

Village District of Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS

New Hampshire

2024 Meeting Minutes

Polls were opened on the 12th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-four at the Pines Community Center, Dearborn Road, Northfield at seven o'clock a.m. by Moderator Pro Tem Kent Finemore. The polls were closed at seven o'clock p.m. with 342 votes cast. Polls were opened on the 12th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-four at the Winnisquam Regional High School, Main Street, Tilton at seven o'clock a.m. by Moderator Helen Hanks. The polls were closed at seven o'clock p.m. with 295 votes cast.

Article 01 To choose Fire District Officers for the ensuing years.

Commissioner – 3 Year Term

Jason A Wright292

Eric Pyra275

Treasurer – 3 Year Term

Timothy F Pearson547

Clerk – 3 Year Term

Jean F Samms545

Moderator – 2 Year Term

Write In – Position to be appointed by the Commissioners for one year.

The 2024 Fire District annual meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on the 18th day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-four at the Winnisquam Regional High School, Main Street, Tilton, by Moderator Kent Finemore to act upon the following subjects.

Moderator Finemore introduced the members of the Budget Committee, Commissioners, Clerks, Assistant Moderators Matthew Drummand and Stephanie Giovannucci. Read the rules of the meeting. Commissioner Tim Sattler presented a slideshow outlining the year in review. Chief Michael Sitar led the assembly in the Pledge of Alliance.

Moderator Finemore read article 1 with the results.

Article 02 To accept the reports of the Treasurer and the Fire Commissioners and pass any vote relating thereto.

Moved by Arnold Graton, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

Kevin Waldron asked what does the article mean? Discussion ensued. Moderator Finemore called for voter card vote.

Yes 38 No 40. Article Fails.

Kevin Cate moved, Kevin Waldron seconded to protect the vote. Article Passed.

Article 03 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committees' recommended sum of Three Million Six Hundred Ninety Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$3,690,960) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners for \$3,555,019 (Majority vote required.)

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Wright stated that this is all general expenses to run the department.

Discussion ensued regarding which amount on the budget is actually being voted on; the Budget Committee recommended amount or the Commissioner recommended amount? The reply was the Budget Committee's recommended amount. Helen Hardenbergh asked how many employees there are currently and if there were any new. Chief Sitar responded there are 19 full-time employees and 1 part-time. No new hires. Mark Hubbell wanted to know why there was such a large increase this year. Jason Wright responded that tenured personnel costs were the reason. Chuck Mitchell was interested in knowing what created the difference of \$135,945 between the 2 recommendations. Ch Sattler responded personnel cost PayScale difference between the two.

Kevin Waldron moved an amendment to the article.

Amendment 1: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Million One Hundred Seventy-Nine Thousand Six Hundred fifty Dollars (\$3,179,650.00) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Amendment seconded by Arnold Graton

Kevin Waldron stated that the SAFER grant should have been discussed in a prior public hearing so everyone would understand that at the end of the grant the taxpayers would pick up the cost. The difference is approximately a 5% decrease. Moderator Finnemore opened the floor to discussion. Scott Lewandowski responded that the SAFER committee worked very hard to mitigate the impact. Kevin Cate wanted to know why now we must pay for the hydrants when the assembly has said no 3 times. Jason Wright responded that it was court ordered to pay. Discussion ensued concerning the need for additional personnel for the department and the difficulty in recruitment.

Kathi Mitchell moved to call the question, seconded by Jerry Davis.

The motion requires a 2/3 majority. Voice Vote Passed.

The moderator calls for a voice vote on Amendment 1. Being in doubt calls for a voter card vote.

Yes 31 No 51. Motion Failed.

Ross Cunningham moved an amendment to the article.

Amendment 2: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate sum of Three Million Five Hundred Fifty-Five Thousand Nineteen Dollars (\$3,555,019) as recommended by the Commissioners for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required).

Amendment seconded by Jerry Davis.

Ross Cunningham stated that this amendment is for a bottom-line budget and requests that the employees are taken care of. Moderator Finnemore opened the floor to discussion. Jason Wright wanted to make sure the hydrants were included in the budget. Ch Sattler said yes, they are. Jason Wright stated that the budget committee wanted to include payroll raises in future years so they wouldn't have to come back every year to ask for payroll increases each year.

Jason Durgin moved to call the question, seconded by Kathi Mitchell. 2/3 vote required. Voice Vote Passed.

The moderator calls for a voice vote on Amendment 2. Being in doubt calls for a voter card vote. Yes 48 No 30

Amendment 2 Passes.

Article 3 as amended: Passes

Eric Pyra moved, Mark Hebert seconded to restrict reconsideration. Motion Passes.

Article 04 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate Two hundred Fifty-Two Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Nine Dollars (\$252,849) for the purpose of purchasing Fire, Rescue, EMS Equipment and Ambulance Charges, with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Replacement Special Revenue fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 7, 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and \$225,559.00 is recommended by the Budget committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finnemore opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Pyra explained the difference in recommendations and what is included in the amounts. Base station repeaters were removed from the budget committee number. Gretchen Wilder inquired as to if the purpose of the fund had been changed. Chief Sitar responded that the purpose of the fund was changed last year to include maintenance, repairs and equipment.

Moderator Finnemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Matthew Drummond moved, Jason Durgin seconded to protect the vote. Motion Passes.

Article 05 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate Five Hundred Fifty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Dollars (\$559,520.00) for the purpose of a new ambulance with equipment, with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue Fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 7, 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Tim Sattler, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Commissioner Sattler stated that it is to fund the purchase of a new ambulance to replace A1. The district wants to keep the old ambulance for backup. Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. Kevin Waldron questioned the need for a 3rd ambulance at this cost. Chief Sitar spoke of the need to have a 3rd ambulance available if one is in for repairs and, in order for the ambulance to be licensed it needs to be equipped in to be licensed by the state. Jen Haskins wanted to know if the revenue received would be the same every year. Chief Sitar responded that it changes and may be more this year. Commissioner Sattler explained how the account earns revenue and how it can cost the department by missing calls.

Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Matthew Drummond moved, Jason Durgin seconded to protect the vote. Motion Passes.

Article 06 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy-Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$79,950.00) for the purpose of purchasing a new ¾ ton 4x4 pickup with plow with said funds to be withdrawn from the Apparatus and Equipment Special Revenue Fund established under RSA 31:95-C (Adopted March 2005). Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Tim Sattler, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Commissioner Paul Auger said it is to replace an 18-year-old pickup truck. Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. Chief Sitar said that the pickup will be replaced utilizing the State bid for a Ford F250. Kevin Waldron wanted to know why the District wasn't getting an F350 as it is needed on back roads.

Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Matthew Drummond moved, Jerry Davis seconded to protect the vote. Motion Passes.

Article 07 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established and to make the Board of Fire Commissioners agents to the fund. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Kevin Wadleigh and seconded by Jerry Davis.

Paul Auger reported that the fund currently has \$792,451.25 and it is gaining interest.

Kevin Waldron moved an amendment to the article.

Amendment 1: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,00.00) to be added to the Land & Building Capital Reserve fund previously established. (Majority vote required).

Amendment seconded by Gretchen Wilder

Kevin Waldron explained that if the Commissioners were named as agents on the fund, they could expend the money for anything and at any time they wished without a vote from the public. This amendment is only to remove the commissioners as agents. Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. Jason Wright commented that by having agents named, if a survey or other test borings are required on a property it can happen timely.

Discussion ensued regarding the commissioners being agents, and room in the budget for additional spending.

Moderator Finemore calls for a voice vote on Amendment 1. **Amendment 1 Fails.**

Moderator Finnemore calls for a voice vote on Article 07 as read. Being in doubt calls for a voter card vote.

Yes 39 No 27

Article 7 passes as read.

Jennifer Haskins moved, Jason Wright seconded to protect the vote. Motion Passes.

Article 08 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Nine Thousand Six Hundred Twenty-Seven Dollars (\$9,627.00) for the purpose of adding to the existing Fire Prevention Expendable Trust Fund with said funds to be withdrawn for the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioner and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority voter required).

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. There being none, Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 09 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Seven Hundred Nine Dollars (\$4,709.00) for the purpose of purchasing materials, tools, and equipment related to public education, code enforcement, training, etc. with said fund to be withdrawn from the Fire Prevention Expendable Trust Fund. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. There being none, Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 10 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) for the purpose of adding to the existing Health Insurance Deductible Expendable Trust Fund with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unassigned Fund Balance, funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Paul Auger, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. This fund is used to offset deductibles for employees.

Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 11 To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-three thousand Eight Hundred Seventy-Six Dollars (\$23,876.00) for the purpose of adding to the existing Communications Tower Expendable Trust Fund as established by Warrant Article 11 at the 2021 District Meeting with said funds to be withdrawn from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Funds appropriated from this fund do not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Tim Sattler, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion.

There being none, Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 12 To see if the District will vote to establish a contingency fund per RSA 31:90-a and raise and appropriate Thirty Thousand One Hundred Twenty-Seven Dollars (\$30,127.00) to put in the fund. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund. Funds appropriated from this fund to not affect the tax rate. This article is recommended by the Board of Commissioners and is recommended by the Budget Committee. (Majority vote required).

Moved by Eric Pyra, seconded by Jerry Davis.

Moderator Finemore opened the floor for discussion. Gretchen Wilder asked if DRA requires this per the RSA? Chief Sitar responded that it is a requirement by DRA and it needs to be on the warrant every year. If not used, the funds revert to the Unassigned Fund Balance at the end of the year.

Moderator Finemore closes the floor and calls for a voice vote. **Article Passes.**

Article 13 To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Moderator Finemore thanks Eric Pyra for his term as Commissioner.

Kevin Waldron reveals after he read the annual report from 2023 concerning article 7, the Commissioners as agents to expend were deleted at the District Meeting in 2023. What happens now?

District Attorney Paul Fitzgerald explained that Warrant Article 7 was protected by majority vote, so at this time it cannot be reconsidered. A separate meeting would have to be held. Janice Kate spoke of holding a special meeting. Instead of that, Kevin Waldron asked the Commissioners to promise they would not spend any funds from the Land and Building Capitol Reserve Fund in 2024. The Commissioners agreed to that request. Gretchen Wilder requested that all 5 Commissioners indicate they would not spend any funds by a positive nod of their heads. They complied.

Dennis Manning made a recommendation to the Commissioners that they remove the verbiage that requires the Fire District Chief be a resident of the District.

Moved by Tim Pearson, seconded by a Majority of the body to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;



Jean F Samms, District Clerk