

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 4, 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, and the community volunteers, that they may return home safely to their families.

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

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 the Mayor questioned the funding for Resolution 140-2007, reconstruction of the boardwalk at Birch Grove Park. Councilman Carew confirmed that grant monies and the trust fund will be used for this project.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Council President Kern said that a committee meeting was held, during which several questions and concerns arose about the proposed tree removal ordinance. She said the ordinance will be further revised with input from the Planning Board. Councilman Martinez agreed that the focus needs to be on the original intent and that rules impacting individual residents need to be readdressed.

Mayor Perri advised Council of a request from the Atlantic County Mayor's Association asking for the City's support in matters relating to the Atlantic County Board of Taxation. He said that Council will be provided copies of the written correspondence and asked for their approval to move forward. Regarding the Welcome to Northfield sign that will be constructed at the Tilton and Route 9 intersection, the Mayor asked for Council's input on approving a design so that the project can move forward.

Mayor Perri reviewed a report he prepared as President of the Northfield Volunteer Rescue Squad that outlines the annual costs associated with the proposal made by the squad to convert to a semi-paid organization. He thanked Stan Gunnison for his help in estimating the costs of employee insurance such as worker's compensation. He respectfully requested Council's support of this proposal and stated that the goal is for the squad to become self-sustaining, without any aid from the municipality, by eventually billing insurance companies for service calls.

Council President Kern asked who would be managing the organization. Mayor Perri responded: the Northfield Rescue Squad, Incorporated, as a non-profit organization, as its own entity. Kern asked if the squad had already accepted

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applications for paid staff. Perri replied in the affirmative, noting that attempts were made first to get more volunteers. Perri and Kern discussed who would be conducting the interviews for paid staff. Perri commented that, per Solicitor Bonchi and the State Attorney General's Office, the organization can exist as a non-profit that accepts donations and still be permitted to pay the staff. He has also contacted the City of Linwood regarding a possible shared services agreement for EMS. Linwood has a one-year contract with their current provider, but indicated they would be willing to participate in a feasibility study.

Councilman Vain asked how many active members the squad has at this time. Chief Lynn Perri replied 18 active, 7 of which are EMTs. Vain expressed concern that, if the squad were to hire the current volunteers, they would have trouble getting new volunteers to backfill and cover the night shift. The Mayor and Councilman Vain discussed staffing and municipal costs such as equipment. Vain stated that he has the utmost respect for the squad, but he felt more research and detailed costs were needed for Council to review. Council President Kern reported that she was given a proposal that day by the Fire Department, everyone has a lot of questions and the best thing to do would be to establish a committee to evaluate all of the possibilities.

Mayor Perri stated that all contract negotiations are supposed to go through himself and the City Administrator. He was not made aware of the fire department's proposal and expressed concern that it is a matter of union negotiations. Council President Kern established a committee to include Councilmen Martinez and Turon, Administrator Bruckler and CFO Dolcy. Councilman Martinez stated that he had asked the City Administrator for more detailed information at the last meeting, but failed to receive it. Kern thanked Chief Lynn Perri for promptly providing records she had requested.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Kern opened this meeting to the public. Lynn Perri, Chief of the Northfield Volunteer Rescue Squad and resident of 7 Haddon Avenue, came forward. She stated that the squad has been working on the proposal for a few months and that discussions related to the future of the squad have been ongoing since last year. She expressed concern that calls for service can not be filled right now and the conditions are emergent. She said that it was the squad's responsibility to man the ambulances and they would do whatever they had to, including hiring paid staff, until Council reached a decision. Council President Kern asked if it was her intent to start paying people immediately, without Council's consent. Perri replied in the affirmative, stating that they were going through the correct channels and she believed that they have the right.

On a motion of Councilman Carew, second of Councilman Vain, all present were in favor of adding Resolution 143-2007, an executive session to discuss the emergent

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conditions of the rescue squad and matters related to negotiations with the fire department. Council left chambers and entered into executive session in the office of the City Administrator at approximately 7:45 pm. Council adjourned the executive session and returned to chambers at approximately 8:40 pm.

This work session was adjourned and the regular meeting of Council began.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Raph, RMC/CMC