

Tilton Northfield Fire District
Public Hearing on February 7, 2007
Warrant Articles

Comm. Gallant called meeting to order at 7:06pm. Two commissioners present, Comm. Bob Watson and Comm. Tom Gallant. Commissioner Harold Harbour not available due to medical issues.

Comm. Gallant read the warrants. Articles 1 through 4 deal with the elected positions for the fire district. Moderator, Article 1, Clerk, Article 2, Treasurer, Article 3 all positions for one year and Article 4, 1 Commissioner for 3 years. Voting will be by official ballot in Tilton and Northfield at their respective voting sessions.

2 people are running for Moderator: Ken Randall and Scott McGuffin.

No one is running for clerk

1 person for treasurer: Roland Seymour

3 people running for commissioner: Kevin Waldron, Charles Harris and Paul Auger

#5. Comm. Gallant read entire article. we will be holding a bond hearing subsequent to this hearing. Commissioners have capped damages on that truck to \$25,000 should the district not vote the truck in by 3/5/07. We are accruing interest charges at \$158.00 a day which is approx \$16,000 in interest until next meeting. So \$25,000 is reasonable to us. We could be brought to court and sued if we don't purchase truck in March. Engine 4 remains out of service. It has been evaluated by a pump technician who stated it's not financially feasible to put back in service. \$1200 in parts plus labor. About \$3500 to get back up. If truck is worth \$3500 we'd be surprised. Our original asking price was \$10,000 for E4 but no interest at all. This leaves us with one engine down. The forecasted use of new engine 3 is to be fist front line attack piece and bump down E1 down to second. If this engine is tied up right now, we don't have another engine ready to be an attack vehicle. Article 5 is to borrow. Financing through Franklin Savings Bank \$148,000, 4.5 fixed rate of interest. First year's payment would be short, annually \$22,346.76 after 2007. \$32,774 in interest for term. \$178,774.08 is total payback..

Comm. Gallant: Article 6 commissioners are wholly in favor of article 5, but in the event that 5 fails, will fully support article 6. Comm. Gallant read article. He stated one may ask why capital reserve fund is held off. The state RSAs specify that money from capital reserve fund cannot be used for lease payments except for final payment. This warrant article meets DRA specifications.

Chief: reviewed page 2 of a power point handout regarding the 2 articles reviewing all the numbers. Comm. Gallant asked for any questions. Kevin Waldron: issues to engine 4, is it just the pump? Chief responded at least 2 valves that need to be replaced and the mechanic stopped at that point. Mr. Waldron asked about drive line problems. Chief stated there was a problem late last winter, could not come out of pump. At that time it was determined that when truck was built the wrong drive shaft was used in that truck so replaced at that time with no guarantee that it would be working. We seemed to have intermittent problems after that but it has been working. Mr. Waldron asked if we know what the cost of a new pump was and Chief said no. It is a 1974 truck, 33 years old. Chief continued that engine 4 was the water supply truck. It has a reel on the back of it, cannot do more than be water supply, it's not set up to be attack truck, just supplies water. This is why operationally we are having trouble. He would prefer to set it up to supply water. The tanker is designed to carry a large amount of hose as well as a tanker. If we had a fire in rural area,

tanker shuttles water. Engine 4 can perform pumping or hose line duties in hydrant district. Mr. Waldron asked if we were looking for another hose wagon, Chief said no. we're staying away from that. In Laconia they did that but the problem was they were doing too much with too small a truck. Comm. Gallant asked for other questions. None.

Comm. Gallant read warrant #7. Chief didn't have anything to add. Comm. Gallant asked for questions. None

Comm. Gallant read warrant #8. Chief addressed. The extra \$100,000 would bring b fund to \$300,000. Original intent was to put aside to do work on Park Street station. However, could be used for any buildings which would be taken out at the will of the voters. Comm. Gallant asked for questions, none.

Comm. Gallant read article #9. Comm. Gallant commented on this article. We have asked for legal opinion from counsel on this warrant article and it has been rendered. Comm. Gallant read opinion. The issue is: what happens if at annual district meeting, if article is voted down, now we know. Comm. Gallant didn't have anything to add to opinion. Kevin Waldron: it says we have to do this with "available funds" and says we have to have water. He asked why river, Knowles Pond and river further up in Tilton were not good enough. Another item, "good repair", not up to us to keep hydrants in good repair. We want them to all work and flow enough water to fight a fire. Not up to fire dept to make ends meet for the water dept. Chief: regarding the question "why isn't river good enough". The river provides access in a few limited points through the use of dry hydrants, but with more time loss to have water pushed into our pumper. Point to limited access more than any other reason, we do use river as a supplement. In talking with the water dept., we feel that they are making some improvements as far as flow tests being recorded. A recent test showed engineers' estimates at Wendy's was 1/2 what was reported. Mr. Waldron: can a copy of legal opinion be gotten? Comm. Gallant said yes. Copy given. Donna Bouchard.: at the last meeting regarding the water commission, we had to buy so much water from them. Do we have a record of how much we used? Is there been a method to determine what amount we used? Chief responded: you can estimate at any given incident how much water has been flowed, but we don't meter the usage of water. You can buy flow meters and put on our trucks, but we are not purchasing water, but renting the hydrants and based on number of hydrants in the district determines the cost of the "rental". Michelle Bonsteel: has commissioners considered meeting with board of commissioners for water district to determine future rates. Now cost only justified as an assessment to former owner by something that doesn't apply to us as a village district. Comm. Gallant: we are currently doing that. They are doing their budgetary process. They have a budget which is a work in progress. We will work with them. Comm. Gallant felt them very cooperative and is sure that their budget is available to anyone who would like to see it. Comm. Gallant feels there has been a great amount of thought going into the process. Mr. Waldron: wanted to make a point that he is not totally against paying something for use of hydrants but it has to be realistic. No more discussion.

Comm. Gallant read article #10. He commented there is a separate budget for the Apparatus and Equipment fund and the budget committee will review at their public hearing. This amount does not include any other separate warrant articles. Only deals with items that remain on the books from last year. \$110,718 for 3 vehicle leases, fire and rescue equipment and it has been recommended by both the commissioners and the budget committee. He asked the body if acceptable to wait until budget committee comes up to present their budget.

Comm. Gallant read article #11. This means that both the budget committee and the commissioners are recommending the same amount of money for general district operations. Amount excludes all other money articles that have been read. We'll discuss when budget committee discusses the budget.

Comm. Gallant read article #12, the petitioned warrant article. Comm. Gallant asked if a petitioner or someone representing the petition warrant article would like to speak to the article. Joyce Fulweiler addressed: this was presented last year on behalf of citizens who came to the Northfield Town Hall. They found this fund confusing and it failed last year. This year petition is coming from the selectman. Even though the numbers are out there, it is still confusing. We went back to looking at all the revenues and expenses and how much money you have coming from ambulance fees feels this would make it a little bit clearer to people. Donna Bouchard. was wondering if appropriate due to confusion and experience this year. School has cost centers, could it be better defined like the school budget is? At least she knows what they are buying. Comm. Gallant agreed and commented that the budget committee will be having their meeting and this idea could be discussed at that time. Kevin Waldron, if this article passes, when would it be in effect. Comm. Gallant said 2008. Kevin asked what would happen with the money. Comm. Gallant was not sure, but assumed it would go back into the general fund. Kevin asked if we'd have to make another warrant to open another truck fund. Comm. Gallant said that the truck capital reserve fund still exists. We will be raising money and including in the operating budget the money spent on equipment and replacement. We would basically revert back to the system that we had before. Joyce Fulweiler: spoke with Bob Anderson from DRA go ahead and adopt all that was presented and pay out all the 2007 budget and whatever monies are left you take out of the fund and put into the general fund. The separate account would be closed. Comm. Gallant said that if all the funds go to the operating budget that would mean there would be no money in the truck capital reserve fund. If we ended 2007 with \$150,000 in that account and it all goes back into general fund, we will have \$0 in capital reserve fund. Joyce commented the district could retain that balance and have people vote to spend a certain amount or set up a capital reserve fund. The money would be accounted for differently. She is speaking for townspeople from Northfield. They come out once a year to town meeting but know what the bottom line is. All warrants are there for a reason, if it goes to a capital reserve fund, or another fund that won't lapse. When they see the bottom line is \$3.2 million dollars and ask what will do for their tax rate. Part of problem they like to pick the color of truck, ask questions about the input of the purchases. They want to have something to say about it; not that they don't agree with what you are purchasing but the way it is being purchased. Scott Davis: he voted for this article in 2005 because he believed in principle. You said money would go into the fund and then next year we would close the truck funds. His understanding when he voted that he was going to save up to the account and brought to body to vote and it would be a full purchase not a lease purchase. Will we always be leasing for several years out or will this be a direct purchase? Comm. Gallant: regarding his comments that night to close trust funds out, DRA informed us that we cannot do that, we can draw them down. But we are now looking at a \$155,000 loan and \$155,000 coming from capital reserve fund. We changed that amount from capital reserve because of the returns on that account being low. Will we ever reach a point to draw and pay cash for something? It would be the intent of the commissioners but it will be impossible to have the amount required to purchase a ladder truck. What is it costing us in the meantime? It's a business decision. We try to work in a reasonable manner with that fund. It is governed by state RSAs, subject to scrutiny of commissioners and the body. It is no different from the equipment fund that the town of Tilton is trying to establish. Scott Davis: whole crux of question is the thought to get to a point where to buy a pick up or a Chief's vehicle wouldn't it be wiser to save money up and pay

for a one time payment from fund? Comm. Gallant stated if he had to choose to draw the \$25,000 today or leasing it at \$5000 for a lease, he would not go to buy outright. He would lease or not buy at all. Can we live for another year without it, yes. Comm. Gallant mentioned that he will move to take the warrants out of order until warrant 5 is voted on. Article 6 is a back up article in case article 5 fails. This is why he provided the lease interest and the loan interest. Kevin Waldron: you mentioned the only reason you put article 6 in is that it gives you another shot at the engine. Comm. Gallant said yes. Kevin: so you want this truck and you will try financing any way possible. Comm. Gallant agreed. Lisa Swampscott: the ambulance fees would go into a capital improvement fund and stay there until next town meeting. Are they being spent during the year? Comm. Gallant: it does have its own separate budget and expense accounts. She feels that it is strange to have two separate accounts and, if to make large purchases, should come before the town for approval. Discussion ended on Article 12.

Comm. Gallant read article #13. Chief addressed. Ordinance #3 would set up basic fire alarm for installers. False alarms, more than 3 in 12 months would give us ability to fine. Maintenance or lack of maintenance we could charge them a fee in order to get them to comply and get their systems back up to workable standards. Comm. Gallant asked for any questions. Kevin Waldron: is there going to be an appeals process for the aggrieved. Chief commented it isn't clearly defined in the ordinance, but we would certainly be available to hear any appeal. Not clearly written into the ordinance. Comm. Gallant asked for any other questions. None

Comm. Gallant read article #14 . Housekeeping item once reports have been rendered.

Comm. Gallant read article #15. Comm. Gallant asked Chief to address. This warrant continues what we have done relative to grants. This year we received a grant for \$165,000 for breathing apparatus and the installation of a compressor to fill the breathing apparatus. Now all SCBAs are all up to the same standard and uniform and all function the same way. The breathing air cylinders and our cascade system can now be filled at Park Street station which saves us from going to Franklin and having personnel out of the district for that purpose. The grant had a 5% match and we paid \$11,000 as our share. The last big grant we got gave us a tanker. The tanker was delivered in July 2006 and that was another grant from fed government. So we paid \$10,000 out of our money to get a tanker. Comm. Gallant wanted to thank Chief for his expertise in writing these grants for the district.

Comm. Gallant read article #16. We haven't borrowed money in anticipation of taxes in the past few years.

Comm. Gallant read article #17. No comments.

Comm. Gallant motioned to close warrant hearing at 8:06 and move to bond hearing. Comm. Watson seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Janine L. Vary, Clerk