

# Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By: Commissioners

Date, Time: 09/26/23, 5:30 PM

Transcribed By: Courtney Palmer

Location: Tilton Town Hall  
Downstairs Meeting Room  
257 Main Street  
Tilton, NH

## **Call to Order**

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM.

## **Attendance**

Commissioners Paul Auger, Eric Pyra, Tim Sattler, Chief Michael Sitar, Deputy Chief Sean Valovanie, Deputy Chief Michael Robinson, and Lisa Martin.

## **Building Committee**

Lisa reported that at the last building committee meeting (9.19.23) the majority vote was for the Sanborn Road site. She stated that, in her opinion, they really need to own the site before continuing with designing.

She mentioned that Matt Auger made a comment about the value of Center Street being \$350,000 based on Zillow. She believes this is important to consider when compared to the value of the Sanborn Rd. site.

Lisa stated that if the department were to tear down Center Street, they would have to go through the historical preservation society because it is protected under the National Historic Preservation Act, section 106.

## **Old Business**

The deal that the commissioners made with the town of Tilton was the following: The town agreed to do a land swap and give the department Sanborn Rd. in exchange for the Center Street property with the building demolished and the lot paved.

Commissioner Sattler discussed having two stations. One at Park Street and one at Sanborn Rd to appease Tilton voters who will not be ok with having just one station over in Northfield.

Commissioner Pyra asked what one station on Sanborn Road would mean for the future of the call division since they are mostly at Park Street in Northfield. Deputy Chief Robinson responded that it wouldn't be good because, at present, the call firefighters can use back roads

and side streets to get to the station, but if the station is moved to a different location the traffic and roads would make it harder for them to get from point A to point B.

Commissioner Sattler stated that Sanborn Rd. would have the administration, living facilities, and primary response vehicles. Chief Sitar stated that they would need both ambulances, at least one engine, the boat, and the pickup truck at Sanborn Rd.

There was a discussion about how difficult is to get call personnel and how there will eventually be a need for more full-time people.

Deputy Chief Robinson suggested reducing the size of the bays on Sanborn Rd and design it with the knowledge that things change and grow. He suggested having a plan for later down the line to accommodate full-time firefighters.

Deputy Chief Robinson stated he would like to see the apparatus and equipment fund modified, so that some of those funds could be used to finance a bond. He asserted that the fund is in good shape at this time and will continue to accumulate money.

Commissioner Sattler stated that they have gotten a little off track by focusing on what is the better site to build on without having a good conception of what they are building or whether it is the best location.

There was discussion about the value of Center Street and it's status with the National Historic Registry. Commissioner Pyra commented that section 106 only applies if it is a federally assisted property. Lisa disagreed because it is eligible and protected. Chief Sitar stated they would need someone to look into that.

Commissioner Pyra mentioned that Center Street has no parking because they are under agreement with the Town of Tilton. That does not mean it will carry over with the sale of the building. This would lower the value of the property.

Deputy Chief Robinson brought up response times and discussed where most calls come from, mainly the village area. Discussion ensued about what is included in the village area and how things are changing.

Commissioner Pyra asked if they should get on the selectman's agenda.

Lisa commented that they should have a backup plan. She stated that at the building committee meeting it was made clear that they were voting on a site not the building size or layout.

Discussion ensued about setback rules for each site. Commissioner Sattler asked about having to bring existing buildings up to code if the new building would not be attached to the existing one.

Lisa stated that the other issue is that the department is housing very expensive equipment at Park Street in a building that is not up to code.

Commissioner Pyra stated that he noticed that the square footage estimates are off on the proposed design. Commissioner Sattler stated that they noticed that, but that they haven't yet gotten into the building size.

Commissioner Pyra asked if the DOT would allow access from Park Street. Chief Sitar stated that he would need to look at that.

There were concerns that there is not enough parking at Park Street.

Commissioner Pyra shared that he was concerned about the timeline for proposing a new fire station because it has been said that the Northfield Police Department will be proposing a new police station in 2025. It would not be ideal to propose a new fire station at the same time a new police station is being proposed. It was discussed that there are other factors working against them as well, such as the cost of construction being so high.

Chief Sitar said he would have Loureiro Construction look into the National Historic Preservation Act, section 106 for Center Street. He would also look into the curb cut at Park Street and what can be done about that.

Chief Sitar stated that he could do some investigating on response times.

Commissioner Auger stated that the Commissioners should come to an agreement about whether they want to wait to propose the new station or if they want to have it ready for March 2024.

Lisa stated that there was no consensus from the committee on the timeline. She went on to state that the Committee could move on to looking at space needs.

It was reiterated that the deal with the Town of Tilton that the department would give them Center Street with the building demolished and the space paved in exchange for Sanborn Rd. Discussion about this ensued.

There was discussion about what the taxpayers will and will not vote for.

Commissioner Auger stated that the questions and issues discussed at today's meeting should be looked into before going further.

Commissioner Pyra makes a motion to have the Building Committee continue to look at space needs until the location is determined. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. A vote is taken. The motion is passed.

Commissioner Pyra makes a motion to have Chief Sitar report back to the Commissioners on the following: have Loureiro pause the design of the fire station and continue space needs evaluation, come up with a fall back plan if unable to demolish the Center Street Station, determine if there is any historic significance to Center Street Station, find out about a possible curb cut or expansion of existing curb cut at Park Street, and find out response time changes

based on each location. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. A vote is taken. The motion is passed.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Pyra makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. A vote is taken. The motion is passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Submitted Respectfully,

*Courtney Palmer*

Courtney Palmer

Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place:

October 3, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

Tilton Town Hall

Downstairs Meeting Room

257 Main St. Tilton, NH 03276