

Tilton-Northfield Fire District
Public Hearing on the Proposed Warrant Articles
held on February 4, 2008 at 7:00PM
Northfield-Tilton Congregational Church

*Approved with one
correction. 2/21/08*

Public hearing opened at 7:05 by Gretchen Wilder, Chairman of the Budget Committee. Warrants to be discussed first.

Commissioner Tom Gallant took over meeting to review the warrant articles.

Tom read first four articles: All election articles to take place at public polling places. No questions on first four articles

Art 5: treasurer: Kevin Waldron addressed. He said this article is not an affront to current treasurer. It is to make an effort to have someone who knows what is going and how to do it in the event some one wins an election who doesn't have the skills to do the job. Don Stevens asked if the warrant fails, what would be the result. Kevin stated nothing would change. If passed would take place in 2009.

Article 6 and 7 were read. Tom stated that both deal with payoff of notes for apparatus utilizing surplus amounts that are available in the special revenue fund. Revenues from the ambulance pay for all apparatus and equipment. Comstar does the billing. Budget of Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund are included in the budget. Revenues exceed expenditures, both in past and present and can accumulate those proceeds and allocate the payoff of these two notes. No money from taxation. Allows the fund to generate itself at a quicker rate. Gale Ober, Citizen, asked about the balance of fund. \$134,106 is balance in fund (provided by Chief Carrier).

Article 8: Tom stated this article deals with payoff of loan from Engine 3. The funds to come from general funds surplus. This has accumulated over the period of 4 or 5 years. Surplus would be as a result of revenue exceeding expenditures for those years. These are revenues from taxation. Expenditures budgeted for through regular budgetary process. This would take that money from general fund surplus. Tom does not support to take that revenue to pay off apparatus. He made a pledge when he created the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund saying it would generate revenue to buy ambulances and engines. Would prefer to use the general fund surplus to offset taxes. You only see the effect in one year and then it changes next year.

Kevin Waldron commented that he voted in favor of putting this article on. Using general fund surplus to reduce tax rate will give help 1 year. But if we pay off truck, then we won't be paying \$1800 a month for the truck for the next 4 years. He believes, when the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund was created, he asked would we come back looking for money for apparatus and he was told 'no'. However he thought the account would buy vehicles in cash. This will at least allow Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund to progress at a quicker rate and we become debt free. Kevin LaChapelle: had a comment. Community trust is foundation of budget. He agrees

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with Tom and Kevin and comments. If you confuse taxpayers anymore with “funds”, “surplus”, etc., and expect taxpayers to understand in 10 minutes, he didn’t believe they can make an informed decision. Pay off debt is good idea, but to mix things so as to not confuse the issue for taxpayers. Gretchen said the money is in a non-interest bearing account. With only 1-dollar interest and \$200,000 in the account, how does it benefit public? Take this money and put towards tax rate, gives false message to public. Let’s lower debt and put towards Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund and there is interest being made in that account. She wasn’t sure when the commissioners were going to use the money. Kevin LaChapelle said there can be all kinds of opinions, but whatever, don’t confuse the taxpayers. Year after year, people talk and they can’t understand what the articles mean and don’t know how to vote. Don Stevens said there is \$260,000 in surplus,. There is no long-range plan right now. If we pay off debt, there’ll still be \$160,000 still there. Now the equipment fund can grow. The \$58,000 payments in vehicles out of Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund will be paid off. Fact is that some of this money was already in there when Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund was created. There’ll be \$160,000 still in there, 10% of budget but Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund will grow \$58,000 faster each year. Kevin LaChapelle stated he is worried about the long-term trust of the body. If we confuse them anymore and say there is opposition on paying off this debt, the public will be confused. Don said an accountant suggested to have the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue fund borrow money from the general fund and pay it back that would work. Another idea is to have two separate surplus accounts. The efficient use of money. \$86,400 are payments and we are paying off \$85109 of the general surplus fund. If we can’t make \$1300 on \$85,000 of general surplus, then why are you only earning \$1 in interest? Find a better banking fund. We should be able to do something better with that lump of business. Greg Hill feels that we can do better than paying this off. He didn’t think he would misunderstand if the district dropped the tax. Don asked if he understood what he would get back as a household. Greg sees the surplus as an overtax and not underspent. If next year you come back and ask for more, at least I won’t mistrust what is being purchased. Kevin LaChapelle said if you tell them that they are going to 10 cents back, they’ll say wow,10 cents. He feels that they may take that and run with it. Then the board and Budget Committee can determine where to keep the money. He feels the vote would be split. Wherever it is spent better than sitting in this account. Kevin LaChapelle said if you think of those who are at the meeting, there may be those want the dime back. Gale Ober asked what amount of surplus as of 1/1/08 in the General Fund. \$263,000 commented Bob Watson. Don said if you have a \$100,000 house you’ll get \$12 back in Northfield. Tilton gets bigger balance. Bob also commented that this is an unaudited number.

Article 9: pressurized hydrants. Tom commented that there would be more discussion with the Budget Committee on this warrant.

Article 10. Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue budget. This warrant amount will change if articles 6, 7, 8 pass.

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Article 11: operating budget. This will be discussed with Budget Committee.

Art 12, 13, 14 and 15. Tom commented that these are all housekeeping articles for business to be run. We haven't had to take a TAN out for several years, but in case the towns found themselves not able to make their monthly payments, it gives commissioners authority to get a loan. There were no other questions on the warrants.

Tom terminated the discussion on the warrants and gave rest of meeting pertaining to the budget to the Budget Committee.

Public hearing on the proposed Warrants ended at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janine L. Vary
Tilton-Northfield Fire District Clerk