

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Special Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting called by:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	October 1, 2007 at 16:30 to 17:20
Note taker:	Janine Vary	Place:	Center Street Station

Attendees: Comm. Tom Gallant, Comm. Bob Watson, Comm. Kevin Waldron, Chief Steve Carrier, and Clerk Janine Vary.
Absent: Treasurer Roland Seymour, Deputy Mike Robinson

Comm. Gallant called meeting to order at 4:33. The 3 commissioners were present, Chief and Clerk. Purpose is address concerns that Kevin had to website posting of memos from Chief Carrier. Tom asked Kevin to address. Kevin commented that the 3 memos that Chief Carrier made as his offer of explanation to objections that Kevin had made regarding money spent and then chose to have posted on the web site was not appropriate. Web site not used for that purpose. Anything said in the meetings is recorded in the minutes. Chief could have said whatever he wanted to say and that could have been reflected in the meeting minutes. Posting on the website was not right he didn't have equal time to speak. He is requesting that the memos be pulled from the web site. Kevin made this as a motion. Tom didn't believe that a motion was needed at this time. Tom asked Chief to respond. Memos addressed as point of fact because he knew there would be questions from someone reading minutes. He submitted as part of the meeting in response to items discussed and asked the clerk to post the memos as part of the meeting. Tom asked if Chief felt he needed to respond in the meeting due to the minutes. Chief agreed. Kevin felt that may have been the case, but no reason not to say something, memo or not. If intended to be part of minutes, they didn't end up that way. There is a separate link for each memo. Kevin feels that if something could have been read into the minutes, they should have been read into the minutes. Kevin feels the web site isn't the place for this. He feels if he is the cause for the memos, then there has to be a place on the web site for him to respond to them. Tom commented that if a person reads the minutes and doesn't have the memos, then he doesn't have the knowledge to be able to understand the conversation. Your comments are in the minutes and Chief's comments are in the minutes by attaching the memos. This is his personal feeling. Also, we are being reminded that disclosure is the way to go and we are striving in that direction. He thinks it makes a complete package. Tom asked Bob, Bob agreed with Tom and commented that if you leave out the memos, you don't understand what the Chief is saying. Tom commented after reading the discussion in the minutes, he didn't feel that the reader would understand what the "IAFC FRI 2007 conference" is. Kevin commented it would be different if Chief had read the memos into the minutes. He feels the memos are a lot more detailed than Kevin's objections. He feels his objections were voiced and recorded at the time. But if giving a forum to the public to give the Chief an opportunity as to this is what I did and why, then he requires an equal opportunity to address the memos line by line. Tom stated the memos were issued to address the fact that there were 3 items not approved on the manifest.

Tom asked who is responsible for the web site and maintaining it. Chief commented that Janine is the one who puts items on the web site but is not responsible for what goes on. We don't have any policies for the website. Tom was not sure if the towns had guidelines or not. There should be some guidelines as to what goes on the website. Tom stated another thing is that we should only post the minutes after they have been read and approved by the board. If we had waited until October and discussed the minutes then, this could have been avoided. Although the wording of the RSA is that they are open to public inspection there is a big difference between going on the web site and being able to be examined in the office during the office hours. Tom said it is important that we control what goes on the web site. Tom feels we need to establish what is on the website. Janine shouldn't be making decisions as to what is prudent on the web site. Tom is an advocate to meet two times a month. Kevin requested to change his request that the memos be pulled from the web site pending a meeting of the commissioners to decide what parameters go on the web site.

Tom asked a question to Steve Bluhm as to the parameters as to what goes on the web site for Northfield. Steve Bluhm commented that Joyce has to make the minutes available within 5 days. We meet weekly and make changes to them. He wasn't sure when they go to the website. They are done and ready within 5 days but he 'believes' they are not put on the website until they are accepted. That was confirmed by others in the public audience. Tom: commented that in the minutes for Sept. 20 that there are misstatements and because we are going to address them in our next meeting, someone could read today and have a misunderstanding of the meeting. Gretchen, has seen in the past, drafts, not voted on, not final product, etc. Tom feels the changing of the law is to make sure that the minutes are available to the public. We are not failing to meet the letter of the law if the minutes are not on the web site within 5 days. Kevin said it is easier to read them on the web site rather than going into the office. Steve Bluhm commented that at least you know that you are putting out an accurate product. Suggestion from Janice Lynd Bloom to solve both problems, remove the last meeting minutes and memos and then have the memos read into the minutes and then have the whole thing read into the minutes. Kevin agreed that if we pulled the memos and minutes he would be satisfied. Kevin made a motion that commissioners authorize Janine to pull the minutes of the Sept. 20, 2007 commissioners' meeting and the 3 memos posted on behalf of the Chief from web site. Tom seconded. No more discussion. Motion voted on and accepted unanimously by all 3 commissioners.

Tom wanted to set up a time that the commissioners get together to discuss policy for the web site. Tom made a suggestion to meet at 4:00 in the afternoon on the 18th to deal with the web site issue followed by the normal monthly meeting at 6:00. If we have a round table discussion before we have our regular meeting, then all this will be a mute issue. Kevin had concern about meeting earlier in day if someone wants to come but too early for the public to come due to work schedule. There was more discussion and Tom stated the board has unanimously agreed in discussion that on the 18th of October at 4:30 they will gather in public forum to discuss the web site, who is responsible for it and responsible for the content of it. Then will follow at 6:00 with the normal meeting.

There was discussion about the special meeting scheduled for the 25th which was to discuss goal setting. Tom made a motion to strike the 25th as a special meeting for goal setting. Will reset the date for the special meeting at the regular meeting on Oct. 18th. Tom feels a minimum of 2 2hour sessions. First framework, second get into all the pieces. Even if it takes 5 months, then is workable.

There was discussion about when the purchasing policy would be discussed. There was a problem with getting a date that worked for everyone. Kevin asked if the commissioners were discussing policy do they need to have their administrator there. Tom said well in the town setting, he believed it would be difficult to not have the town administrator there. Tom thinks that the Chief's input would be important in setting policy. Kevin said he sees commissioners as the board setting the policy and Chief as the manager of those policies. Tom asked Steve Bluhm for his comment. Steve said yes, his town administrator is there but for note taking only. But he then reconsidered and said the town administrator would also give the history, what we are doing, what we have done and will give input as to how the PD and Highway Garage may be impacted by policies. Tom sees some detriments if Chief is not there. Tom wants to discuss the purchasing policy. Kevin asked if Tom would come in with his own. Tom has questions, comments, objections to some of the language, maybe dollar limits, as it relates to this department. As Chief had commented regarding when engine 1 went down and had to have springs done. If the purchasing policy went in as proposed, Chief would have had to wait for a meeting because the quoted repair cost was over spending limit. Then we would have to convene special meetings for higher expenses. Even discussion on the internet can be constituted as a meeting. Tom would like to cover these issues. Chief commented that the minutes from Sept. 20 said purchasing policy was to be discussed at the next monthly meeting (Oct. 18th). Steve Randall asked if we had a template for the bid policy? Is it possible that that document could be made available to the public? Steven asked if the commissioners thought the public might be able to help them define that document? Tom commented that it was a combination of policies from Concord and Laconia – their city wide purchasing policy. Tom suggested to the members of the public to come on the 18th at the regular monthly meeting at 6:00pm.

(back to Tom's motion to cancel the special meeting for goal setting scheduled for Oct. 25th) Kevin seconded to cancel the special meeting. Discussion: no more. All three commissioners voted to not meet on October 25, 2007.

Tom commented that we have moved a new meeting for 4:30PM on Thursday, October 18, 2007 to discuss web site policy.

No more to be added. Meeting closed at 5:20pm.

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

October 18, 2007 at 16:30 Special meeting re: web site. Regular monthly meeting 18:00 at Center Street Station