

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION MEETING
AUGUST 14, 2007**

This meeting was called to order by Carol A. Raph, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised under Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

The flag salute was led by Mayor Perri. Following the flag salute he called for a moment of silence to recognize those who are fighting at home and abroad for our liberties that they may return home safely to their families.

ROLL CALL: Present: Carew, Mazzeo, Martinez, Notaro, Turon, Vain, Kern

City Solicitor Keith Bonchi, City Administrator Jeffrey Bruckler, Engineer Ed Stinson, CFO Marilyn Dolcy, Deputy City Clerk Kim Hodsdon, and Police Chief Robert James were present.

Council President Kern reviewed the agenda. Councilman Mazzeo and Engineer Stinson discussed Resolution 135-2007. Councilman Vain requested that Resolution 139-2007 be added to the agenda to show support for a Library Levy Cap Exception.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Council discussed the 'Welcome to Northfield' sign program. Councilman Notaro reported that Eastern Signs was the lowest bidder on making the signs and that Council needed to decide the fees that would be charged to sponsors. Councilman Notaro will prepare a detailed proposal for the next Council meeting for Solicitor Bonchi's review.

Administrator Bruckler included a copy of his proposed Facilities and Fields Use Policy with his written report that was distributed to Council. The proposal includes rules, regulations, fees and insurance requirements that would be imposed on non-City organizations for the use of City recreational areas and facilities. He asked Council to please review the proposal and be prepared to vote on it at the next meeting.

Council President Kern opened the discussion to the subject of the Northfield Volunteer Rescue Squad. Mayor Perri reviewed an analysis that was prepared by Administrator Bruckler which outlined five different options for the future of the Squad. Perri stated that the Rescue Squad is recognized as a corporation. As the President of the Squad, Perri reported that the Squad held a meeting to discuss the matter which resulted in an option that was not reflected in the Administrator's analysis. They suggested that paid EMT's be hired to staff the operation between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm and that the evening hours be supplemented with volunteers. The initial cost of paid personnel could be funded with the organization's current account holdings of approximately \$140,000.00. Future costs would be offset by billing insurance companies for calls; the rates and terms of collection would need to be established by resolution of the Governing Body. The Mayor stated that individuals without insurance would not be billed personally for the service and that the City could still accept donations.

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Perri spoke to the dedication, professionalism and experience of the long time members of the squad and suggested that they be given first consideration for the paid positions.

Council President Kern noted that Council is always appreciative and commends the Squad for their outstanding service to the community. She expressed concern that Council had just seen the analysis for the first time that evening and felt that more detailed information is needed. Councilman Carew questioned the legality of using public donations to pay staff salaries. Solicitor Bonchi suggested that it would be prudent to seek the opinion of the State Attorney General's Office regarding the use of the funds for a paid staff.

The Mayor and Council discussed the requirement for the Squad to become licensed in order to start billing for service calls. Councilman Carew asked why shared services were not listed as an option on the analysis. He stated that the City of Linwood experienced the same transition with their rescue squad and ultimately opted for an outside service. The Mayor and Councilman Carew discussed regionalization, consolidation, and shared services. Councilman Turon questioned how many of last year's calls were billable. The Mayor estimated 50 to 65%. Turon would like to see a more detailed proposal and analysis of the Squad's suggestion. Solicitor Bonchi reiterated the need for more information and long-term projections. Mayor Perri agreed and thanked City Council for their time and consideration of the matter.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Kern opened this meeting to the public. John Fredericks, Northfield resident and member of the Rescue Squad, came forward. He offered figures that he had calculated regarding the suggestion to pay EMS staff. He also discussed the cost to the City and residents of Linwood for using AtlantiCare. He suggested that Council utilize the paid firefighters to primarily cover the EMS calls, as they are already a paid staff, and to use volunteers to supplement the evening hours.

Robert Webb, of 218 West Revere Avenue came forward and urged Council to utilize current paid staff to supplement the Rescue Squad operation in order to keep property taxes down.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, Council President Kern closed the public session.

On a motion properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Raph, RMC/CMC