

# Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	January 19, 2009 at 18:02 to 21:00
Note taker:	Audio Recorded	Place:	Tilton School, new Academic Building, School Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Classroom, Tilton

Attendees: Commissioner Kevin Waldron, Commissioner Paul Auger, Commissioner Bob Watson, Scott Davis, Tom Gallant and Chief Steve Carrier.

Commissioner Waldron called special meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Meeting is being held to discuss the warrant and fire department study.

## Warrant Articles

Kevin started with warrant. He did a draft of the warrant. A couple of things were added and he made a correction to the budget amount. He will not be reading every article.

Articles 1 through 4 do not change from year to year. Kevin: Tom, if I misspeak would you be so kind as to correct me. Tom: Just for the record, last year (2007) was the 1<sup>st</sup> year that voting was done at the ballot by virtual ballot on Articles 1 through 4. That is the 1<sup>st</sup> time it has changed in many years. It is still the same now as in 2007.

Article 5 has to do with the by-law committee. Kevin did not get a chance to run the wording by an attorney but it has to go to DRA. Everything that Kevin was able to find out told him that by-laws are for organizations but articles of agreement or incorporation are for companies and may or may not apply. Scott presented the wording for the warrant article. Kevin asked where the articles of agreement came from. Scott: The articles of agreement were put in with the by-laws to allow for the flexibility to work on that in case they want to bring that back. It gives them the ability go down that route and it is a gives a clear understanding. If you just put by-laws that is all that you will be able to bring back because that is all the body is asking them to do. Kevin asked Scott if he researched the terminology. Scott: No. Any district that is formed by more than one town involved in that district has some type of articles of agreement on how it was formed and included in that is how to dissolve that district. That should have been in there when the district was formed. It was included in the warrant article so it can be worked on. If articles of agreement are set up for the district there will be complete understanding on how that would be handled and will be easier for the lay-person to understand. Tom: He agrees with the by-laws 100% but not the articles of agreement. Generally this is covered by the charter but there is no charter here. There never was a charter. He feels that if you are opening this up you are opening a large pandoras box. Things like what happens if you want to dissolve is covered by RSA and is in the Tilton study. He agrees with the by-laws 100%. If the committee feels they need to get outside of that, they need to come back and talk with the commissioners about that and work on step 2 when step 1 has been accomplished. He agrees with the by-laws. They should be pretty cut and dried. If you get outside the by-laws, it will take eons to put together. How do lay people determine what is covered or not covered by RSAs? Scott: Whether you have articles of agreement or not, if the district decides to dissolve, it will end up in court. It will never be dissolved by what is in the articles as it will be challenged by one side or the other as to the legitimacy of the articles. He wholeheartedly agrees with Tom on that. He wholeheartedly agrees that district needs some by-laws. It is up to the commissioners on what they want to do. Paul and Bob both agree with by-laws not the articles of agreement. Tom did not know how the legal budge was arrived at. He cautioned that there needs to be some level of budgetary funding given for legal counsel for a review of the by-laws. He would not recommend taking it to the voters without review by council. If they should be adopted they need to be legally binding. He does not expect it to be a long thing. It will certainly be a review and will probably involve a couple meetings where they draft in final form.

Kevin asked Tom if the board voted on each and every article. Tom said yes. You can vote on each as you progress or make a motion at the end.

Article 6 to see District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$64,000 for a final payment on Engine 3. Said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus & Equipment Special Reserve Fund established under RSA 31:95C adopted March 7, 2005. Any discussion? If we pay this off, that loan will come to maturity in 2012. It has been running around \$3,000 to 4,000 per year in interest. The closer you get to maturity the interest payment decreases and the principal payment increases. This was on last year as well but because of the funding proposal failed. We were going to take some money from the general fund surplus and we had told the people in 2005 that we wouldn't do that so it was successfully deleted last year. This is a little high as Franklin Savings Bank cannot give us an exact payment more than 31 days out. DRA advised that we go a little higher than the final amount due. Tom asked what if the payment is less. What will happen to the extra money? It will have to go to the general fund as it cannot be deposited in the Apparatus & Equipment fund. Nothing but ambulance revenue can be deposited in that account. Tom recommended that the night of the meeting that the amount be amended on the floor to the correct amount of the final payment once the article has been opened.

Article 7 to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$41,500 for the purchase of a new command vehicle for the Chief. Said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus & Equipment Special Reserve Fund established under RSA 31:95C adopted March 7, 2005. Any discussion? Kevin believes that is the number the Budget Committee ended up at. Right Chief? Yes. Tom asked if that includes the command center. Yes.

Article 8 to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$59,550 for the purpose of purchasing Fire, Rescue and EMS Equipment, paying vehicle payments and the cost associated with collecting the Ambulance charges with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus & Equipment Special Reserve Fund established under RSA 31:95C adopted March 7, 2005. Any discussion? Kevin believes that is the right number. Looking at the budget spread sheet, the changes would be if Article 6 failed Article 8 will have to be amended to put the payments for Engine 3 back in. The amount would be \$22,271. The command vehicle is not included in the \$59,550. Tom stated that the payment for Engine 3 needs to be in both articles. The command vehicle cannot be in the budget by law. If Article 6 passes, a motion will need to be made from the floor to reduce Article 8 by the amount of the payments. Chief: \$81,821 should be the total. This is Fire, Rescue and EMS Equipment, payment for Engine 3 if Article 6 doesn't pass and adding in the ambulance billing services charges of \$17,550 and that should be the total Apparatus and Equipment Fund Expenses. All that is for the purchasing of Fire, Rescue and EMS Equipment, paying vehicle payments and the cost associated with collecting the Ambulance charges.

Article 8 should now read: to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$81,821 for the purpose of purchasing Fire, Rescue and EMS Equipment, paying vehicle payments and the cost associated with collecting the Ambulance charges with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus & Equipment Special Reserve Fund established under RSA 31:95C adopted March 7, 2005.

Article 9: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$115,033 to pay for Pressurized Hydrants. Discussion: Per Tom we have no choice on whether to put this in or not. The wording has been carried in the past. Tom stated that at one time he asked DRA about putting it in the budget to end the controversy on this article. The amount is a significant enough as it relates to the total operating budget and should be listed separately. There is no law that says you have to, but they strongly recommend that you do this.

Article 10: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of \$1,461, 917 for General District Operations. This article does not include special or individual articles addressed which would be any other article which has a money amount attached to it.

Discussion: Tom brought up the wording of the article. The wording is appropriate. \$1,461,917 would include Article 9. The \$1,461,917 needs to be reduced by \$115,033. Just remember, that your statement after reading warrant Article 10 was accurate so whatever happens before you get to 10 you will have to make up those numbers. The Budget Committee should actually give you that number. You will need to refigure the number and the Budget Committee should refigure the number just to be sure it is accurate.

Article 10 should now read: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of \$1,346,884 for General District Operations. This article does not include special or individual articles addressed which would be any other article which has a money amount attached to it.

Articles 11, 12, 13, 14 have been around forever almost. Kevin doesn't believe that the wording has changed since he has been around. They are strictly housekeeping.

At this point, Tom would add to pick up on something that was discussed, researched by the appointed by-law committee in Article 14 to transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting. At that point, no money articles can be discussed and/or resolved. This would be the appropriate place for discussion to ensue relative to expanding the pervue, it's not binding, so the body knows that this committee may be looking into something that goes beyond by-laws. It's not binding. It won't come before the taxpayers with anything next year. But if that discussion should ensue this is the place it should ensue, not at the time you are discussing the by-laws. If you start going outside the realm of by-laws and the moderator does not stop you, that warrant article will go on forever and not really reach the point of vote that you want and that is in a positive way. When the warrant article is discussed, keep it very simple and you will go right past it. You can easily indicate what the importance of by-laws is and why the absence of by-laws is dangerous. Do not expand or mention is whole thing or you will go on all night long. This is where that should be discussed.

Kevin suggested a vote be taken on the warrant as a whole with the aforementioned changes. The articles being changed will be an actual payoff figure in Article 6, putting the Engine 3 payments back in to Article 8, and taking the fire hydrant money out of Article 10.

Chief asked if there was no interest in the Fire Prevention articles. Kevin was glad Chief brought this up. The biggest two articles or packets, Kevin looked over. There's a lot. He understands that there is some he doesn't like. It came to them rather late. They could say yup, throw it in there and let it happen. That's not really his style. Of the three things they were given, the item he liked best personally was the dismantling of the fire alarm system. It has a suggested date of 2012. He wanted to know if it could be done any quicker. Can the date be replaced with 2011? Chief: Yes. Part of that was switching over was the people on master boxes to radio boxes giving them an extra year. Kevin asked if the components were readily available. Chief: Yes. One of the biggest issues is going to be right on the Tilton School campus. The have four master boxes but all of the buildings are alarmed. The question they have is can they have one radio box for 10 different buildings or however many buildings they have? We do not know the answer to that yet. What they thought the process would be is to notify the people that the article passed and let them know their options. One of Kevin's concerns is that every year money is put into the old system. As time goes on, it's harder to get parts for it. Chief's biggest concern is the brain, basically what precedes the boxes in the station. It is ancient. If something goes wrong with it, there is a good possibility that they will not be able to replace it. Currently it says: Shall the Tilton-Northfield Fire District vote to dismantle and remove from service its current Fire

Alarm Telegraph System and replace that same system with a Radio Fire Alarm Box in the following manner: Phase 1: Remove from service all Fire District Telegraph Street Boxes by December 31, 2012. Phase 2: Notify all property owners by May 1, 2009, that the Telegraph System shall be removed from

service effective July 1, 2012, and that it shall be replaced, at the property owner's expense, with a Radio Fire Alarm Box. The Radio Fire Alarm Box shall report directly to Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Communications Center.

Kevin proposes that anywhere it mentions 2012 to change that to 2011. He asked the commissioners if that is an acceptable change. All agreed that this was acceptable for dismantling the Fire Alarm Telegraph System. Tom Gallant explained that his comes after any money items. This should become Article 11 and 11 through 14 each advance one. There are now 15 Articles.

Article 11 should now read: Shall the Tilton-Northfield Fire District vote to dismantle and remove from service its current Fire Alarm Telegraph System and replace that same system with a Radio Fire Alarm Box in the following manner: Phase 1: Remove from service all Fire District Telegraph Street Boxes by December 31, 2011. Phase 2: Notify all property owners by May 1, 2009, that the Telegraph System shall be removed from service effective July 1, 2011, and that it shall be replaced, at the property owner's expense, with a Radio Fire Alarm Box. The Radio Fire Alarm Box shall report directly to Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Communications Center.

As for the proposals for the upgrade of the ordinance and fire alarm rules and regulations, Paul asked if new ones were added. Most of them are pretty much the same. Chief explained that this is an upgrade with the changes being for references to residential sprinklers and homes over 3 stories and over 4,000 square feet. It will be in all new businesses and he believes that there is one other area as well. Kevin asked if the Supra box is the same as the Knox box. He asked why we liked this rather than Knox. Chief does not know. The difference between the two is that Supra has a curved key and Knox has a straight key. Knox box keys can be duplicated while Supra cannot. It was asked if any boxes can be opened with a tone. Chief said no. Paul asked if there were some where the PD was notified atomically. Chief said they could be wired for that. In the past some have been wired wrong so that a fire alarm was sent. Chief wants alarms to send trouble alarm so police and fire are both notified. He believes that all have been changed. Not all are wired but newer ones come through with that ability.

Kevin asked what other options we have for doing this. Tom stated that he thought that Brad mentioned that these changes do not require the authorization of the body. Chief confirmed. Under the village district RSA, it gives you 90 days. You have to notify the public 90 days in advance and after 90 days the ordinance goes in to effect. Tom's solution is the following, if the commissioners agreed with the majority of it put it before the body. Thereafter the board can amend them because the board can adopt them. In the future, amend not add. If they are amended that 90 day rule would apply. You would have to notify the general public that they have been amended. That will at least get the expanded frame work on the books and as Paul pointed, out many of them are already on the books. Some of them have been rewritten and the number has been expanded.

Kevin: one of the 1<sup>st</sup> things that came to mind, does it make any projects anyone wants to do (A) more expensive or (B) does it make either Town less user friendly. He feels to a degree it does. He doesn't know to what agree as he has not had the opportunity to go through it. Tom: Generally, any regulation will add something. Kevin: Most of this will come down to no choice. As Brad mentioned, most of these are going to come down to no choice in 2011. Chief: The residential sprinkler vote was ratified by the members of the ICC out in Minnesota and voted to take effect in 2011. Could it be reversed? He guesses it could be. If that is the code NH has adopted at that time, NH really can't exempt that code. It has been exempted from the State Fire Code at this time; but, if it becomes national code, Chief believes they will not be able to do that. Tom: If you can, attend any of the planning board meetings throughout the State and in Concord. They should be specifically about writing new ordinances that this should be considered. Subdivisions and so forth. Chief: This is an attempt to look long range rather than how it would be effective today. It may increase the cost to the consumer or contractor. The chief feels that the cost should be born by the user. In the long term you should be reducing the liability to your fire district as far as setting up protection. Build the homes the best you can and protect them the best you can right up front. In the long term it should have less of an effect on your fire department down the road. Tom did some investigating on the cost of this after the meeting the other night. If you

are on a public water system, it will add to the average home of 2,000/2,500 square feet approximately \$3,000 to \$3,500 to the bottom line of that house. If you can go off a well, the nice thing about going off a well is they require a certain number of gallons per minute. That is not the actual production of the well. It takes into consideration the reserve that is in the pipe. The fact of the matter is instead of drilling a 2<sup>nd</sup> well if you need to have this system, you go to the point where you have your gallon and a half per minute which is State standard, calculate the reserve, calculate how many more feet you need to go and then multiply \$13 per foot for an extra 100 feet. This is how much it would add to a system that would otherwise be on domestic water. Kevin: This system does not require another tank and pump? Tom: As long as you can work off your reserve. As an example, if you live in a subdivision that has a public well, then your ability to draw is limited on gallons per minute. Therefore you would have to put an extra 275 gallon tank in the basement that becomes a pressurized tank. Kevin: The little bit of looking he did, the schematic for a system had a 310 poly gallon tank with a pump and was good for 8 or 10 minute reserve. Tom: The reason the poly tank was used was to prolong the life of the tank due to the corrosiveness of the water in rural areas.

Kevin: Do the Commissioners want to put this out now or let it happen when it's going to anyway? Bob: Brad said that one of these would make it easier for people when they went in to get a permit. He wasn't sure which one it was. Kevin: He believes it was the fire alarm. Chief: He talked about the fire prevention ordinances which basically, from that document, would be turned into a booklet that would be given out to contractors when they came in. Tom: As an example, do you think it is reasonable for the Police Department in Tilton to locate themselves up where they located themselves and not sprinklerize that building? I don't care whether it's the Town or who it is. Do you think it is reasonable? Kevin: Do I? Would I? No, I would not. Tom: Do you think it's reasonable. Kevin: No, it probably isn't. Tom: No, it's not. Scott: Especially when there was a fire right across the street. Tom: They may well have those intentions to limit the cost of that project. Kevin: That would be their choice or prerogative the way things are right now. Tom: Correct. But if we could all agree that in theory that doesn't make any sense then why not put legislation on the books that would lay that out clearly as to whether you do or don't have to sprinklerize. Scott: As the Chief said, preventative. You're making them put sprinklers in so if they do have a little fire it's going to put it out rather than have the fire department run up there and having another PSNH building across the street again. Tom: It's one thing to accelerate the need to sprinklerize residential dwellings, although I believe in that completely. As far as businesses, commercial structures, manufacturing, retail, I don't care what it is, they should sprinklerize. Kevin: This doesn't separate that out though. Paul: I agree. When it comes to a person's home I disagree with that. But when it comes to a public place, yes. Anything with the public yes. Whether it be police or anything else. Tom: A person's private home could be a public place. Scott: They could be running a home business or day care. Tom: It could be a residential structure in excess of three stories. They could have rental space. They could have two apartments in it and rent them both and not have to sprinklerize it. People smarter than any of us in this room probably have analyzed it very closely which is why they have propagated this regulation which was adopted in August or September. It's been coming a long time. It's interesting to note that they are now licensing contractors to install them so you are not going to have people running roughshod out there installing these things not knowing what they are doing. They are not just starting it, they have been doing this for well over a year in this area. Chief: There is more competition too. The systems and technologies are a lot better as well. Tom: It does reduce your fire insurance. He is not sure of the amount as it depends on the value of your home. He did check into that. It is now looked upon as an item you can put in your amenities which has salability. Scott: You can always put it to the people and let them decide. It can always be amended down the road. Tom: People generally do not read regulations. You are not going to have all that wording in the warrant. It will be available upon request. People will either vote for it or against it. Generally what they will do is vote in the affirmative. You are right, it is coming to you late and he did mention that. Kevin: It will probably and somebody will probably take this the wrong way but, it will probably pass with flying colors based on the sales pitch that was presented the other night. Tom: At some point these should be reviewed and those items which you do not agree with come up with a summation and with the consensus of the board take a vote. If there is anything you disagree with you can change it at that time

with public notice. Kevin: One of the things that really cranks me is the fact that not only does this apply to new, some of it applies to existing, and if you change a certain portion of your building you have to do the whole thing. Tom: You are right, the grandfathering is going away. Chief: If you have to remodel more than 50%, of the building you have to come up to code. The new regulations are more stringent than the current.

Kevin: He wants to do it the other way but he is only one of three and needs to hear from the others. Bob: It's good to be proactive. Do it before we are forced to do it. Paul: Again, there are some things in there that are very vague. It's the 25%. If his home was to burn tomorrow, he couldn't afford to bring rebuild. Tom: If your home is insured for replacement cost, it should not be an issue. Kevin: What do you guys want to do? Bob: Put it in front of the body and let them decide. Paul: I agree. Motion made and seconded to add the ordinance amending the fire prevention code. Paul and Bob in favor, Kevin against. Commissioners requested Chief take care of the wording of the article as DRA has requested a draft copy of all warrant articles this week..

Kevin: The vote on the warrant as a whole was interrupted. There was a motion and second on the floor. These articles will go separately. They will end up with a total of 17 articles. Vote taken. All in favor.

### **Tilton Fire Department Study**

Bob: Northfield's Town Administrator, Glenn Smith, e-mailed agenda for meeting next week on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Kevin: Do you have this Paul? Paul: Yes. Kevin: This is Northfield's idea. What is Tilton's idea? Chief have you heard anything? Chief: He has not heard any response yet. Kevin: Are there things here you don't like? Is that the idea or what? Paul: That's what the agenda seems to be about. Bob: There doesn't seem to be a need to hire somebody to do a study of response times. He doesn't remember that the Commissioners told them they would put a master plan together by January. Kevin: He believes that they would start to talk about it. As far as the master plan, he asked for some names that night. He was given Lakes Region Planning Commission and LGC. He sent them an email asking if they could help them. Lakes Region Planning Commission responded that they would like to talk to him in person. He replied and has not heard from them. LGC answered the question with questions. They may be able to help but the person that might be able to help is gone right now. Tom: Every town has a master plan. LGC was referring to that. LRPC towns pay a fee to belong and they deal with towns helping structure master plans. They run seminars on how to write master plans. They do long and lengthy reviews as far as towns are concerned. He does not know if LRPC would be the vehicle to use to put this together for the District. He does not believe that they could. There are so few districts in the State that he can't imagine they have any experience with this. Scott: You are not going to get a concrete answer right now. You are going to get several questions. That's why they want to meet with you because they will have an array of questions that need answers. Tom: Question 1 will be What do you understand a master plan to be? Question 2 will probably be How do you want to structure your master plan? Do you want to do it in layers? They will not do it for you but they will help. They will help you review it. You may get I'll get back to you because I have to check with so and so, I have to check with so and so, I have to check with so and so as this is not something they have dealt with. It is out of the norm. Scott: Was it Eric Anderson that you spoke with? Kevin: I didn't actually speak with anyone. It was all done by e-mail. It was Kim Gallant. Tom: Kim worked with Northfield and Tilton on their master plans years ago. He has moved up the ranks. He will probably be the person that you speak to who would then do some research to see how they would help us or can we help them. In regards as to whether they will be able to help or not. Kevin: Does the Water District have a master plan. Tom: No, they don't require one. Chief: Do they have a strategic plan? Scott: No, not really. Kevin: You said they don't require one. Then why do we? Scott: He thinks that's the finding of the MRI report. Tom: He recalls them asking if one exists. He does not remember them saying that one definitely should exist. He does recall them asking if one does exist. He also recollects that they refer to

the fact that it would be helpful if there is one. Chief: They made a reference to making sure that the FD is involved in the master planning process of the two towns. Scott: What would the District have a master plan for? Chief: To establish direction in the way we were going and where we want to be. That's why I said strategic plan because they could do the same thing with a strategic plan. It would be more of an operational level than a political level.

Bob: #7 was a question you answered. The question before it was written by MRI. It said that "Community master planning should reflect appropriate public safety resource deployment in terms of EMS and fire suppression." Tom: To that end, the master plan of Tilton and probably 99% sure of Northfield, they make no reference to that. If anything, it is broad brushed in a sentence or two and that's it. Kevin: Are you talking about the town master plans referencing the fire district? Tom: In regards to what Bob read as Chief's response. Bob: That was not his response. That was the question. That is what they said. Scott: What was that again Bob? Bob: Community master planning should reflect appropriate public safety resource deployment in terms of EMS and fire suppression. That was their question and then Chief had an answer. Tom: and their bullet underneath that was "As target hazards and population centers shift, adequate fire and EMS response should be considered and planned for. Master planning allows the community to have a voice in determining the appropriate level of service provided. Obviously this planning needs to consider a risk management approach and balance cost and Department capability to establish an acceptable level of risk and an acceptable level of service. Based on our observations to date, we found a growing level of animosity between Tilton and the Fire District that has allowed the master planning process and public discussion to stray from a dialogue on service level. We believe that the District has become focused on financial obligation and has not recognized or engaged concerns pertaining to providing an acceptable level of service or the growth of the two communities within the District. "

Chief's response was "I whole-heartedly agree that the department should be involved in both community's master planning process. We should also be involved at a much lower, more basic level as well. For example, the department should be involved with planning and zoning issued. The District should engage and interact with the selectmen regularly. The fire department should attend staff meetings for both towns to share and acquire important information. Already we have worked with both communities to update Emergency Operations and Hazard Mitigation plans. These processes bring together department heads and other key players in the communities in non-emergency situations to give them valuable "face-time" to prepare for real incidents where a pre-determined understanding of each other's strengths and abilities becomes essential for the positive outcome of any incident.

I also believe that the District needs to begin planning internally, as well. This will establish a vision for which goals and objectives can be put into place to begin to move in a direction that will strive to meet that vision. Otherwise, the organization will flounder in the present without any preparation for the future. Cost equals time."

Chief: There was minimal info gathered in the Tilton Study. They asked for updates on apparatus and equipment. Things like that. Kevin: It makes sense to know where you want to go but there has to be a way to get there.

Tom: I wouldn't get too bogged down on this master plan now. Kevin: He thought it was pretty clear from at least the Tilton Board that we should have a master plan. Tom: That's fine if they want to open the door. He thinks everybody would see the benefit for that. But, not one that was laid out for you but you participated in. Kevin: There is no hiring someone to build us a master plan. That doesn't happen that way. Tom: He's not saying you couldn't do that. The need for a master plan for the district probably does not lend itself to that. It probably lends to the integration. This becomes even more difficult with the district rather than a fire dept in either a town or city. We are talking about two towns that have one fire dept and integrating that fire department into both master plans. Which could be entirely, significantly different to both towns. There is no question about that. Both towns are entirely different. This becomes even more complicated with the district rather than the fire dept in either the confines of a town or a city. Scott: The master plan in either town, what does it represent or what does it

refer to when it goes to fire safety? Just that it has a district? Chief: Each town says the Fire and EMS is taken care of by the fire district. These are the buildings that they work out of. The equipment that they own and that they operate. Pretty basic. Tom: That was only included in the most recent revision. Chief: Right. Tom: That's in Tilton. Do you know what it is in Northfield? Chief: I don't.

Chief: Wasn't the purpose of tonight's meeting for you to come up with items that you wanted to see on the agenda. Kevin: Yes. That's where we want to go. Tom: Based on what you have there, I assumed that Glenn Smith was instructed by the board of selectmen to come up with that framework for this upcoming meeting. Is that what it is? Kevin: Yes. It looks to me like it's a suggested agenda. Tom: I assumed that Tilton was asked to do the same thing and that this board would be asked to do the same things. The moderator would take all three and compile it down to common questions. Scott: I assumed that the moderator is looking for what is common with all three groups to come back with. Bob: I don't know what they are looking for. It's not like we are going to put it in the budget next year to spend a million dollars or two million dollars next year to build a new station or add four more firefighters. Chief: The reason I asked that is I just hate to see the commission go into the meeting responding to somebody else points, to establish that defensiveness right up front. He thought the purpose was to get a bunch of items together that everybody had a common interest in to discuss them. That's why he was a little surprised to see the list come out and it not be from Scott McGuffin. He it was his job to take all the responses and put it together for an agenda for the meeting. I think this is just a heads up from Northfield that this is what we would like to discuss. Bob: Basically, this is what we discussed last time. Scott: Scott cannot put out a list of common questions from all three boards if he hasn't received all three boards replies. If the commissioners haven't sent him what they would have for questions or concerns, then how can he compile an assortment of questions or concerns that are all common with all three when you do not have all three in front of you. I assumed that he was looking for what was common among the three groups to come back with. Kevin: So far all the concerns we have heard all come from Tilton. Nobody in Northfield is telling us anything. Tom: That's because their feelings are still hurt. This is a report on Tilton as at least one member of their board pointed out. It doesn't study Northfield. Northfield then takes the posture, why should we respond on this as it does not report on us. Kevin: At some point they need to get over it. Tom: He does not agree or disagree. It's a matter of forgetting what happened yesterday and going forward. Start today and go forward. This could be a constructive document for everybody. Especially the two towns. The commissioners need to look at this report. Based on the findings and voice their opinion on it. Over and above that, what other things do they feel are important to the district? Kevin: That should be equal, should it not. Tom: No, there are values that are more important to the Town of Tilton rather than the Town of Northfield. As an example, your population base. There is a significantly a larger population base in Tilton that there is in Northfield at any given time. So the concerns of the Town of Tilton would be different that the Town of Northfield regarding Fire & EMS. So that's why I say that are not the same, they are different. Kevin: Could it even be possible that the Northfield board has some concern? Tom: All he will agree with is that they did not feel their concerns as expressed to them by the taxpayers were not significant enough to warrant any kind of a study or looking into their complaints further. The commission sits in the middle and needs to express their vision and what they are going to do. Kevin: If Northfield Board of Selectmen doesn't want to say that these are their concerns. Tom: Then Northfield would back away from the discussion. Kevin: No matter what the budget is as it's currently set up. Whatever affects one town is going to affect the other. Tom: You need to make a decision on what you are going to do on Monday night. Kevin: If we want concerns from Northfield and there are none, do we find someone to find them. Do we do another study? Bob: They what be up to them. Tom: If they don't think they have any problems, then fine. I don't believe that they won't express their concerns. The three of you are supposed to represent the district not a town. People don't understand that. They thought we represented the town. Whether you like it or not, you represent the Town of Northfield. I know you represent the district but that's not the perception. Scott: It's not that way in the water district either. Tom: You go to the annual meeting. As the budget was escalating. It was always pitting Northfield against Tilton. It wasn't a vote for what was best for the district. That's not the way it should be. It should be for the district, not the town.

Tom: Each town should be represented on the board. In the by-laws you can say equal representation.

Kevin: Wouldn't that also mean that Tilton would have more representation than Northfield. Tom: No. If you read village district regulations for towns. You could apply it to the fire district. There needs to be representation from all parties. Scott: One person from each town sitting on the board at all times. If you read the, Village to Fire District if you could apply it to that, then you would find that law to be that there be representation from all towns. When we sought legal council on this years ago as we were proposing a warrant article, the rules of the Village District basically guided us. If the body voted and approved that warrant article non-enforceable as the village district already covers that. To vote in a fire district you don't even have to own property.

Kevin: I find the whole thing to be borderline unbearable. It takes a tremendous amount of time. We have people coming at us saying we want this, want this, I want to do this and then take this big ball, drop it and say there you go, it's all yours. It could be a totally wrong conception but that's how I see it. Tom: To the extent that these things are warranted you should take a position on. That's what this is all coming down to, taking positions on all items. Bob: I'm not sure where we are going Monday night because there is no agenda. Kevin: I'm not entirely sure either. I don't like being put in this position. We are three people out of I don't know how many in each town and I feel like we are in a bowl. What are you going to do. Scott: I think the commission needs to stand as a body as to which way you go. You as a body represent the fire district as they represent the citizens of their two communities. When you go to any gathering as the fire commissioners you need to go as one body. With the water district, we do that. We know how we stand and how we feel. You need to address that with yourselves and the chief. Unfortunately, the fire district has not taken a stance on any of the questions. Whether you like it or not, you are sitting in the chair. This district took a vote two or three years ago to not put a \$400,000 addition on in Northfield. That issue has never changed or been addressed since it was voted down. Now all of a sudden, there's no sense in putting the \$100,000 away to address that. We have a firehouse that does not meet codes. It only went away to the extent that now we have a place to house the guys but its not appropriate. The commissioners need to address the issues. Unfortunately, the report only talks about Tilton but it is talking about the whole district. Be honest, it will never come to a perfect solution but we can work toward that. Kevin: Admittedly for me that is a big portion of it. Scott: The commissioners need to say that they know they have things to address. Paul: Over the last 10 years look where we have come. Scott: That's what the commissioners need to stand up for. You guys need to work together in the direction you need to go. At least you get into communication and are talking. It's like everything for Northfield got dropped after it didn't pass. It should have been brought back. Would it have solved some of the problems we have now. Kevin: A lot of the concern. A portion of it I share. We keep spending more and more. How big can we get? We are just two little towns. Scott: You are the governing body. Let the legislature decide. We are a democracy. Put it forward and let the majority decide. It's part of it, Kevin. It's part of democracy. . If you don't take a pro active and you are sitting as a commissioner. If you had taken that approach, the second year you could have seen what you could have done to bring it back. The first year your put \$100,000 and the second year another \$100,000. The following year you said, why are we putting \$100,000 away because we have no plans. By dropping that project, was that the best thing for the district? The easiest thing is to not address it. If you can stand in front of people and say we took a stand and this is the reason we took a stand. That's what people are looking for. If you don't educate them they are not going to get educated. They are looking at you to say that this is what we need to do or the direction we need. Will they always support it. No. You are elected to look out for the needs of the people of the district. Kevin: To some degree all three of us have addressed that MRI report. Bob: But not as a board. Kevin: Right. Scott: If you had addressed it as a body or as a commission have you gone into discussion and taken a formal vote. Are you using all of your assets to make a qualified answer or response to these questions? Are you using everything you have at hand to make that determination. To answer that question as a chair of the fire commission we have taken a vote and this is our answer because... Paul: I think he's right. We really do have to have something. Kevin: What he was going to say was at that meeting they all had their say individually. Is he to believe that that is going to change? Scott: What were you there for? To address the report of the fire district Tilton did through its MRI study. You were not there as three commissioners answering as a body along with your Chief. If there was a question that needed time or some studying done before you

can answer that question then that question should have been taken in. You three, through whatever you have should sit and make a decision on the items in front of you and take a vote on it. Kevin: The statement you just made assumes that you are all in the same room. Scott: I'm not saying that. You are taking the question. Going back to a workshop and sat with your chief. Said what is all the pertinent data that we need to answer that. What are your true feelings on that? You ask Bob, Paul, Bob and Chief where you all stand on that. Then you take a vote of the commissioners to see where you stand as a body. If we take a vote, if two are for and I'm against it, I have to present that even if I'm against it. You have to make a decision on the items being brought before you. You either agree or disagree. Even if you all agree, you just state that you agree but you don't have an idea on how to address the issue that is satisfactory to the people. That's what they are looking for. Something you as commissioners have made a decision on and are standing by it. Kevin: Those 14 questions on that sheet, where did they come from. Bob: They came out of the MRI study. Scott: Not to put you on the hot seat but you should take those questions and have a workshop session where you work out how you feel on that and take a vote. Unfortunately being the chair, you might not agree personally but if it is a vote of the commission you bring that forward. Bob: If we don't have something this will be a wasted meeting like last time. The Chief had some good answers.

Scott: The way the last meeting was set up, it looked like it was three boards against the Chief and then you have the moderator. The Chief should have been with the Fire Commissioners.

Kevin: Do you think either we should get behind all the ideas that come down or do you think that the department head should follow us blindly. Scott: No, you should work as a team. You need to try to come up with what is best for the members of the district. Kevin: What he sees time and again, is that inevitably they will turn and look at him and ask what the chief wants. Scott: That does not mean they are against you. They want the input. The Chief is the one that has the knowledge. Take all the info that he can provide you with and then make a decision. When he says that the commissioners voted he tells them it was either affirmative or not. He does not say who was for or against. Use the assets and resources that you have available. You can never educate yourself enough. Paul: I think we should have some answers here. It can't be me and you against Bob or Bob and me against you. He's right, it has to be what we decide. Kevin: Let's do it.

Bob: #1 is the Failure to meet federal OSHA Two-In/Two-Out standard.

This federal requirement addresses firefighter safety. A total of four firefighters need to be on-scene of an emergency before firefighting operations can commence (the exception is to make an immediate rescue of a civilian observed within the structure). Currently there are only 3 personnel on duty. The only time that four personnel would be immediately available would be during the workweek daytimes if the Fire Chief or the Fire Prevention Captain were in Town and could respond. The solution is to add a fourth person on-shift 24/7. Pursuing a federal SAFER Act grant for three career personnel, for \$300,000 over four years should be a priority.

Paul: I think we addressed this once. Bob: The Chief addressed it. Paul: Yes he did. I think we brought it up there. I don't know how many times we have gone to structure fires without four people there. Are there any facts that prove that the majority of the structure fires that there at least four people there.

Chief: There is always more than four people there but it depends on do the four people arrive simultaneously. We don't track that. We respond with three but we can't track when the fourth person arrives. We can track by arrival times of other apparatus and we did this for the study when they talked about NFPA 1710. Paul: Let me ask you something Chief. Do you think it's feasible that most towns have that many people on the scene. I don't believe that it happens. Chief: I don't think that it does.

Kevin: You can't go into a building to do interior firefighting operations, you are supposed to have four firefighters on the scene so you have two in the structures and two able to rescue them. Kevin: Except in the event of an imminent rescue. If the guys pull up and see someone in the window, you can go in.

Chief: Correct. Bob: We can't fulfill this at this time as we don't have the space. We can't hire that personnel. Kevin: Is that the only solution? If the only solution is to hire someone else, we can't fulfill this at this time. Chief: It depends on the situation. You need to have four qualified people with air

packs on in order to meet that. Kevin: When you say qualified, are you alluding to a career person. Chief: Not necessarily. Kevin: Is there another solution to either answering that or doing something other than hiring another career person? Chief: Even with automatic responses, there can still be that delay before they get on the scene. The only way to put four people on the scene immediately would be to hire that fourth person. Even with the fourth person we can't guarantee that we can do that as two people could be on another call. Kevin: Do we need to put more resources time and training into call people? Chief: I don't think that's the way to look at it. The reason they put this into the report is that they don't want firefighters entering that atmosphere without firefighters being able to rescue them. It's nice to have 45 call members on the roster but you cannot guarantee you will get more than five at a call as they may be in class. You can't guarantee that those people will always be there. You can't guarantee that Brad and I will always be there. I may be in Concord or Brad could be out on an inspection. He can't guarantee that our people will go to a building fire in our town. Who's to say they are not on another call. Kevin: No matter what we do, something could come along to change that. Chief: We are not overstaffed. We are running on a shoestring and have to make decisions based on that. We now have this report that says that. Now it's as much pressure on me as on anyone. Sometimes you make a judgment call and stretch a line by yourself. Is that right? If you end up in the basement it was not right. Kevin: We are in the business of protecting life and property. Do we say that if we pull up to a fire and there is no one in there, we say no one goes in? Chief: If the public wants to know what our capabilities are, we are a one line fire department. Can we do more sometimes? Yes. We can guarantee that we can get to your fire and pull one line off the truck. A lot of the time other people show up and we get that second line out and the ladder truck out. We are a small town fire dept. That's how we operate. Bob: This is something we should strive for. It's not going to happen over night. We don't have anyplace to house them. Chief: We could apply for a grant but there is no guarantee. You guys have to buy into that as well as it's an escalating grant. Bob: It's something we should strive for eventually.

Chief: I think the selectmen only want to see a plan. They want to see what we are striving for. Kevin: That's how we should promote this to them. Chief: They had the conception that the commissioners are not going to listen to them. That's been going on for years. That's their perception, not the reality. The selectmen agreed they want to do the study on the fire department. They want to put pressure on the commissioners as that's only the way they are going to get the commissioners to react to them. Now they have done that. They are looking to see what the commissioner's reaction is. We can put them off but that's not our job. Our job is to answer the public. We should address the questions. We should address these issues and let them know what our plan is.

Bob: #2 is Failure to meet NFPA 1710 standard. This reference standard requires at least 13-15 firefighters to be assembled on scene in 8 minutes at least 90% of the time. The 15 personnel required are for the following functions: Incident Command; initial fire attack hose line; secondary fire attack hose line; search and rescue team; water supply team; ventilation of smoke and fire gases; and firefighter safety team. The Tilton-Northfield Fire Department cannot place 13-15 personnel on scene in 8 minutes, even if they utilize mutual aid. The solution is to utilize more mutual aid departments on automatic aid for reports of fire or smoke in buildings: increase on-call membership: and increase the number of career staff on-duty. Pursuing a federal SAFER Act grant to recruit and retain more on-call firefighters should occur.

Bob: Chief answered that that it is unattainable. Kevin: Does everyone do that? Chief: I don't believe that any one does. Kevin: Is it a reasonable standard? Chief: It's a national standard. Paul: Do that do that in big cities. Chief: Yes, I would say yes. Manchester, Concord, Dover probably do. That doesn't mean it's right. We all fight fire in a manner that gets us by. It doesn't mean it's a bad standard. Paul: Towns can't afford that. Chief: It's a system wide problem. Scott: I wouldn't say it's not affordable. It's unachievable. Chief: Reality, I don't think we could ever meet it here. You would have to have system wide changes. Scott: As a commission, we just stand behind the Chief's statement on that. Take that stance.

Bob: Next one is Less than Optimal Station Location and Deployment patterns.

Because the two fire stations in the District are about a mile apart, and concentrated in the business centers of Tilton and Northfield, the response times into east Tilton and southwest Northfield exceeds the standards of care for EMS and fire suppression. There used to be a volunteer fire station in Winnisquam (in east Tilton) that the District partially funded. The membership waned and eventually the Town of Belmont took it over. It now has limited availability through the Belmont Fire Department; however, response is constrained by a lack of on-call firefighters in the area. Even when it was staffed with volunteers, Tilton-Northfield firefighters consistently placed firefighters on the scenes of emergencies before Winnisquam arrived.

The solution to this station deployment issue is two-fold: relocate the Center Station to east Tilton; and retrofit the Park Street station with living quarters to accept a duty crew 24/7 to cover the business districts and most of Northfield.

Kevin: If we had nothing today and we were going to build those two stations, they would not be where they are. Park Street might be. You definitely wouldn't build one a mile away. But the fact of the matter is, that is what we have. It probably should be a little closer to code than it is. Is that building useless? Chief: Yes. It doesn't even have insulation in the walls. Kevin: You are talking \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 to build a new building and we have this one that doesn't owe us a cent. Can it be made into something? Chief: If you want to throw money away. Scott: You have a historical value you are going to bump up against. Chief: The other thing is, it may be a good theory having our apparatus in the middle of town but it's a horrible place to respond out of. Getting onto Main Street is terrible. The site is horrible. There are not a lot of options there. The other thing is it's heavy timber construction. We can't modify the stairs because the carrying timber is right under the top step. The floor on the apparatus floor is horrible. It's all caved in. Kevin: Has anyone given a thought as to what to do with it? Chief: PD has stated that there is room for us in Industrial Park. That would be fine for a substation but not headquarters. Paul: You did say once, that if you did have the option or such that you would like the offices and stuff down on park street. Chief: If Tilton decides they are going to do something on Business Park Drive, I would rather have the headquarters on Park Street. There are more options there. Kevin: His preference would be something on Route 3. Chief: At least that's a direction or goal. If a piece of property comes up that would be something to consider. Scott: Then you have made a definite statement. If we are going to exit 20 then we want visibility. Options, that's what you are looking at. Chief: Rumor has it that MB Tractor is going to be for sale pretty soon. Scott: Building is for sale now. \$3.2 million. Chief: Who knows what's going to happen with J Jill. That old Tilton Sand & Gravel would be an awesome site for a fire station. They are having some difficulty. I don't think it would be improper to say we should reestablish the building committee and start seriously looking for sites for a station. That would be a step in the right direction at least.

Bob: #4. Inability to answer simultaneous emergencies, whether fire or EMS

This is due mainly to the fact that there is only 3 personnel on-duty. At least with 4 personnel on-duty, two EMS calls could be answered immediately, or an EMS and fire call together. Relocating/renovating fire stations alone will not solve the lengthy response times if there are insufficient personnel on-duty available to answer the emergency calls. The level of staffing is the primary reason that the District has experienced some delayed responses to emergency calls. In the absence of optimally positioned stations, had the level of staffing been sufficient to immediately staff two units, the response time of the first due piece of apparatus would have been dramatically reduced. Presently 26% of all responses involve overlapping or simultaneous calls. This means that when the on-duty crew is assigned to an incident a second incident occurs 26% of the time.

Bob: This goes back to #1. Kevin: There has to be something said for the 74% that it's not an issue. Chief: The simple answer is that the majority of our calls happen Monday through Friday. Bob: Hiring the extra 3 firefighters would help solve that. That's something we are going to work toward. It's not going to happen overnight. Chief: There is talk of a petitioned warrant article to add the 4<sup>th</sup> person per shift. We have to be prepared to say that we don't have any place to house time. The comment was

made that it looks like a lot of these items could be taken care of with one more person. If that happens we may have to go with portable housing. Scott: What the Chief is saying is if the commissioners come with a game plan. Let the people know that we would like the fourth person but we don't have a place to house them and we would like to address that before we get to that point. You could end up with portable housing for a long time just like the school did with the portable classroom. The commissioners have to have what they want for a position, how they want to go forward.

Bob: The next one is the training program. The Chief has taken care of that. Kevin: Taken care of it how? Chief: Basically all of our training is tailored after national standards. The key point that I took out of that is they want us using lesson plans and teaching off them for each class. We discussed that at one of our training committee meetings and we are going to start drawing up lesson plans for our trainings and at least have some objectives. That way if someone is out, you can still hold the training. If someone misses training, it can be delivered the same way. Kevin: So #5 has to do with training.

Bob: #6. The aerial ladder should be the next major piece of fire apparatus purchased by the District. We all realize that. Kevin: What are we to make of that report? On one page it says we don't need one and then on another page it says we need a brand new one. Chief: Wasn't that an average of what other departments had and they said zero. Kevin: Yes. Chief: I thought they pointed out in the report that we do need one just based on some of the structures that we have in the community. I think that if you look at the ISO requirements you will see that we do need a ladder truck based on their requirements. We do have built up areas in the community and we do have structures over two stories tall. That is the way I took it. The average they took of similar communities averaged out to less than .5 so they said 0. Bob: I think we all know that will be next piece of equipment we need to replace. Kevin: What do we replace it with? Bob: I don't know. Certainly not a new one. Chief: We'll get just what we have now.

Bob: The next one is master planning. The Chief says "I whole-heartedly agree that the department should be involved in both community's master planning process. We should also be involved at a much lower, more basic level as well. For example, the department should be involved with planning and zoning issued."

Bob: They never come to you or Brad before they go ahead. Chief: They do, but it's very minimal. We get a sheet that says this is what's going on do you have any comments. Bob: Sometimes some businesses move in before you know it. Chief: Right. Neither community has a good site plan review process where they get all the players together and discuss the site plan before it even goes to the planning board. That would be beneficial. Kevin: So you feel this is more of a town issue than a fire district. Chief: We are involved in it. We suffer the consequences sometimes. A lot of times we come in at the end being the bad guys where they say no one told us we had to do that. Well, there is no process to tell them that. It's up to the builder or contractor to come in and discuss that with us. Scott: As the water district we will be addressing that in 09. Chief: As a district we need to work on planning in the district as well. It will be hard for us to answer anyone else's questions unless we have our own vision on where we are going to go. Kevin: What do you think when it comes to that building code and enforcing it and stuff. What about putting that on the towns to make sure that people do what they are supposed to do when they are building. Chief: I would rather have the building inspector be a civilian employee of the fire district. You would have building and fire working side by side with consistency across the board in both communities. Kevin: If it could work that way, why wouldn't it work the other way. Chief: Because you are not going to get a lay person that can enforce fire codes. You're not to get that expertise. Kevin: If it was in the fire district, we would have another employee. Chief: You would but the towns would drop an employee. Scott: It would have to be set up the same way as the library. He would be housed at the fire station and would go out and do whatever needed to be done. Chief: We already have the taxing in place. Kevin: Is that allowed? Is it done? Chief: Franklin does that. Chuck does all of the building inspections as well as fire. I don't know if he is the health officer as well. He has an assistant. Bob: That's another issue.

TNFD Commissioner's Meeting Minutes  
January 19, 2009

Motion made to adjourn by Bob and seconded by Paul. Vote was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine, Administrative Assistant

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

January 26, 2009 at 18:00 at Northfield Town Hall with selectmen of the  
Towns of Tilton and Northfield