



Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS

Stephen M. Carrier, Chief
Michael Robinson, Deputy Chief

Comprehensive Facilities Review Committee Meeting July 13, 2009

Commissioner Waldron called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

Present: Commissioner Paul Auger, Commissioner Tom Gallant and Commissioner Kevin Waldron, Chief Stephen Carrier, Tilton Selectman Sandy Plessner, Northfield Selectman Steve Bluhm, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine.

Commissioner Waldron welcomed Tilton Selectman Sandy Plessner & Northfield Selectmen Steve Bluhm. He then asked Commissioner Gallant if he had a format in mind.

Commissioner Gallant handed out the outline he had prepared to use as a guide. He then explained that this is the same outline that went to the towns in letter format.

Commissioner Gallant: I thought the first order of business would be to appoint chairman of the committee. I set this in an outline form of areas I felt we should be looking at. I thought we could possibly take a look at it as a group and determine whether there are items in there that should not be there, items that should be highlighted and items that may have been omitted that should be in there. As far as the chairman is concerned, a member of our board should be the chairman of the committee.

Commissioner Gallant: I nominate Kevin Waldron.

Commissioner Auger: I second the nomination.

Commissioner Waldron: Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, vote was taken. All were in favor.

Commissioner Waldron: Commissioner Gallant is there anything here that you feel shouldn't be or should be added?

Commissioner Gallant: No. I drew it up over a period of time and I think I've covered most everything that I feel needs to be covered. I would add that items on the outline are not necessarily in the order of importance. We may want to take a look at them and set a direction to move in. There are some items on there that require some research that the Chief can help us with and so forth.

Commissioner Waldron: Has everyone had a chance to review this prior to this meeting?

Sandy Plessner: No, not prior. I'm just going over it now.

Steve Bluhm: I have one question I don't know if you want to throw it out here or not. I wouldn't mind going back to the history of how we became or the mindset of how we became a 24/7 district. In 2005 we went from on call to 24/7. What was the mindset of the

meetings? That was my first year in office. I don't know how you guys came to that from 2004 to 2005.

Commissioner Waldron: We had a full time day shift.

Chief Carrier: They had day coverage for years.

Commissioner Auger: They had Gina and Mike Summerset. Then they hired Bob. Mike was there first.

Chief Carrier: Wasn't Milton there first?

Commissioner Auger: We don't need to go back that far.

Steve Bluhm: Personally, I am just looking to get it put on. Whether or not we want to discuss right now is fine.

Commissioner Auger: That's how it started. It started with Mike Summerset then Gina then Bob.

Steve Bluhm: Obviously calls were a factor. Actually they have all been about the same. Basically we were getting bigger. Wasn't one of the key reasons too that Winnisquam failing at the time and we were looking for better response time.

Commissioner Auger: That was not the only reason. The reason is during day there were a lot of people worked at Wyman Gordon that had permission to leave for calls. Then it got so that fewer and fewer people that were on the fire department worked there. They had to do something because there was a shortage during the day. I think that is when they started to look into hiring full time people.

Commissioner Waldron: You are looking for history for what?

Steve Bluhm: The decision process from 2004 basically to 2005. Here we are in a decision process of possibly going to two stations, two people 24/7. We have a big think tank here and that's what we are putting together. The question is what was the thinking to make the call to go to the first 24/7?

Chief Carrier: Do you want me to answer that right now?

Commissioner Gallant: Yes, you are part of the committee.

Chief Carrier: The thought process was to increase the number of full time people on duty to 24 hours a day and to reduce response times. A lot of it was based on response times. If you had 24 hour coverage at night when the call people were covering from home you had a built in five minute delay in response time. So we were able to diminish that. Data proved that over the years or at least in the first year that we kept close track of that it was obvious that during the night we dropped five minutes off the response time. That was the reason we went to full time 24/7.

Steve Bluhm: That's a process that was going on for years before too. That would be like a five year period of thinking of boy we have to think about changing over to 24/7 because we have this five minute lack. It just didn't happen in 2004.

Chief Carrier: In 2003, the commissioners told me when I was hired that they felt they were five years behind. They wanted 24/7 five years before I was there.

Commissioner Gallant: All that can be part of the discussion under the bullet that says detailed review of personnel, present and future as that could well affect facilities needs.

Steve Bluhm: My first year on the board was 2005. I'm just trying to get myself a time line here as to the reasoning behind it.

Discussion ensued about response times.

Commissioner Waldron: Is there anything else anyone would like to add or take away.

Commissioner Gallant: I think that with this facilities review is that the outline is not necessarily in order. A good place to start is the current use of the existing facilities. What are we using them for? What are their strengths, their weaknesses relative to the physical structure, relative to their physical location things of that nature?

Commissioner Waldron: Do we want to go through the list and place a number on it to prioritize it?

Commissioner Gallant: It certainly is not clear to all of us in every regard what the two facilities are currently being used for and what their strengths and their weaknesses are. The Chief can probably tell us more about that than anybody else. We have our perception but again I think we have to deal with reality. My suggestion is that maybe that would be a start and then we can branch out from there.

Commissioner Waldron: It would also be the first item on this list.

Commissioner Gallant: I think it's a great place to start.

Commissioner Waldron: I would agree if for no other reason than you need to know what you have before you can go on. So are we agreed that number one will be Facilities Review?

Chief Carrier: I have copies of a Life Safety Inspection that was done by Captain Ober last September and also a Workplace Safety/Usability Inspection done by an Internal Building Committee that was done in May of last year if you want copies of that. Chief Carrier then passed out copies to everyone.

Steve Bluhm: Are we looking to review everything at the meeting or are we looking to do one thing at a time.

Commissioner Waldron: I think we should go through the list and set a priority then start with number one and move through the numbers.

Commissioner Gallant: I would think that part and parcel of that would be important for us to again do the apparatus we currently have. What is anticipated within the next five to fifteen years? Chief, you have a capital improvement plan correct?

Chief Carrier: I do, but I don't have copies of it with me tonight.

Commissioner Gallant: I understand that. Basically what I am saying is that when we look at facilities we have to make sure the facilities accommodate the equipment we currently have. How we foresee it accommodating equipment that we anticipate in the next five to fifteen years.

Commissioner Waldron: Certainly any new facility would need to be able to house any new equipment in the future.

Commissioner Gallant: So again, we need to acclimate ourselves to the physical structures, acclimate ourselves as a group to the physical assets that are housed there. I personally would do that as number two.

Steve Bluhm: Are we talking about just apparatus?

Commissioner Gallant: Yes. The second bullet a detailed review of the major apparatus needs in the next five to fifteen years.

Sandy Plessner: So that would be number two?

Steve Bluhm: I thought personnel would probably go next. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Gallant: This would also be a good time to look at the Chief's capital improvement plan.

Commissioner Waldron: The Commissioners do not have copy.

Steve Bluhm: The Chief has a capital improvement plan?

Commissioner Gallant: I just think this would be an opportune time for us to take a look at it. Do you want to make personnel second?

Steve Bluhm: I don't care. It's all going to be talked about anyway.

Sandy Plessner: I agree. Everything is going to be talked about. I feel a little bit at a disadvantage. You know a little bit better than I do the order in which you rank the importance in your own departments. It's my understanding from everything that I have read about the fire department that the issues that I saw from reading minutes and different meetings that you have had that obviously personnel is an issue and understanding what you are going to need, what you have now, where you are going to put this personnel. Can you put them somewhere where they are available if you are going to be 24/7? If you are going to be 24/7 you have got to have a place like what was brought up before of putting sleep rooms in Park Street. I feel that has to be looked at. As far as the response times and also your locations, I know that Park Street is a wonderful location and you have the ability there to expand somewhat if that is what you need to do. Center Street, other than maybe just office space, I think that you have kind of outgrown that location. I know that you are still using it but it is really cramped there and getting in and out onto the Main Street to get anywhere is, I'm sure at times, quite a significant problem. This is kind of my understanding, the things I need clarified. I understand we are not going to come up with anything other than suggestions of what we found after we have discussed all this and done our investigations. It would certainly be up to all of the Fire District itself to decide which direction they want to go. As far as locations, if we are going to look at areas that would make an excellent location for a second station if we could find a location on a main route where you would have easy access on and off. If I am looking at this incorrectly, please let me know. This is kind of the idea in my mind of what we were going to accomplish so you would have recommendations that would hopefully work for this District that you would want to use.

Commissioner Waldron: I think you are right. So we have to decide if apparatus or personnel are going to be second.

Commissioner Auger: I believe that we have more than adequate apparatus right now.

Commissioner Waldron: We need to look ahead. The highest frequency of replacement we have would be the ambulances?

Chief Carrier: Yes.

Commissioner Waldron: That has to be done within the next two or three years doesn't it?

Chief Carrier: Yes. We are trying to space it out so that every five years we are buying an ambulance now. We keep an ambulance for ten years. We purchased one in 2002 and then 2006.

Commissioner Waldron: So that would be 2011.

Commissioner Auger: Do we have the apparatus that most departments have?

Chief Carrier: We have enough apparatus when everything is in service. It depends on where you go and what their needs are. Most places have four engines. Franklin has three engines, a ladder and rescue so it's pretty comparable. In my opinion, we don't have an excess of equipment. We have equipment that allows us to do the job and allows us

some built in safety so if we have something go down we can bump something up to take its place but then we have to rely on mutual aid to fill in that spot.

Commissioner Waldron: Have we made arrangements with another town?

Chief Carrier: Nothing specific. The officers are aware of the situation. They would be more apt to call quicker.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Waldron: Is personnel second or apparatus second? I don't see where it makes a bit of difference.

Steve Bluhm: Personnel would have to go toward the building because you need to know how many bunks, how many rooms. That's the only way I would look at it.

Commissioner Gallant: If you want to put personnel number two, put personnel number two. It doesn't make a bit of difference.

Commissioner Auger: No it really doesn't matter.

Commissioner Gallant: Is that what we want to do? Two for personnel number two and three for equipment. The only thing remaining is Administrative Offices.

Commissioner Waldron: Administrative Offices location and review of Pro's and Con's of a "Life Safety Complex." I would think Administrative Offices would come before Pro's and Con's. So A Review of where the Administrative Offices should be located will be number four. That leaves five for A Review of the Pro's and Con's of a "Life Safety Complex".

Commissioner Waldron: Do we want to set length of time for our meetings?

Commissioner Gallant: Yes. I think it should be limited to three hours.

Steve Bluhm: How many meetings are you going to have a month?

Commissioner Gallant: We will have meetings every two weeks until we get through this. If that takes us six weeks, it takes six weeks. Whatever amount of time it takes.

Sandy Plessner: So every two weeks?

Commissioner Gallant: That would be my idea, yes.

Commissioner Waldron: I don't want to spend forever on it. The quicker we can do it. I do however have a conflict two weeks from tonight.

Commissioner Gallant: So, we can just pick another date. It was just my idea. If we met every two weeks for a period of two to three hours each time I would think within six to eight meetings we should have this thing pretty well buttoned up.

Commissioner Waldron: Is everyone ok with three hours?

All agreed.

Steve Bluhm: The Life Safety Building Committee is way past where they need to be. This committee here is based on what direction they go. One of the main reasons for the complex is because there is free money out there. Free money also means that you build them both at the same time. They have to be ready to change facilities right away.

Sandy Plessner: That's true but I've looked at this whole thing as I thought part of the problem was the fact when that originally got started the Fire District was told they were going to be part of life safety building whether they really wanted to be or not. They weren't really given any say in the direction it should go, where the property should be located. They were just sort of told when all was said and done that this is what we are going to do and you are going to like it. It didn't work out that way obviously. The new committee that they have over there working, although they are looking for something that

would encompass everything, at this point until this committee gets started and does something they are still concentrating more on police.

Commissioner Gallant: They are well aware of the fact that this committee will move at its own speed and come up with its recommendations. They are forging ahead and looking at property. There are similar interests as to where the property could be located. They are fully aware of the fact that it is not as sensitive for police to respond from a specific location as it is fire because they are out in their cruisers. It's been said many times. You are right, Steve, until this committee makes a decision they currently have an RFP for and for an architect engineer. That architect engineer specifically outlines what they are looking for and that is going to be either the design of a stand alone police station and/or retrofitting an existing building and/or a life safety complex. It would be a life safety complex which is two independent buildings connected by some common area. They are well aware of that. I don't want this committee to get hung up on life safety complexes. That's not what we are here for. Let's move ahead and do something. Time is of the essence for us now. I think the District, as represented by the two boards of selectmen, has said loud and clear that it's in your hands boys do something with it.

Commissioner Waldron: Just for explanation to me, what is the difference between a life safety building and a life safety complex?

Commissioner Gallant: A complex is more than one building connected by a common area. A life safety building would be one structure. Mike Robinson has offered to visit various life safety complexes and life safety buildings while traveling the state. It will be left open for anybody who wants to go take a look at them to go ahead and do so. That wouldn't be just committee members. It would be open to the general public.

Sandy Plessner: I would like to ask the commissioners a question so I know what I'm really trying to accomplish here. How do you, other than this committee discovering what it is our needs are and which direction you want to take the District in the future, feel as commissioners about having a life safety building or life safety complex? Is this something you would consider? You really don't want to get involved with it? You'd rather do your own thing. This is important to really know for when we are coming up with different ideas.

Commissioner Gallant: From my perception, I can't answer that question. I can answer it from a personal standpoint but I can't answer it as a representative for the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners, in conjunction with representatives from both of the select boards, has not yet studied the needs of this District. It may well be that once we establish what these needs are that we can't afford to go it alone. Then we are going to have to say what better way can we accommodate it. I don't think anybody should enter this thing with a completely closed mind as to whether we should or should not be part of a life safety complex.

Sandy Plessner: Then really I would assume that our duty here is to come up with what your priorities are and if you are going to consider a complex at all that your priorities also have to be met on anything to go forward that way.

Commissioner Gallant: Do you want to start by taking a look at what we have for facilities?

Sandy Plessner: Yes.

Commissioner Waldron: I have a couple of questions on the inspection reports that Chief Carrier gave us. Are we under any warnings or notices from OSHA?

Chief Carrier: Not that I know of.

Commissioner Waldron: Have they been in?

Chief Carrier: Not OSHA. The Dept of Labor comes in annually. Usually they inspect our pressure vessels. They have in the past written up things like there is no shield on the grinder or something like that. It hasn't been anything major.

Commissioner Waldron: There are no outstanding issues with anything?

Chief Carrier: Not that I'm aware of.

Steve Bluhm: Is this just for Center Street or is the second for Park Street?

Chief Carrier: They are both Center Street.

Commissioner Waldron: Do we have anything like this on Park Street?

Chief Carrier: No because they didn't really do a life safety as there are no living quarters there. Mike and Tom Beaulieu came up with a list of repairs that need to be made. I don't have it with me.

Commissioner Waldron: Mike Robinson?

Chief Carrier: Yes.

Commissioner Waldron: The Plymovent, is that the exhaust?

Chief Carrier: Yes.

Commissioner Auger: That's new isn't it?

Chief Carrier: I think we got the grant for that in 2003. It might have been in 04.

Commissioner Waldron: It was installed blocking window?

Chief Carrier: It was an office at the time.

Commissioner Waldron: Are these on the bulleted list life safety violations?

Chief Carrier: It's a combination of things. They did more of an inspection. They are on safety loss committee so they were looking for hazards more than anything. I think they threw in some of the same things that Brad discussed. I think they talked about the stairs.

Commissioner Waldron: I think some of the things are easily corrected and some need to be addressed.

Steve Bluhm: Do you have anything from builder or building inspector?

Chief Carrier: No. You will see that Brad said at the end of report he would suggest getting ADA Compliance Inspection and also a building code inspection.

Commissioner Waldron: The location of the bunk room is non compliant. Didn't we build that? We built it non compliant?

Commissioner Gallant: What other choice did we have? We didn't do it, the men did it. They volunteered. There was only one place to put it.

Steve Bluhm: I understand that. That's what we are trying to say here about putting the cart before the horse. We will fix it this time, hopefully.

Commissioner Gallant: Again, where would you put the quarters? There was a need to go 24/7.

Steve Bluhm: I don't know. Probably the same place. Some of this is as simple as buying the right drywall. I haven't looked at it, I don't know.

Chief Carrier: It might be worth taking tour of both facilities.

Commissioner Waldron: The bunk room was built in response to the failure of the project on Park Street.

Chief Carrier: The original plan was that if we were to have the addition on Park Street, we were going to put people in there. There were going to be living quarters built there. The need still remained to go to 24 hour coverage so what other options did we have. We even talked about putting up a temporary trailer type living quarters attached to Park Street at the time or do we just make do with what we have at Center Street.

Commissioner Waldron: When the plan for Park Street was promoted there wasn't living quarters at Center Street. Was part of that plan for Park Street to retrofit Center Street as well?

Chief Carrier: No.

Commissioner Waldron: It was all going to be Park Street.

Commissioner Gallant: Would administrative offices been done there?

Chief Carrier: Yes, it would have been a complete move. Basically Center Street would have become a substation.

Sandy Plessner: Where do you feel would be a good area to locate if moved or closed the Center Street station and had a new facility. Where do you feel it would be best located, the general area.

Chief Carrier: I have always said that if we closed Center Street for whatever or vacated it that we should look to be going toward exit 20 somewhere. If we could someday have a fourth person on shift and we had living quarters in each station that would allow us to split the shift and have two in each station which would reduce your response times of the initial responding apparatus.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Waldron: On this particular sheet it says pick up bay roof caving in.

Chief Carrier: That has been fixed.

Commissioner Waldron: If we went into a building and did an inspection and came up with all these. What would happen?

Chief Carrier: We would probably try to impress upon them how dangerous their building is. We look for them to come up with a plan to show us that they were serious about improving their property. If was something as serious as a building having no smoke detectors whatsoever, we would probably give them 24 hours to get a smoke detector or close the building down or a portion of it whatever it may be. That's what I said to Tom before when we got done looking at them. We are our own worst enemies sometimes. We are out enforcing this but we don't do any of it ourselves.

Commissioner Waldron: We tell people they can't run a building without exit signs and egress lighting yet here we are.

Commissioner Gallant: I think the ADA noncompliance is also a very large item.

Chief Carrier: I think it is too. We have a Budget Committee member that is wheelchair bound and he can't even get into our stations.

Commissioner Gallant: I think, as an example, when Janine left and her position was advertised we automatically precluded anyone that had a physical handicap from taking that job. Kathy tomorrow could go in for an operation which landed her in a wheelchair and she would lose her job because of it. I think that's a pretty serious infraction.

Sandy Plessner: Short of putting in an elevator for Center Street, what else could you do?

Commissioner Waldron: There are some side notes that say no emergency power and no floor drains. Aren't floor drains unlawful?

Chief Carrier: They are unless you do them the right way. You can put an oil water separator in.

Commissioner Waldron: Do we have that at Park Street?

Chief Carrier: Yes.

Commissioner Waldron: Do we have emergency power at Park Street?

Chief Carrier: No.

Sandy Plessner: No back up generators?

Chief Carrier: No.

Commissioner Waldron: Does the Highway Dept. have a generator?

Steve Bluhm: Yes.

Commissioner Gallant: The Sewer Dept. has generators. Can they hook up to the station?

Chief Carrier: No. We don't have any transfer switches or anything. We could use it if we had to but obviously they would need it as well.

Steve Bluhm: By rights the only thing you have to worry about is heat. You can open up the doors by hand.

Commissioner Waldron: You need it for lighting and radio communications. I can't believe there wasn't one put in Park Street.

Commissioner Waldron: At what point do we want to view the buildings?

Chief Carrier: We can do it now if you want.

Commissioner Waldron: Going there, I fully expect, will raise questions and will provide a boatload of answers. Anyone have issues going to Center Street and Park Street.

Commissioner Gallant: The bottom line is if you look at a lot of the things that are on there and once you look at the building, it isn't worth putting any money into Center Street. We have already come to that conclusion. Then we said well we had no choice but to put money into the floor because we may possibly end up losing an engine.

Commissioner Waldron: I don't know that it was a consensus of the board that the building wasn't worthwhile.

Commissioner Gallant: I though that was long since reached but evidently you didn't.

Sandy Plessner: How do the Commissioners feel about Center Street? Is it something you even want to contemplate keeping or are you more looking that you are going to need different facilities for now and the future.

Commissioner Gallant: In my mind, both as a commissioner in charge of the people's money and as an individual, it isn't worth putting any money into that building. The building has outlived its service. I don't know how these gentlemen feel. That is my opinion.

Chief Carrier: I can't imagine if you tried some type of renovation there I would think you would just open a can of worms. It would cost you more than what it is worth.

Sandy Plessner: There is no room for expansion there.

Chief Carrier: It is a very small footprint. Most of the property is in the rear.

Commissioner Auger: I have mixed feelings about it. As of right now I'll keep feelings to myself.

Commissioner Waldron: Before I agree to build any new building, I want to see exactly what we have. If it can be kept, we will keep it. If it can't, we won't. Just because it's however old it is and where it is doesn't mean we still can't use it.

Commissioner Gallant: If there is anyone in favor of salvaging any old buildings anywhere in this county, it is me but that building has outlived its use as a fire station. I'm not saying it should be torn down, I'm just simply saying you cannot bring into compliance for any reasonable amount of money.

Commissioner Waldron: Do you think it will cost more to do that than build a new building in the long run?

Commissioner Gallant: Yes. It cannot economically be done.

Steve Bluhm: One of the thoughts I had from the start way back when was it could be modified in conjunction with Park Street. Completely move all the offices out of Center Street and make the upstairs floor nothing but dorm space. Of course the question comes down to how much is this going to cost? Is it worth it?

Commissioner Gallant: The fact of the matter is you still have all the combustible equipment on the first floor with people living above.

Steve Bluhm: What flammables do we have?

Chief Carrier: Vehicles are the biggest hazard of course along with all the hazards you have in your own home. You have cleaning materials, washer, dryer, storage areas.

Commissioner Gallant: You would definitely have to sprinkle the building. It definitely should be sprinkled now.

Steve Bluhm: Is that what we are going to do? Go to Center Street, Park Street and then call it or do you think we will have time to come back?

Commissioner Gallant: It's 7:15 now.

Commissioner Waldron: I don't expect to come back.

All members of the Comprehensive Facilities Review Committee left to go view the two stations.

Center Street was the first stop. The property lines, the railroad right-of-way, parking and street access were discussed. Chief Carrier gave a tour of the facility pointing out various features and answering questions.

Sandy Plessner gave Kathy a copy of the tax card and deed for Center Street and a copy of the tax card for Park Street.

We then continued to Park Street. Chief Carrier gave a tour of the facility pointing out the floor drain, the heat and other features. The heat in the building is gas fired ceiling heaters. He answered questions. The Fire Station Construction Grant the Chief applied for was also discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: July 16, 2009 at 18:00. Meeting to be held at Tilton School, new Academic Building, School Street, First Floor, Ninth Grade Classroom, Tilton.

Approved on: August 30, 2009