

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
Litchfield Board of Fire Commissioners & EMS
November 16, 2023 – 5:00 PM
Litchfield Fire Department
258 West St ▪ Litchfield CT**

Members Present: John Campbell, Michael Castelli (on cell phone) , Sean Fogarty, Jack Hodges, Jon Tarrant (arrived at 5:05 pm), Fire Marshal Dave Rogers.

Members Absent: None.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman J. Campbell opened the meeting at 5:00 pm. LFD still does not have a fire commissioner.

2. Discuss Bid on Northfield Fire Truck

Engine 1 Committee Chairman, D. Carroll, read a letter addressing the concerns expressed by this commission at the previous meeting which prevented a vote on the NFD Engine 1 bid. This letter was submitted as part of these minutes and is attached. D. Carroll read a second letter providing supporting documentation of the spec differences from the Alexis Fire Equipment Company's low bid detailing how New England Fire Apparatus bid is the best option. Most noted were the 15" longer wheel base making turning around in tight driveways difficult, hard suction storage will need to go on the roof making the truck 4" higher and ladders will hang 10" off the back. The commission was satisfied with this explanation and accepted the recommendation. Public Works Supervisor, N. Boccio, found no issues with either bid. The New England Apparatus bid is \$882,463.00. NFD has \$849,784.24 available capital. Additional funding of \$32,678.76 is needed before the expected delivery in July 2025.

3. Vote on Approval of Truck Bid

J. Hodges moved to select the New England Fire Apparatus bid for NFD's Engine 1 Fire Pumper Truck and approved the capital balance authorization of \$849,784.24 for this purchase, S. Fogarty seconded and there was no discussion. Voting to approve the bid was J. Hodges, S. Fogarty, J. Campbell and M. Castelli (via cellphone). J. Tarrant voted against the bid.

4. Vote on Supporting Additional Funding if Required

J. Hodges motioned to authorize the Board of FC & EMS to request from the Board of Selectmen the additional \$32,678.76 needed to fulfill the overrun cost for the proposed truck to be purchased from New England Fire Apparatus. J. Tarrant seconded with discussion regarding concerns if additional funding was not approved. The expected delivery time for the truck is 600 days. The commission was confident there was sufficient time to acquire the needed funding. The commission's approval vote for the request was unanimous.

5. Possible Executive Session – Bid Process

Since this committee reached an agreement on the truck bid, no legal issues needed to be discussed and there was no executive session.

6. Adjournment

J. Hodges moved to adjourn at 5:33 pm, M. Castelli seconded and vote was unanimous.

John Campbell, Chairman
Board of Fire Commissioners & EMS

Date

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To the Board of Fire Commissioners,

Over the last 12 months, a 7-member committee consisting of current and former officers (including one career firefighter) have diligently worked on a replacement truck spec and bid review for Northfield Engine 1.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to provide our firefighters with the tools they need to be successful in protecting life, property, and coming home safely to their families. All 4 town fire departments have diverse fire districts with significantly different needs than one another.

All the Engine 1 bids received by the Town of Litchfield exceeded the budgetary allotment provided to us 2 years ago by \$100,000 to \$150,000. The committee compared potential configuration adjustments and decided to downgrade the engine/transmission and take advantage of early payment options to further reduce those costs.

The Northfield Fire Company has chosen the New England Fire Apparatus Bid for several reasons. New England built Northfield Engine Tanker 2, our existing Engine 1, and dozens of other fire apparatus across Litchfield County. Most importantly, their middle-priced bid fully meets the expected output of our bid spec. The New England package we have chosen is \$11,849 more than the comparable Northeast Fire low bid that does not fully meet our requirements.

Attached is an appendix laying out the specific differences in apparatus and cost.

At the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting on Nov 9th, there was significant pushback on our choice of apparatus by some members of the commission and a clear desire to push the fire company toward the Northeast Fire bid.

The officers of the Northfield Fire Company do not believe it is in the scope of either the Board of Fire Commissioners or anonymous amateur fire apparatus "experts" to decide what is the right equipment to protect the members and residents of the Northfield fire district. This sets a concerning precedent that will apply to all town department equipment purchases in the future and is counter-productive to the ideals of teamwork and brotherhood that we all speak of so strongly.

The Northfield Engine 1 committee and the membership of the fire company are unanimous in our choice to move forward with New England Fire to build our future Engine 1.

Thank you,

David Carroll
Deputy Chief
Engine 1 Committee Chair
Northfield Fire Company