



# *Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS*

Stephen M. Carrier, Chief  
Michael Robinson, Deputy Chief

---

## Comprehensive Facilities Review Committee Meeting August 3, 2009

Commissioner Waldron called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

Present: Commissioner Paul Auger, Commissioner Tom Gallant and Commissioner Kevin Waldron, Chief Stephen Carrier, Tilton Selectman Sandy Plessner, Northfield Selectman Steve Bluhm, Tilton Selectman Pat Consentino, Scott Davis, Vince Paratore.

### July 13, 2009 Minutes

*Kevin Waldron:* Minutes were skipped due to not everyone having a copy. They will be reviewed at the next meeting.

### Agenda

*Kevin Waldron:* We don't have a printed agenda but we do have a path to follow.

*Tom Gallant:* I updated the outline in the order into which we wanted to review them. The outline was then passed out to everyone.

### Call Volume Presentation

*Kevin Waldron:* Do you know when Deputy Robinson is going to give the presentation on call volumes and locations?

*Tom Gallant:* Anytime we want him to come. He can do it in conjunction with Ben LaBelle bringing the overhead. We can do that at the very next meeting. I can make arrangements if you would like.

*Kevin Waldron:* All right.

### I. Facilities Review

*Tom Gallant:* When we last met, we left here and reviewed both stations. I would be interested to know what observations individuals had as they viewed both of those stations, particularly the folks that are not commissioners. If we are going to discuss strengths and weaknesses, impressions are also important.

*Sandy Plessner:* I thought Park Street looked pretty good. I vaguely remember the plan that was taken to a District meeting before about putting sleeping quarters there. It looks like it would be easy enough to do that. It is my understanding that the District does have plans.

Center Street, I wish I could be more positive about it. It just seems to me that an awful lot of work is needed there to bring it up to just the safety standards that we have today. The sleeping quarters in there are like a big can for sardines. It's unbelievable that our firemen have to be like that. It seems to me that the building is going to require a lot of

work; foundation work, work interior. I'm sure most of the wiring needs to be updated. If you go by the list we were given, there are a lot of safety features that are not in the building that really belong in the building. We wouldn't allow a commercial entity in the Town to do anything like that. In my mind, you have to weigh what it would cost to bring that building up to today's standards for safety and whether it's really worth it because you don't really have any room there to expand. You can go up but that's about it. You don't have any room to go out. Everything that I have looked at so far would indicate to me that the District might be better off looking for another location.

*Steve Bluhm:* I feel basically the same way. My observation with Center Street is that if it was built 20 years ago pushed up on the street the way it is it would probably be perfect but it's not. Again, once you get in there and look at it what we are doing to our firefighters as what is called sleeping quarters is embarrassing. It's rough. Of course the almighty question is, can it be fixed and for what. Is there really an issue with pulling out of it? It looks like there is. It's a mess. Is it worth overhauling it? I don't know. What would it cost for someone to look at it to bring it up to code? It's a fire trap. The stairs aren't to code. Could that be changed out? I don't know. By first response standards it's perfect. It holds one engine and one ambulance. That's about all it is.

Discussion ensued between Sandy Plessner and Steve Bluhm about possible renovations and cost.

*Sandy Plessner:* I would be interested to hear what the Commissioners thoughts are.

*Kevin Waldron:* I think the building is a mess but I'm not going to throw it away. It definitely needs a lot of work. As far as relocating for the benefit of anyone in Northfield, the only people that talk about relocating for the benefit of Northfield are people in Tilton. How much growth have we had? Hope much growth will we have in the next 15 years?

Discussion ensued regarding potential growth.

*Sandy Plessner:* Depending on what the Life Safety Committee comes up with, is this something that the Commissioners would consider as far as some kind of a life safety complex? Say, sharing the cost so that it might be more spread out so it wouldn't be such a great burden at any one time. If we went for one larger piece of land and you each had your own area on that piece of land.

*Kevin Waldron:* Are you talking about bonding money?

*Sandy Plessner:* If that's what we have to do, yes.

*Kevin Waldron:* I would not support bonding money personally.

*Steve Bluhm:* It also still comes down to the time frame on how we are planning this out too. Not everything needs to be done right now or in the same year. If it does, then we are talking bonding and you would have to bond heavily. We have \$200,000 in it now. It needs to be planned out a little better. There are a lot of things to look at.

*Tom Gallant:* I will answer your question. As far as I'm concerned, Center Street is in the wrong place. Park Street is in the right place. When Deputy Robinson gives his presentation and certainly when you see the five year numbers overlaid on a map of the District put together you will find that it is in the wrong place for purposes of response to areas east of Exit 20. Optimum location would be directly east of Exit 20. My perception for a long time has been that Center Street, even if it were in the right place, would not be cost justifiable to try to upgrade that building. The living quarters are a real problem. My feeling is that the general consensus of everybody coming out of joint meetings between

Commissioners and both Boards of Selectmen is that Center Street would be gone. Everybody there might not have agreed but it was the general consensus. That's my feeling. As far as commenting on the life safety complex, we have just barely started to scratch the surface of our own needs so I think we have to come up with an independent plan. If that plan leads us in the direction where we are willing to listen, then so be it.

*Paul Auger:* My feeling is that Park Street is the place to start. There is plenty of room down there. It's easy access to I-93 in both directions. In the future if a piece of land did come up, say within five to ten years, then we have the option to build a sub-station. You are right something needs to be done with Center Street Station. Whether we do away with it or renovate it, something has to be done. It is bad. Myself, I think I would rather see us go to Park Street and put an addition on; have all the sleeping quarters and everything down there, all the people down there. In the future, not next year but maybe in five to ten years, look for a piece of land for a sub-station.

*Kevin Waldron:* If you put an addition on Park Street and it becomes headquarters, which would include sleeping quarters, you have just increased the response time to East Tilton. You didn't diminish it, you didn't keep it the same, you decreased it.

*Paul Auger:* You sure have. The reason you do that is because by having one station like that during the day if there is a back to back call. As it is now, I believe the Chief and whoever at the station for the second call has to travel down to Park Street to get apparatus and then respond. You are talking what, four to five minutes extra time. It could be that or more.

*Tom Gallant:* So what would be the difference if they are at Park Street? They would have to go to Center Street to pick up some equipment wouldn't they?

*Paul Auger:* I didn't say Center Street. I said do away with it. All go down to Park Street. Have one station.

Discussion ensued between Paul Auger and Tom Gallant regarding response times.

*Kevin Waldron:* Just so I'm clear, you are saying put an addition on Park Street and all the equipment goes over there.

*Paul Auger:* Yes.

*Kevin Waldron:* So we need a bigger apparatus bay.

*Paul Auger:* Or do away with some equipment.

*Kevin Waldron:* A meeting room, a kitchen, sleeping quarters. Am I on the same page with you?

*Paul Auger:* Yes. That's the way I see it.

*Sandy Plessner:* Access to I-93 is limited.

Discussion ensued regarding I-93 access.

*Pat Consentino:* You are opening yourself up to quite a liability if close down Center Street and put everything in Park Street even on a temporary basis. I cannot see you creating the same amount of response time to the East Tilton area as you do with Center Street.

*Paul Auger:* You will probably gain time on some calls

*Pat Consentino:* On some calls but it's going to be that one call that you are going to be liable for. I would not want to venture to guess what would happen.

*Tom Gallant:* Let's hear from the Chief. He's a member of this committee.

*Chief Carrier:* It's kind of hard to be objective. It's always been my point of view that a station somewhere east of Exit 20 in the vicinity of the Tilton Sand building would be ideal. It just seems to make sense when you step back and look at the District and you look at call volumes and you look at the areas where the response times in East Tilton has a big gap. Whether you like the results of the study or not, the study was done and told us that this is where our areas. In looking at that, if we were to put a station somewhere up there and if it's a sub-station or the headquarters we will have to figure out what's best for the District on where the headquarters are located. Either way, it's going to allow for that first piece of apparatus to get to the scene more quickly.

I think Tom's right. I went to the last Life Safety Building Committee Meeting and saw that data that Ben had. It was impressive to see the coverage the District has. It would be beneficial to put a station somewhere east of Exit 20 and have the station on Park Street so not just East Tilton benefits. As far as the station and the condition that it is in, in the short term if we do not move out of Center Street, we really need a second means of egress out of the sleeping quarters. A simple fire escape if nothing else would serve the situation. It would be my recommendation if we had the opportunity to do something with the life safety complex or if we were going to build something new that would be where the headquarters would be located. That would give us more flexibility if starting from scratch.

*Tom Gallant:* That's why personally in looking at sites with a building on it you might as well tear the building down as it's difficult to build around it. You might as well start with a clean slate.

*Steve Bluhm:* It's not that I can say anything as I'm not privy to any of the properties or anything. So obviously they have been thinking about a piece of land with a building on it that they want to demolish.

*Tom Gallant:* No we are not. We have looked at 19 pieces of property and some of them have buildings on them and some don't.

*Paul Auger:* I think also though Tom if you look at a piece of property with a house on it you may be limited on how big you can go. You may be limited to just a police department because there may not be room enough for the apparatus for the fire department.

*Tom Gallant:* That's why they are looking at pieces of property that have a minimum of three buildable acres. Five is actually the bench mark.

*Kevin Waldron:* So they are considering three more?

*Tom Gallant:* That's correct.

*Steve Bluhm:* Chief, When you are looking at starting from scratch in East Tilton are you talking about holding all the apparatus that is in Park Street or are you still just three bays and at that point what do we do with Park Street if we have a place that will hold 10 vehicles or eight vehicles or whatever's there?

*Chief Carrier:* No, even if it was the headquarters station, I wouldn't move the majority of the vehicles there because we don't have call people that live in that area of town. That is one of the downfalls of that area.

*Steve Bluhm:* One of the options that you are looking at is two people in each station 24/7.

*Chief Carrier:* That's right. That would allow us to have a lot of flexibility with what we do.

*Tom Gallant:* I absolutely believe that Park Street needs an addition. There is no question to me that in the long term maybe in the near future. Should we have a proposal to go to

four men per shift instead of three, we should position ourselves to have two in each station as the Chief just referred to.

I think we should bear in mind that the District is comprised of two towns and there is always the possibility of secession. I don't like to hear talk about it. I know it wouldn't be economically feasible. It wouldn't be fair to Northfield. If you put all your eggs in a basket down on Park Street, how do the people who pay 61% of the bill fair. If there's secession, what have they got? It's a real problem. I know, Paul, you didn't say not to have two stations at one point but you used a window of five to ten years. At the age of 60, five to ten years is a long time to me.

*Steve Bluhm:* That's why I think it's important that we come up with a plan that all of us can sell.

*Tom Gallant:* Correct. It has to be saleable to both towns.

*Steve Bluhm:* It has to be saleable before it even starts. If we can't sell it with our so called master plan between all of us, I can tell you at least a very large group that will be screaming for my head and saying yes, it's time to secede.

*Tom Gallant:* Again, I can't emphasize enough; I believe that an addition is necessary at Park Street. Adding to the apparatus floor on Park Street is difficult because of the way the building is structured. But to go off with an ell going out toward 93 as the Chief had pointed out when we last met and we were down there makes a lot of sense. The apparatus bay stays just as it is now. In that case, that plan was to have administrative facilities there on the first floor and bunk rooms on the second floor. That would then call for a location somewhere else which would be a sub-station with people manning it and equipment.

*Chief Carrier:* Unless we are confusing recent requests for grant monies, it was not for the headquarters to be at Park Street. It was just a shift office and living quarters with sleeping quarters on the second floor.

*Steve Bluhm:* \$895,000 doesn't buy us any office space, just housing?

Discussion ensued of plans for Park Street.

*Kevin Waldron:* Review from Mike and Ben can come anytime.

*Tom Gallant:* Do you want to set a date for that?

Discussion ensued regarding the next meeting.

*Kevin Waldron:* Is it okay with everybody for them to come to the next meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup>?

All agreed.

*Paul Auger:* Are we all aware that something needs to be done with the Center Street station?

*Kevin Waldron:* Yes. It's just a matter of what needs to be done.

*Tom Gallant:* Are we all in agreement that it's in the wrong place or do we want to hold that until we take a look at the presentation at the next meeting? Do you agree that it's in a bad spot to cover a good portion of the District as far as response times are concerned?

*Steve Bluhm:* We've been using it for years and it's been working.

*Sandy Plessner:* I agree. It's in a bad spot.

*Pat Consentino:* I don't think you have seen the presentation with the overlay of the calls have you.

*Steve Bluhm:* No, I haven't seen it.

## II. Personnel

*Chief Carrier:* Presently we have three shifts with three people. We have other people that fill in with what we call Kelly Days as well. On the administrative side we have Chief, Administrative Assistant, Fire Prevention Officer, three shift personnel. Monday through Friday you have the possibility of having six personnel in the station at one time. Nights and weekends you have three personnel for 24/7 coverage. The only way that would change is if we lost personnel or hired personnel. What I can see in the future, a fourth person on each shift would probably be ideal. When we talk about the facility needs we should consider the possibilities of all personnel staying in the station. We also should consider a student live-in program.

When we talk about office space, our needs right now are truly storage. One other need is some place to meet with people. Not only is my office not very conducive to having more than two people meet but Brad also needs the ability to have a space to meet with people.

Discussion ensued regarding personnel and future needs.

Talk of 48 hour versus 42 hour shifts occurred.

Steve Bluhm showed his charts on the call data.

*Steve Bluhm:* This is our first year. We did 1,621 calls.

*Chief Carrier:* No, we had full time people before that.

*Steve Bluhm:* Full time but not 24/7.

*Chief Carrier:* Right.

*Steve Bluhm:* That's what it comes down to is the 24/7 that we are at now. These are the following years. In fact, this was with two people the 1621. The 1538, 1525, 1570 were all done with three people. Currently we are at 93 calls less than where we were at last year at this time. Here's your six months of the year so far, how many calls. This is how many average calls per 24 hour shift, basically four calls per shift. I think I was told by you before that you are talking about the average calls per hour. Does that sound right? At this time, 2008, you are 812 so you are 93 less than last year. I know it doesn't mean a whole lot but for me it's just trying to figure out why we needed more people especially the way the calls are now. With all the growth we have had over the last three years, it hasn't increased the number of calls. I'm not sure we are ready for more manpower. That's a management issue.

*Chief Carrier:* I guess that call volume fluctuation is not drastic by any means. It's pretty minor in the scope of things. You are talking less than 10% in most cases. Like I said, over time you can look at our call volume data continuing to increase over the long term. It is a pattern that has existed over the years.

Discussion continued.

## III. Apparatus Needs

Chief Carrier handed out a draft copy of his 2009 Capital Improvement Plan for Apparatus. He then reviewed the information.

*Paul Auger:* Are you figuring 20 years on the apparatus?

*Chief Carrier:* I do. I would think that maybe the rescue truck or the tanker on the use of it and how well they hold up, we might be able to get a little more. I think 20 years is very realistic.

*Paul Auger:* The vehicles here, the U1, the U2, is that 10 years?

*Chief Carrier:* Seven years I believe.

Discussion ensued regarding apparatus needs.

*Paul Auger:* If you were considering replacing the ladder truck, would you consider a quint?

*Chief Carrier:* Yes. That's what the grant was written for.

*Paul Auger:* That would eliminate that ladder truck and/or?

*Chief Carrier:* The ladder truck would go.

Discussion ensued on ladder truck versus quint.

*Kevin Waldron:* Is there anything else before we move on?

*Steve Bluhm:* I would almost say hold up.

*Tom Gallant:* I would agree. Before we move on to anything else I really think we should see the presentation that Hannaford put together as well as Mike. I think once we see that we may revisit some of the things we have already talked about.

*Steve Bluhm:* I agree. Number four is walking right into that, back to a review of the facilities again.

*Kevin Waldron:* So you want to call it a night? Anything else?

Kevin Waldron made a motion to adjourn. Paul Auger seconded the motion.

Vote was taken. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine  
Administrative Assistant

**Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:** August 25, 2009 at 18:00. Meeting to be held at Tilton School, new Academic Building, School Street, First Floor, Ninth Grade Classroom, Tilton.

Approved on: 9/21/09