

Tilton-Northfield Fire District
Reconvene of Annual Meeting
April 3, 2006

Moderator Randall asked for members of public who wished to be on the budget committee, to contact Ken tonight or contact their town clerk to be signed up. He will be appointing the members within 30 days after the close of the District Meeting tonight.

Meeting reconvened at 7:00PM and Moderator placed Article 9 back on the floor. Article was defeated and protected at meeting held on March 6, 2006. Roland Seymour asked for reconsideration. Moderator gave first comment to Roland Seymour, Water District Commissioner.

Roland: He pointed out that the Water District is not owned by towns, but is owned by a district, just like the fire and school districts. The money in this warrant article is needed to be put back into the fire district budget. Asked Rob Steady to address the body on insurance ramifications.

Rob Steady, Northfield: as a result of last meeting cost additional \$80,808 of increased insurance premium. Doesn't take into consideration impact for the commercial owners. This would make this area a less desirable place to put up commercial industries.

Joe Denault, N. Feels that it's too much money and would prefer that the fire department should meter water usage. He also asked Mr. Money if the money not being paid to the employees cover the reduction in funds.

Ken Money, T. responded. He was asked by water commissioners to respond to a letter from Gretchen Wilder. She asked for a break down of customers from towns by residential and commercial. Approximately 925 water services, 700 residential and remaining are commercial, etc. She questioned the total percent served by water district. This had never tracked, so this cannot be answered. Total number of hydrants is 126 fire hydrants hooked in. 71 are municipal and 45 are private. There are really 78 municipal hydrants. Water District has been paying for the other 7. \$130,000 municipality and \$85,000 from private side raised last year.

Negotiations for water contract, he never remembered a water contract. These rates were arrived at through the PUC, billed as a fire district. The hydrant fee was inherited and has been used for 30 some years. When water district has rate increase/decreases, change was applied across the board to all. PUC staff concerned that fire district didn't pay enough. Feel 30% of revenue should be paid for by fire district. Currently fire district pays 12 to 15%. It appears a large amount of money, but fire district required larger pipes and storage tanks for fire protection. If not needed, could get away with smaller tanks and pipes. Fire District is not buying a set amount of water, more like a large amount of water over a long period of time. At the Surette Battery fire, over 1 million gallons of water was used. Hydrants are like insurance. If don't use, a waste of money, but when needed, priceless. Looking at upgrading the system but it's too early for new commissioners to do now. There are always improvements/enhancements to be made. The more customers you have, the less you charge everyone else. As far as salary costs, it will remain to be seen if there will be any savings because people haven't been hired yet.

Lee French, N. - asked how many hydrants in Northfield. Mr. Money said 34 in Northfield and 44 in Tilton, municipal hydrants only. He didn't look at commercial.

Arthur Haskins, N. Had some statistics. Town of Henniker has 82 hydrants, charge \$2006. Epson used to charge \$2000 for 46 hydrants, Hillsboro, 88 hydrants no charge. \$50 a hydrant in Litchfield, etc.

Ken Money: almost impossible to compare one town to another. Each town has its own capital structure, customer base. He gave up on this a long time ago.

Heber Fener, T: This is its own district. He doesn't think there is another one set up like this in the state. Therefore you cannot separate how many hydrants here or there. We got this for fire protection.

Jim Vila, Tilton: Both towns have growing outlying areas that are not protected by this hydrant district. Suggested possibly two tiers for district. Those within in the hydrant district and others who live outside the hydrant district.

Ken Money: feels response should come from fire district. No one in the fire district able to answer this question

Brian Watson, N. Has there been an estimate of how many gallons used. Chief said no. May be able to estimate gallons used at a fire, but hasn't been tracked over time. If trucks return to station, they are filled from water system or can also use dry hydrants. Chief felt we cannot estimate how many gallons are used. Chief Carrier also felt metering usage would be unrealistic. Attaching a meter in the emergency would delay response and increase friction loss. When flowing water from a hydrant, difficult to measure gallons per minute. It is how much the nozzle is opened and how much flow there is.

Barbara Foster, N. She feels that this is part of the budget, this is part of the cost of running the fire district. if this is preventive, why did commissioners recommend, would like to hear from them. Tom Gallant: fully in favor of the expenditure for hydrant system. His hope is that in upcoming year that the new commissioners will be able to get up and running and will work with fire district to work out some issues.

Heber Fener, N. Availability of water. No hydrants available at Lancaster Hill Road fire, went to closest hydrant to refill. The hydrants are available to get the water no matter where the fire is.

Dave Tracy, N. Asked how much it costs to replace a hydrant and how much to put one in new.

Ken Money. cost to install of hydrant is an average of \$2500 and this is just the hydrant, not the pipes being laid. If there's a distance where job is and if you need to dig in the street, it gets very expensive.

Donna Bouchard, N. agrees that we need the water source. If we don't know how many gallons we use, could it be written that the contract would reimburse if we use a lot less water or that it would be a graduated type charge and does the district have to pay this every year? Tom: believes that Mr. Money stated it is a rate for the availability of water and it is voted on every year.

Roland Seymour; felt body was missing the point. The Moneys borrowed over 5 million dollars because of clean water act and putting in 16" pipe and huge pumps to meet this. PUC allows them to recapture the capital investment. If \$2.5 million was for fire protection this can be done over 10 to 20 year period. Monies to be used to improve system as time goes on. We are trying to recapture that capital investment. We're billing the fire district less than the PUC actually set the rate at. It is the availability that is being charged for. If we didn't have fire hydrants, all homeowners insurance would go up, not just those in the water district.

Gary Smart, T. understands that this a fire district meeting. He had heard that the water district would pull out hydrants. It takes money to run a business and we spend \$17 million for schools. Suggests that we think about that. To not vote for the water expense is unwise.

Kevin Waldron, N. Felt budget for water district should be paid for by its users. We were again told it's not fair to compare but we do it every year. \$135,000 every single year, feels we need value for the money.

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Move to question, Arlow Stanley, seconded by Jerry Davis. Moderator mentioned that a standing vote had been requested.

Ballot vote was requested from the floor and more than 10 people agreed.

Moderator ordered that a Ballot vote will be taken. Mr. Fener asked for definition for the vote. Moderator explained that a yes vote means you want the article to pass. If you vote no, you are against article 9 and no money will be appropriated for the article.

Ballot box opened at 8:03pm. Moderator closed ballot box at 8:18pm seeing all voters had voted. Ballots counted by Jim Lamanuzzi and Steve Davis.

91 ballots were cast. Simple majority needed to pass. **66 yes 25 voted no.** Moderator declared **Article 9 passes.** Joe Demello called for adjournment and Barbara Isensee seconded. Meeting adjourned 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Janine L. Vary, Clerk
Tilton-Northfield Fire District