

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS

2021 Fire Station Building Committee Meeting

Meeting Called By: FSBC

Date, Time: 10/23/23, 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Courtney Palmer

Location: Tilton Town Hall
Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main St. Tilton, NH
03276

Call to Order

Paul Blaisdell called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Attendance

Dennis Manning, Kevin Waldron, Lisa Martin, Paul Blaisdell, Nate Langione, Deputy Chief Sean Valovane, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson (arrived at 6 PM), Chief Michael Sitar, and Derek Farrell.

Public: Commissioner Paul Auger

Public Comment

Commissioner Auger stated that the Building Committee is overlooking a few things. He commented about the age demographics of Tilton and Northfield as well as the age of the buildings in each area.

Commissioner Auger stated that he is not in favor of the Sanborn Rd. site. **He stated that the Committee should consider a single station in Northfield.**

Derek commented that they should consider tearing down Center Street Station and building a three-bay station.

Dennis asked what the Commissioner's thoughts were on getting a third ambulance. Chief Sitar replied that that hasn't been discussed yet in the budget process.

There were questions about how much land TNFD owns at Center Street. Paul replied that they own up to the railroad tracks. Discussion ensued.

Derek stated that what is needed right now is a fire station in the center of the district and the best place for that is Center Street. Lisa suggested that there could be a combination of updating or replacing Center Street and adding something at Park Street.

Lisa stated that they are going off the path of what the Committee has been told to do. Derek suggested that they are still in the process of brainstorming ideas. Discussion ensued.

Nate asked if there is any wiggle room in the contract that they have with Loureiro Construction. Chief Sitar stated that he had told them to stop working because no decisions had been made, so he didn't want to spend any more money. He added that if Loureiro is asked to change what

they are doing, there may be a change in price. Lisa added that this had already been done once, which was an extra \$15,000 to study Sanborn Rd.

Lisa stated that she had never seen anything studied on whether they could build a brand-new station at Center Street. Discussion ensued about the possibility of this and the parking needs for Center Street.

Nate questioned where the firefighters would go in the meantime while a new station was being built. Deputy Chief Valovane replied they would have to get temporary housing. Lisa stated that they could add an addition to the Park Street property for that, and when Center Street is finished it could continue to be a usable space.

Paul stated that he would like to know what percentage of Park Street can be renovated without having to bring the existing building up to code. Lisa commented that lateral, structural stuff can easily be solved.

Nate stated that it would be beneficial to have a document from Loureiro with what can or cannot be done to Park Street. Lisa said that they already had that report from Loureiro. Discussion ensued about said report and disclaimers on that.

Discussion was had on whether changing the use of the structure means that the building would need to be brought up to code.

Lisa suggested a recommendation that the Commissioners have Loureiro study Center Street and what can be put there.

Deputy Chief Robinson discussed petitioning the state to add an emergency stop light to the end of the alley at Center Street. He discussed the location of calls and response times.

Deputy Chief Robinson mentioned there had been talk about Northfield succeeding from the district. If that happened, the fire district would have to split the assets. He commented that Park Street has been the closer station for the call firefighters. He went on to discuss the future of call firefighters and the difficulty of finding new hires with the time commitments for training, licensure, and certifications. He suggested that if there was just one station, it shouldn't be too far away from the village. If there were to be two stations, they should be spread out. He added that he thinks the Committee and Commissioners should not rush this decision for March.

Old Business

Paul stated that he would like to discuss the October 20th memo, the subject being "Fire Personnel Concerns" from Chief Sitar. The memo reads:

"I called a meeting of the formal and informal leaders, both Career members and Call members of TNFD, to determine their concerns regarding a new fire station or stations. These concerns take into consideration whether there is a one-station build or a two-station proposal, no matter what form that may take.

Through our discussion, the following points were raised as concerns in order of importance:

- 1. The current staffing of 4 FFs at the Headquarters Station must remain the same, wherever that may be.*
- 2. If there are to be two manned stations, additional personnel must be hired.*

3. *Wherever Headquarters will be, everything needed to operate on a daily basis must be located there.*
4. *An exploration of using Apparatus and Equipment Funds to help pay for any fire station construction bonds should be conducted.*

I want the Commissioners and the Building Committee to know that I agree with the concerns raised. If you would like to discuss these concerns further, we should invite these stakeholders in for a conversation."

Paul asked Chief Sitar whether the four items listed above were unanimous. They were. He went on to ask about concerns that were not unanimous.

Chief Sitar replied that there wasn't total agreement on the location of the fire station. He believes that all the firefighters would prefer to work out of one large central location if possible.

Lisa suggested having Loureiro look at Center Street to see what they could do with it.

Dennis stated that the Committee should be focusing on what is really needed for a new station.

Chief Sitar mentioned that he had a survey done with the voters in 2014 or 2015 to get an idea of what they would and wouldn't support. He mentioned that if the Committee were to conduct a survey, there would be bias attached to that. He mentioned having voters create the survey questions.

Dennis stated that he believes public hearings are better. Chief Sitar agreed. He mentioned that an important question for the voters is "What are your expectations?" Nate stated that it may be a good idea to still hand out a short survey with a comment section at the district meeting and/or the Tilton-Northfield town meetings.

Paul stated the only way one of the proposals is going to be approved is if there is some visual aspect.

Nate stated that they could ask the voters where they would prefer a new fire station to be built, Tilton or Northfield. Lisa said, "I'm a voter and I don't know the right answer because I rely on these people to give me that right answer, and the voters will too."

Dennis mentioned that the Committee has been focused on what they believe the voters will and will not vote for, but they cannot say what the voters will do.

Paul stated that what he has heard so far from the meeting is that neither the Park Street location nor the Sanborn Road location is central enough for calls to make either one desirable.

Paul stated that, in his opinion, if they are going to have Center Street as an option, they need to know the size of the lot, what the setbacks are, the building requirements, what do they intend on putting there for equipment and people, and then hire Loureiro to say whether they can do it.

Nate commented that it would be worth getting confirmation from Loureiro as to the building requirements at Park Street. Paul replied that, so far, it seems like Park Street would not be a solution for a main station. Nate responded that he still thinks it would be a good idea to know what they can and can't do at Park Street before moving forward.

Discussion ensued about the main building having all the firefighters, adequate equipment, which would be one engine, two ambulances, and the utility truck, and having the administration.

Paul suggested asking the Commissioners to contact Loureiro or have Chief Sitar contact Loureiro to find out what the cost would be to have a study done on Center Street and a new design for that.

Nate wanted it clarified that if they were to go with Sanborn Rd. or Center Street for the main station, Park Street would remain for the call firefighters. Paul responded that it would. Discussion ensued about splitting up the four career personnel between two stations. There was some confusion about this.

Discussion ensued about having four personnel at one station and two personnel at the other station and how that would affect shift schedules and the need for sleeping quarters.

Discussion ensued about the Apparatus and Equipment Fund, how much money is in that, and what that money can be used for.

Paul stated that nothing can be taken out of the Apparatus and Equipment Fund without the voter's approval. Lisa stated that the Committee has lost focus as they do not determine where money comes from.

Minutes

Dennis made a motion to approve the minutes from 10.02.23. Lisa seconded the motion. Nate requested to fix a typo on page three of the minutes from "Nated" to "Nate". There being no further discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

Other Business

Paul stated that he would like to give the Commissioners some guidance as to what the Committee's next steps are going to be. He mentioned that one of the next steps will be looking at the space needs study. He added that there is a possibility that they will lose the rescue truck because it isn't being used.

Lisa wanted to discuss postponing the scheduled informational meetings. Paul agreed with Lisa that they should postpone the scheduled meetings until they have a more concrete idea of what they are doing.

Paul asked the Committee if they would like to make a recommendation to the Commissioners that they discuss expanding Loureiro's contract to include an evaluation of the site and potential building at Center Street.

Nate suggested that the Committee recommend the Commissioners meet with the Tilton Selectmen to discuss the Center Street Station. Paul commented that Center Street is the property of TNFD. They don't need the Selectmen's permission for anything. Chief Sitar added that the only discussion they should have with the Selectmen is whether a new building at Center Street could expand into town property.

Nate mentioned that Center Street is an irregular lot, so technically it is not buildable if there was to be nothing on it. Discussion ensued about whether this applies.

Paul asked how the Committee feels about asking the Commissioners to investigate with Loureiro what the options are with the Center Street lot.

Chief Sitar stated that he would ask Loureiro what an amendment to the contract would look like and what it would cost. He could bring that to the next Commissioner's meeting for a vote.

Paul made a motion that, as a committee, they recommend the Commissioners investigate the viability of using Center Street as a location for a new station and ask Loureiro Construction to provide input on building size and general layout of that building. Nate seconded the motion.

Kevin mentioned that every time the Committee changes their mind, they look less intelligent to the public. Dennis disagreed. Kevin added that the Commissioners should have thought of this. Discussion ensued.

There being no other further discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

Paul stated that at the next meeting, he would like the Committee to review space needs.

Paul asked Chief Sitar if he could have Kathy do an agenda for the next meeting with the following: call the meeting to order, review space needs, review minutes, and other business.

Lisa asked when the next newsletter would be. Nate stated that it will be Friday, October 27th. Informational meeting dates were not listed in the last newsletter. Nate stated that they could vote on what exactly that newsletter will say on Wednesday, over email. Lisa requested to add the newsletter to the agenda for all Building Committee meetings. Paul mentioned that the agenda is really for the public.

Adjournment

Dennis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Paul seconded the motion. There being no discussion, a vote was taken. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Palmer

Courtney Palmer
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

November 13th, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Tilton Town Hall
Downstairs Meeting Room
257 Main Street
Tilton, NH