person creates. Kevin proposes to discontinue the half time position. He thinks that would reduce the amount of overtime required to fill that shift and have Chief and the Fire Prevention captain cover some of that shift. He knows that Chief does not like that idea but that is what he would like to do with that position. Bob said the position has been approved by the district and you can't take it away. Bob disagrees wholeheartedly and doesn't support the idea at all. Paul 's solution is the position that is half time, he would like to see that position be taken away because now we are at that point where it is no longer needed. There are many communities that have one fire inspector and we now have one and a half. It is over the time and Brad is caught up on what he has needed to do. He would like that position to be a full time FF position. Chief said this isn't the first time you have spoken about eliminating the half time position. It was to take care of some major issues in the community. Some communities don't deal with those issues. Brad and Sean both cover shifts from time to time. Fire Prevention activities won't be done with that shift coverage. Paul said then Brad would be able to do his job full time rather than covering shifts. Chief commented that we just hired a person in that half-time position, which the commissioners approved that when Greg Stetson left. Now we are going to go back to that FF after it has been approved by both the commission budget and the budget committee's budget and tell him the position has been eliminated? We start the new person at \$14.50, a low pay. Paul didn't think we were talking about not hiring someone. Chief said the Chair had said that. Kevin said right now we are covering a vacant shift with overtime. The communities demand even more than what we are doing now. Paul just wants to cover the overtime. There was discussion about the cost of hiring an individual. Chief said we talked about this when hiring personnel. When you change the make up of the fire department, we will lose ability of hiring fulltime fire fighters. They need to know that there is the ability to make overtime, have family health benefits, etc. We lower our ability to attract good candidates. If it is not a traditional fire fighter position, you may not get any applicants. We are ram Roding a schedule down an employee's throat. How can they work that kind of schedule? Laconia used to hire a person to cover vacation shifts but they don't do it anymore. Kevin said he is not looking to put someone out of work. Chief said if we tell him you won't be working on a regular schedule and not doing

what he was just hired for, he may leave by his own choice. Kevin feels that when his study comes back he knows they won't recommend a half position. Chief feels that when they look at all that each position does, it may be very different than Kevin's expectations. Brad spoke to remind the commissioners that they are doing fire prevention in two communities. Chief said we do not have a full time Deputy Chief. We don't have the time to do the fire prevention evaluations that are needed. We don't have the people or resources to do it. Chief feels it would be a big mistake not to maintain that position. We need to come together to get a common goal but still haven't been able to meet for the "goal setting" discussion. We know we are providing a high level of service to the community and that is what they deserve and expect and we cannot do that without our current level of staffing and the positions approved. Brad asked how the commissioner felt "all is caught up"? Paul hopes that there is something to do everyday. He feels that over a period of time Brad could handle everything without a person helping him out. Chief said it is a nonstop job. Paul just wants to take him off covering shifts. Paul felt that Brad is at a point to manage it himself. Brad said they just received a list of rental properties from both communities that we didn't even know existed and are now scheduling these appointments now. Paul wants to know at what point Brad will get caught up. Chief felt that the commissioners do not know what other communities are accomplishing or not with their fire prevention activities. It is not a true comparison. Paul felt that if other communities felt the person couldn't do the job then they'd be terminated. Brad reminded the commissioners that he was on shift duty for a year and just came back to Fire Prevention in July. Now with the new construction slowing down they can focus on some major fire prevention issues. Brad feels that the statement made is not fair or accurate. Kevin said he wants to postpone filling that vacancy until the classification study is done. His suggestion is to utilize the part time person to ease the coverage of that shift vacancy. It is up to Chief how to cover the shift. There is some sentiment that we want to change a position, that is done differently. Mike asked if we are going against the wishes of the voters. Kevin did not feel so. At some point there was a reorganization of the department with another board. Although it is a fact that the position was approved, a lot less people attend that meeting than the number of people who voted to put that commission in place. Chief felt that the commissioners would be going against the wishes of the people. He was under the understanding based on past practice that if there is a vacancy he has the authority to fill that vacancy. Chief is appointed by local governing body and firefighters were appointed by the Fire Chief and that is how it has been done in the past. He needs a clarification in how the district operates. Who does the hiring and what is the Chief's authority as to hiring employees. Kevin said that would be part of the hiring policy. Chief said it doesn't go with a general policy change. You have to clearly define the powers and organization of the fire dept.; it could change the whole makeup of the fire dept. Chief referenced RSA 152. Mike still feels that the commissioners are trying to disallow the voters' approval for the positions. Kevin stated Chief has asked to fill that position. Bob motioned to give Chief the authority to fill that vacant position. Paul seconded. Discussion: Paul when we start filling these positions he would like to see residents. Chief commented that Matt Gilman will be living in Tilton. Paul said it is a good idea to have people that live in the community. We can't force it for them to live around the community but it is his preference. Vote taken: Bob and Paul approved and Kevin opposed. Motion passed.

Kevin discussed practice of sending people to officer's school when we don't have any officer openings. Chief said we could potentially have them. We have 3 officers now, the 4th officer has not attended the class and none of the firefighters have attended that class. Kevin asked about training people beyond their position. Chief said he hopes that would continue. That is called successor ship. You want them to train beyond where they are. That is how an organization comes together. This is before a position comes open. Can't be a good leader without being a good follower. So they get the training as to what will be needed at a higher position and then the follower is an informed follower. Kevin feels it makes our people more attractive to others. It also causes our employees to look for other jobs when you can't give them benefits. Chief commented that you can't treat employees as a number in the budget. You invest in your employee that makes them a better employee. If everyone is trained to the fullest, we would be satisfying a lot of our goals and objectives. Paul said if you have people in the fire dept that couldn't make/pass the class, would you send them anyway? Chief said no not if he thought they would fail. He gets the sense from the commission that they would prefer him not doing anything extra, trying

to hold the line; if they don't need the training, don't give it to them. Hold them back because we are afraid they'll be leaving here. Paul feels if you invest \$15,000 in a person, you feel that he is competent and you will get something back in return. But they could just be here to get the training and then leave here. Chief feels that the officer's school training is vital to all firefighters. Kevin feels we should train our people for what we need them for. Chief said but then they wouldn't be trained in time for when an opening happens here. We need to see the value of the employee that we have and we need to invest in our employees. You are making sure that that person is ready and prepared to step up into that role. Mike commented with our command structure any firefighter could be put in a command situation at any time. Chief said currently we have no one in the full time firefighter force enrolled in the fire officer program. Greg Michaud commented from the floor. Many times the officer is on the ambulance; when that second call comes in, the third firefighter is the incident commander until the higher ranking officer arrives on scene. That is why we need to train the senior fire fighters now so they can get the job done. Now Kevin understands that there isn't anyone else in the class.

Kevin now wants to discuss the fire fighters union using the Center Street address, phone, email, fax number, etc. This is a private fraternal organization utilizing public facilities. They admitted letters are done on district equipment. He asked if it is occurring on company time and the answer was "most of the time it is not" which means some of the time it is. Chief asked if Kevin knew that as an employer you have to give them the opportunity to use equipment. Kevin has been in contact with LGC and he spoke with Mark .. and he indicated that that is not acceptable. Chief feels we are building walls that are not needing to be there. They are our employees, they don't do things that interfere with their responsibilities. If they are using our paper, ink and cartridges it probably isn't appropriate. Kevin feels they have no right to. Chief said if he is doing something for the IAFC, can he not use his email address. Kevin feels that if they are advertising our phone number to take calls, they shouldn't take calls on company time. Kevin feels people are very resistant to change whatever they want to do. Chief feels that we are being faced with opposition that is arbitrary and capricious and we don't know where it is coming from. We are concerned about the level of service being provided. We need to work to find common ground and work out differences. We have difficulty in getting along amongst ourselves and we should be in the same business - offering a good service to our people. Paul wants them to be aware that they are being watched. Chief will relay to the union members that the commissioners are concerned that taxpayers money is being expended for union business and that should be stopped. Kevin feels it just shouldn't be allowed to be done.

Public comment: Pat Clark wanted to thank Janine for her years of service to the fire district and community and that she will be missed.

Scott Davis wants to address the union issue. If the union is looking to raise money for a fund raiser as they are in the department to help people in the community, he feels it is totally wrong to handcuff them with the restriction previously noted. They presented themselves that they want to promote themselves in the community to assist the community. Scott said the boot drive alone raised \$4500. They went and stood at midnight till the morning to raise money for the children. He would hope as a citizen you won't stifle that. Who loses then, the community loses.

Scott continued: You ought to be proud, he never hears a complaint about the fire district's service given to citizens. We need to be proud of the service that we have grown to. The legislative body should look to go to a higher level of services. We are all feeling the economic times, but this is not like working at a factory. It could be someone's life. To see that commitment from those people, it is important to say that we support you and we will do whatever we can to give the voters of Northfield and Tilton the best service possible. There has always been more people at the voting booth but when the business of the district meeting is done at our annual meeting, decisions are made and it is the duty of the commissioners to fulfill the vote of the legislative body. It isn't the right of the commissioners to change that. Now if the commissioners want to reduce the makeup of the fire dept and then bring it before the legislative body, which is a different matter. He doesn't understand - if we are trying to carry out a certain level of service, how do we sit here and try to change what the voters have approved. We hire an accountant for his professionalism - we have hired Chief for his professional expertise.

Scott continued: Talk about fire prevention. If we can prevent it from happening, that is positive. We have been lucky here especially with some of the buildings we have here. If we can prevent something and that was a directive of the legislative body and if the commissioners have a different thought process, then bring it before the legislative body and let them direct. He would hope that is how we would move forward. Kevin stated we know that we are a busy dept. We have people we pay and he doesn't expect them sitting around and doing other things. Job was not to do union activities. Scott feels they have an organized group now and if commissioners work with them and, if/when they get to the point of a bargaining unit, you can be setting the ground work for how they will work within the district. Kevin doesn't question the quality of the organization but he does question the cost of the department. Kevin said he does get stopped and asked what we are doing with all that money.

Roland said we have public meetings and the Chief does presentations. It gets voted on and the governing body votes on it and it passes. What authority do the commissioners have to change the number of employees when the Chief is in charge? No reply from the commissioners.

Pay bills: Desorcie bill: Chief explained: we had a problem with the tank pump valve on E3 when it came back. Kevin asked if Duane could have done that work but Chief said Duane doesn't work on pumps. We used to use Lakes Region Apparatus but we weren't satisfied with their work.

Fire Programs: invoice for 2 days of training. Janine explained that that bill will not be paid because the training has already taken place. This check will be voided.

Fire Tech and Safety: parts for Engine 3 that were not related to the accident. Kevin is ok with that purchase.

Galls: Kevin mentioned this was a uniform purchase where someone is over their allowance. Chief doesn't see as a huge issue because there are some people who have not fully expended their full allotment. We can deduct from next year's budget or have him pay the difference of the overage. Chief will talk with the firefighter to pay the overage and we will reduce the amount of our check. Commissioners approved.

US Cellular: bill is now attached. Commissioners approved.

Paul motioned to go into nonpublic session, Kevin seconded. Roll call vote taken, Paul aye, Bob aye and Kevin aye. Nonpublic meeting started at 10:26pm

Returning to public session at 10:39. Kevin moved that we keep minutes of the nonpublic meeting sealed with the exception of Josh Merriam's written Exit Interview and the non-public minutes from November 20, 2008. Paul seconded. Discussion: None. Vote taken on sealing the minutes. All commissioners voted in aye.

Bob motioned to adjourn the meeting and Paul seconded. All voted in favor in 10:41. Meeting adjourned at 10:41.

Respectfully submitted,
Janine L. Vary, Secretary

**Next Meeting Date, Time,
Place:**

January 15, 2009 at 18:00 at Tilton School, Classroom in New Academic Building