

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	October 18, 2007 at 18:12 to 20:30
Note taker:	Janine Vary	Place:	Center Street Station

Attendees: Comm. Tom Gallant, Comm. Bob Watson, Comm. Kevin Waldron, Treasurer Roland Seymour, Chief Steve Carrier, Deputy Mike Robinson, Capt. Brad Ober, Fire Prev., and Clerk Janine Vary. Absent: none

Comm. Gallant called meeting to order at 18:12PM. First review of minutes from Sept. 20 regular meeting. Tom motioned to accept the minutes and seconded by Kevin. Discussion: Kevin said on page 2 2nd paragraph, ref. the "*(after the meeting it was determined that the bid was actually \$15,530)*" should be deleted. Chief said if you wanted to amend the minutes now to reflect the proper cost which was why that number was included. Roland stated company is correctly spelled "*Stantech*" on bottom of page 2. Also, Bob brought up it should be "*450*" gallons on page 2 next to last paragraph in describing the fire hydrants that we are being credited for. Tom commented on page 1 first paragraph in the middle where he is speaking about assets, liability and equity, it would be better worded "*This would show what the true equity is.*". Kevin stated there was a typo error on pg 3 8th sentence up from new business, should be "*keep*" and not "*keen*". Discussion having been had and corrections as made, Tom motioned to accept minutes as edited, seconded by Bob. No more discussion. All commissioners accepted the minutes of the Sept. 20th meeting with corrections/deletions as noted above.

The nonpublic minutes from Sept. 20, were reviewed by commissioners. Bob motioned to accept as printed and seconded by Kevin. Any discussion, none. All in favor of accepting minutes. Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of Sept. 20, 2007 nonpublic session. Tom asked to revote by a roll call vote to keep minutes sealed per RSA 91-A:3 II.c., personnel issues. Bob aye, Kevin aye, and Tom aye. Minutes shall remain sealed.

Now reviewing minutes from special meeting held on Oct. 1, 2007 clearly marked as draft which had been distributed earlier. Kevin motioned to accept as printed seconded by Bob. Discussion: Tom. in regards to issues addressed at this meeting, he has given it personal consideration and believes that in the future that if memos are in order they should be read into the minutes. All commissioners unanimously accepted minutes of the special October 1, 2007 meeting as written.

Tom also wanted it recorded that Chief Carrier had stated the cost for the new roof at Park Street on Sept. 20 was \$15,300 and, upon research, the cost was in effect \$15,530. Records should reflect that.

Treasurer's report. Roland reviewed with Commissioners. Operating budget: Right hand column shows "percentage of budget" and he feels ambiguous. It is a percentage of the actual line item, not the budget. Unless the commissioners feel it is needed. Tom feels meaningless no matter what time of year it is. He asked the other commissioners their feelings. Kevin felt that you could look down for anything over 100%. Tom looks down at the dollar amount over budget. Bob doesn't care, Kevin said he'd like it to stay, Tom doesn't need but instructed Roland to keep that column in. Tom asked Chief if he saw anything. Chief mentioned line 290, budget says \$4.00. Roland explained he made one line with \$4.00 rather than having several lines with just \$1.00 in them. Tom said he doesn't like that. Each line that had a \$1.00 means we can spend on that line if an expense is incurred on that line. Roland said you are not bound by the line numbers. Tom said that isn't true. Tilton found that out last year. The line number with a dollar amount has to be there just in case. Roland said there were 3 other lines that had \$1.00. so now he understands that if an item goes beyond the scope of each line item, you cannot make a new line number. Roland said he will restore those lines. Tom asked Chief if there was anything he wanted to address regarding the operating budget. Chief said the vehicle repair line is high. Roland now looked at the Apparatus and Equipment account. We can only expend what we take into it. It becomes a general surplus in that account but isn't like the general budget surplus. We can utilize the surplus in this account. Tom commented that the budget was voted on to expend the monies that were voted on. Subject to the same parameters as general fund. Can't over expend the budget and this holds true for Apparatus & Equipment fund. The under expended general funds goes to surplus, this one surplus stays within the account. Roland said that the accounts did balance with the check books. Tom liked the expanded view so that the lines can be defined. Tom motioned seconded by Kevin to accept the treasurer's report. All commissioners unanimously accepted the Treasurer's report.

Fire prevention report: Capt. Ober reported there are a couple of new stores at Tanger Outlet. Old Navy due to open 11/15. Winnisquam River Health Care facility is going ahead with bldg permits on Scribner road in Northfield, 3 story. Upgrade road to Crossmill Road and end at Northfield Commons. Hydrants along that section. Looking at impact other than the road, the fire dept., etc. Subdivision on Crossmill Road is now coming in for permits for gas appliances; road is paved. South Bay nothing heard. Still have old campers in there. Walgreens moving along as scheduled. Holiday and Hampton Inns - he hasn't heard anything. Roland said Hampton Inn called water district today, evidently they will be starting work up again. NHVH is rapping up on last phase. Winnisquam Village will build as units they sell them. This month we are busy doing the fire prevention in schools. Went to the state house last week, celebrating 60 years of state fire marshal's office. The fire trailer was one of the displays around the state house. No other questions.

Old business

E4 Status: we reduced price down to \$4500 with Fire Tec. Had no activity until yesterday when Fire Tec received an inquiry. Fire Tec gave the interested party our contact information but we have not heard from them as of today. We did contact the original bidder and he said would honor his original bid of \$2500. Chief feels it would be in our best interest to go with his bid for \$2500. Tom agreed. As is and as seen. Bob agreed and Kevin agreed. We tried to do more with it. Tom motioned that we sell E4 to Don Rogers, 288 Hurricane Road in Belmont, NH for the price of \$2500; seconded by Bob. Discussion: Kevin wants it recorded in the minutes that it was tried on several occasions to get as much as we could for the truck but it did not happen. So recorded. All commissioners voted unanimous to sell E4. Tom asked if Chief or Mike could contact Mr. Rogers tomorrow.

Water flow: the flow tests on private hydrants next week. Are there still some private people who won't let us flow their hydrants. Roland hasn't heard that there are any. Chief said we will send someone with the water district to give them a hand. Bob asked if they would be painted like the others. Chief said Scott Davis said yes.

Purchasing policy: set a date for a work session. We had special meeting on web site earlier tonight. Policy was formulated and will be done within the confines of the minutes. The purchasing policy, he doesn't think it can be done in the confines of a regular meeting. Tom feels it needs to be discussed, Kevin agreed. Chief won't be available until end of November. Chief said Mike or Brad could sit in for him. Tom arranged to meet on Thursday, November 8, 2007 at 5:30 at Center Street.

Budget committee. The commissioners have not set a work session on the budget and the budget committee wants to know if the commissioners are all set with Chief's proposed budget. Tom said commissioners usually meet two or three times to discuss. Gretchen said towns submit budget and selectpeople review. Then Budget Committee reviews and goes back to the selectpeople and then back to people for a vote. Gretchen asked if the commissioners had looked at the budget? Tom said "no" but we will. Kevin commented that the concern is why is the budget committee looking at it if commissioners haven't looked at it. Should be a progression of review of power. Gretchen said that is how it works in the town. Tom said that it doesn't happen that way in Tilton. Budget Committee meets with each department and then pass that along to commissioners. So each dept. gets interviewed twice only if felt it is prudent. In Northfield done the other way. Tom doesn't feel there would be any drastic changes to it. At the next meeting, commissioners would review the budget and take a posture on it. Would be conditional posture. If commissioners see anything that looks out of sorts, then can be discussed at that time. Tom doesn't want to have 3 work sessions before the Budget Committee looks at it. Tom asked Bob for his feelings. Kevin asked who established such a procedure – in that it starts here and ends there. Tom: it comes as a complete surprise to him that the RSA indicates that the budget is of the Budget Committee and not the selectmen. If that is the case, then we aren't putting the cart before the horse. It will be the Budget Committee's budget that will be presented to the body. That doesn't make any sense to Tom but that is what the RSA states. Kevin commented that the selectmen present their budget as a recommendation. Tom sees it as the Budget Committee creates budget with Chief and then present it to the commissioners. Don Stevens was very surprised by that as well as Vicy Virgin. Kevin stated if we, as a board, presents a budget plus or minus something, then Budget Committee is spending time on every line that may not even be an issue. Tom responded that if there was a line that the commissioners deleted and the budget committee wants to keep it in, they can. Author of the budget is the Chief, not like taking a number of depts. budgets and working on it. Chief prepares, the budget committee and board of commissioners review, but it is the budget committee's budget. Chief feels it gives the budget committee power. Tom stated the budget is important but doesn't take 4 months to go through. It takes 2 work sessions. Kevin suggested it may take 3 sessions seeing he is on the commission. Tom responded that we (commissioners) question lines that we feel may be inappropriate. We come up with questions that we have, not line by line. Kevin stated that there needs to be work sessions. Tom said he won't work on the budget without Chief seeing he is the author. It was decided that on Thursday, 11/29/07, there will be a work session on the budget, at 5:30PM. Tom suggested that people come up with line items they may have questions on.

Goal setting: we need a work schedule for that issue also. It was agreed by the commissioners to keep under old business to schedule a date in the future.

Janine asked the Commissioners if they would be considering the possibility of a part time position to assist with the secretary/clerk's duties. Commissioners said they will look at the option of a part time position.

New business

Commercial gear extractor/washer. Chief presented the information: Can clean up to 50lbs of gear at a time. \$250 cost. Item not in the budget. The machine comes from Ashland. Current owners are willing to sell to us, there were 2 units. Total cost is \$250 for unit, this is a \$9000 machine. Additional cost would max out at \$2,450 to bolt down, level, mounting base and service tech to evaluate, any trouble shooting completed and 3 phase electric. Put in Park St. station, where current washing machine is

now. Service tech said he was surprised that the old machine still ran. Can't stand up to what is needed. We would take that washing machine here so available to duty crew - not to wash gear. Did get a price for moving the machine, after some research we can move it ourselves with some assistance from Northfield Highway at a savings of \$1800. This would have been additional cost to \$2400. Based on discussion in reference to the budget, no specific line for gear washer but would come out of furniture capital (line 750). Doing some projections for the budget and if expenses continue looking at a \$72,000 surplus at the end of the year, Chief said. There is money to do this project. We could break it apart and buy and install next year but the value far outweighs the total cost. The extractor gets the dirt and grime from the gear by introducing water and chemicals into the gear. Kevin asked the age. Chief does not know, maybe 10 years. Kevin asked about the expected life span. Brad commented that the original owners were running a commercial laundry in Ashland, so not sure of how much use. Kevin asked how old Park St. station machine was. Mike said 5 years old. Paid for through the betterment fund. Kevin asked cost to replace with same. Chief said the current machine is not doing the job for us. It is a heavy duty washing machine, not an extractor. Doesn't clean well at all. Brad said the RPMs the extractor spins at leaves the gear almost dry. These are all programmed to wash at the NFPA spec and will get longer life out of our gear because they are being washed the right way. We are washing gear after every fire and seeing a lot more use. Chief also commented that there is extra wear and tear on the gear with conventional washing machines. You don't get that damage on the commercial washer. Kevin asked if a phase converter was looked into. Chief said there is 3 phase in the station already. Electrician will have to go up through the men's' room and over to the truck locker. Kevin asked who we got price from. Chief said from Daniel's Equipment Company. FF Tim Joubert said he could produce other prices if needed. This was a tech that was recommended to him from the manufacturer of the unit. Kevin said he would like more than one price from more than one vendor. Kevin would like to price out installation. Bob motioned to purchase the unit at least for \$250. Tom reviewed the information Chief had given on the extractor: the electrical is \$300 per this quote. The installers would do the maintenance on the machine. Installation only makes sense to Tom. Tom motioned to go forward with \$2450 for entire purchase as proposed by Chief. Bob seconded. Kevin disputed spending the money without more than one quote. It is the taxpayers money. We are not requesting more quotes from other vendors. Tom stated that he felt that due diligence has been done. Kevin stated Daniel's Equipment Co. is probably not the only installer of this equipment. Vote taken: Kevin voted negative and Bob and Tom voted in the affirmative. Motion passed to purchase the extractor for \$2450.

Chief received a 9-9-9 Worker's Comp & Property Liability Plan from LGC. It is pretty lengthy and he'll have the secretary/clerk make copies for commissioners. Have offered a 9-9-9 plan that limits the increases to 9% cap. Chief said that they are also available to attend a board meeting if commissioners wanted. Tom asked for copies to be given to the commissioners and for Chief to contact LGC to have a rep come and explain it to them.

Chief will be out of state in November from the 7th to the 13th.

Other comments: Kevin asked about the manifest being signed off. Tom mentioned that that will be done when we pay bills at the end of the meeting.

Kevin mentioned there is an invoice from AutoServe for 21c1's car. This is a 2001 has a non-adjustable rear so we couldn't have gotten a 4 wheel alignment. Harbour Enterprise has a bill for 21U1, battery and exhaust - why does it need this. Chief said the battery was gone and the exhaust was damaged per Brad. Kevin said vehicle is a 2006 that we rec'd on 10/05 warranty is 3 years, is it still under warranty? Chief responded other than the damage battery was covered. Kevin commented we should check warranties. Chief commented that FF Steve Smith checks all warranties. The truck has been modified since we got it. There is a draw on that battery even when all equipment is off. We are at the point now of putting a trickle charge in it. Rather than putting in a second battery. Kevin said they put in a new fuse box in his truck and that eliminated that problem. The work was covered by warranty and his truck has been modified also.

Kevin commented that when we have new people come in, we do a criminal record and state driving record check. Can't we have the local PD do that? Chief responded that when he started here, Chief Hilliard said it was not the appropriate way to do criminal record checks. Kevin asked about reactivating line 140 for Over Time. Chief responded if you look at the expanded view of the operating budget you will see that line as a sub account of the 110 Career Salaries and Wages. Chief believes that line 140, which comes after call salaries, and elected officials, wasn't clearly reflected that it was part of the career salaries line.

Kevin stated an email circulated that he received and he found troubling. From Chief to Gretchen. The way he read this, he got the impression that we are stone walling to provide information to and question the integrity of budget committee. The budget committee was put in place by voters for a specific purpose. There is nothing to fear from the Budget Committee, unless there is something to hide. He feels that certain sentences in the email are speaking on his behalf as a commissioner and doesn't feel that that is appropriate.

Kevin read the email. Dated: Oct. 8, 2007 "Gretchen, As requested. I'm sure there will be questions - feel free to call or write, etc. As Janine indicated, we will discuss the information release process at the next Commission meeting. I think the

concern on our part is the possibility of manipulating electronic data so that it appears that it originated here – PDF files would take care of that – and allowing access to our computer system which could potentially affect the information system. I think a better understanding of the RSA and a cooperative spirit will result in a user-friendly method of releasing and obtaining certain documents.” who is making the requests, of whom are they made from? Chief said one of the concerns is that email cannot be read with “emotion” put into it. The point is how do we release info, electronically, on cd, can it be changed, do we release everything on paper? It was his understanding that that would be discussed during the web site meeting.

Gretchen addressed her request. She is looking to understand the budget. She has confusion with line 110 and some of its line items. When she is doing comparisons, she is thinking the base salaries are included in the administrative pay salaries. She is looking to compare last year with this year. She asked for accounts payable. She was told it is an extremely large report. She wants to have in Excel so she can see if things are being charged to other lines inappropriately. She doesn't mean to destroy or ruin the integrity of the data. PDF form slows down her process. She felt that the information was open. Chief asks the issue of questioning his integrity. He has sent her much information. Chief doesn't like the idea of having a outside piece of hardware being put into our computer system. Tom said no one is getting stonewalled here. Tom wants to have all requests for information be made to the Chief. Gretchen stated she is now making all requests through Chief. Chief wants things funneled through him, especially seeing Janine is his employee. Gretchen continued: The question remains as far as the a/p report. Purpose of a/p report is to see all purchases made and are they on the right line numbers. How do we know that that line item is correct? Chief commented that if we can take the money out of another line item, he looks at that as good budgeting. Gretchen responded that some see as slush funding rather than good budgeting. Gretchen agrees that there are instances that you rob Paul to pay Peter. Again, as far as data format, she can't manipulate in PDF, can only print. Brad had a comment: he served 6 years on the budget committee for the town of Ashland and what Gretchen is asking for should be done by an individual auditor. Taking on a load of work that she shouldn't be doing. The auditors make sure money being spent correctly. A slush fund is not making up money over spent on one line. Gretchen has discussed this with other budget committee members and all don't feel that way. Brad suggested that the process can be a much simpler. Gretchen commented that Brad has had 6 years but she has had only one and still doesn't understand our budget. More discussion on the pay roll line items. Fire and police payrolls are handled differently than regular employees. This is generally accepted accounting for fire and police. A question was asked about vacation time. Our vacation policy is that if you don't use it you lose it. More discussion: she asked if records were kept for pc's, tools, etc. purchased, not just big ticket items. Chief replied that we keep a record of them.

Last item from Gretchen. Memberships/affiliations asked if the names could be spelled out., Some line numbers (line 560) may need to be re-identified. Shouldn't “Subscriptions” be under the “periodicals”. Tom explained that the term “subscriptions” is an old accounting term that meant “dues” that are paid to memberships.

Pay bills: Kevin to address his other concerns. [secretary's note: Kevin had pre-written out his comments/questions for each of these items and I could not keep up with his reading of these. Therefore, he gave the secretary a copy of his notes. Those will appear within quotes and in *italics*. The secretary cannot guarantee that the statements were read exactly as worded. Any discussion afterwards will not be in quotes or italics.] *“Fire Engineering - \$21.00 - This is a magazine subscription that expires in April, 2008. There is no need to renew 6 months early. After discussion with Janine, it was determined that this entry was made by mistake.”* Janine confirmed that the Chief had told her not to put in the list, but it was left in accidentally.

“Mike Thevenin bill for \$450.00 – This is related to the Blackberries – to set up email and solve password issues, if I recall the invoice correctly. This is another new, unnecessary expense incurred with out Commissioner approval. It would seem to me that the Blackberries should come all set up from the service provider or come with instructions for set up. This is not something we should be going to an outside vendor for.” Kevin stated he spoke with Verizon and US Cellular and was told they should have been contacted. Chief replied after trying to install the blackberries on our own, he had Brad contact Mike for help. One issue is that the email system here is set up with added security so access is not allowed from outside. This was a reason to go to blackberries from outside to get their email. Mike was able to accomplish that.

“Monadnock Mountain Spring Water - \$89.50 – I don't believe we should be using taxpayer dollars to buy water and renting a water cooler when we have perfectly safe drinking water available in the building.” He thought that it was a donation. But we are paying for it at over \$1000 a year. He feels we have adequate and good water available. He feels we don't have regard to where money comes from.

“NH Employment Security - \$35.56 – Simply put, we did not cause the change in employment for this individual, so why should we pay for something we didn't do.” Tom replied that no matter how Kevin may feel about that bill, the federal government has laws that require us to pay it.

“NH Labor Law Poster Service - \$30.25 – These posters are available from the DOL website, free for the printing. Why do we buy them?” Janine commented that she is aware they are available for free, however, every item is at least one 8.5 x 11 page. She would need to be provided with another wall to post all the individual items if she wasn't using these type set copies.

“Red Jacket Mountain View Resort - \$318.00 – I can’t even believe this made it on the manifest, given the uproar the Atlanta trip caused. Further, I think that when the Atlanta trip was being discussed, it would have been prudent for the Commissioners to have been made aware of this upcoming trip. But here we are, another trip without Commissioner approval. \$318.00 for 2 night’s accommodation, 2 breakfast buffets, Saturday lunch & Banquet dinner and a wine & cheese reception. When our people to the EMS Conference in Bartlett, we pay for their attendance and dinner only, no lodging. If they want to stay, it’s on their nickel, not the taxpayers. The Chief lives in Gilford and the event is in North Conway. There is no reason the taxpayers should be expected to foot the bill for lodging when the Fire District provides a vehicle at no charge to the Chief and the event is no more than an hour’s drive.” Chief said that that weekend is a professional development weekend that he has attended regularly since he has been here. Also, there is a training session on Saturday morning and meeting of Fire Chiefs on Saturday afternoon.

“Tilton-Northfield Aqueduct Co, Inc. - \$28,050.74 – I believe this amount is incorrect. I think it gives us credit for 18 hydrants that produce 450 gallons per minute or less, as set by the Water Commissioners. The hydrant flow information provided us at the September 20 meeting identifies 21 hydrants that produce 450 GPM or less. Therefore we are due credit for 3 additional hydrants.” Kevin also questioned if the name should be changed. Someone commented that the bill is coming from the Tilton-Northfield Aqueduct Co. Tom doesn’t feel that is a reason for not paying the bill. Let us look into the discrepancies.

“US Cellular - \$308.41 – This charge is related to the Blackberries and you know my feeling on them. I will draw a line on this expense every month.” Chief commented that there is a misunderstanding that these are 2 phones in addition to the 6 we have. The blackberries replaced two phones that Chief and Brad had.

Tom commented that for the record Kevin has not signed off on the above items, but Tom and Bob have signed off on the entire manifest. Checks that have been held for payment can be mailed.

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 made by Tom and seconded by Kevin. Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:	November 15, 2007 at 18:00 at Center Street Station
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