

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 13, 2014**

At 5:07pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on February 8, 2014, in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chau, Devine, Dewees, O'Neill, Perri, Piergiovanni, Travagline

Also in attendance were Mayor Jerry McGee and CFO Dawn Stollenwerk.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor McGee. Following the flag salute a moment of silence was observed.

Council President Travagline reviewed the impact of tax appeals since 2010, noting the reduction of \$29.5 million.

CFO Stollenwerk pointed out the cumulative effect of loss in revenue. She reported a \$19.5 million loss this year translating to approximately \$157,000.00. She noted the Assessor strikes the book on January 10th annually. She also stated there was approximately \$440,000.00 in added assessments in 2013.

Councilman Perri noted that the added assessment figure is historically low.

Councilman O'Neill noted a moderate increase in the collection rate for the Municipal Court in the amount of \$10,000.00.

Council President Travagline reviewed the general decreases in revenue, the increases in appropriations, and personnel requests.

CFO Stollenwerk explained the levy cap and the effect of the cap bank. She reviewed the budget summary information and analysis and explained the effect of the use of surplus.

Council President Travagline asked how Council would like to review the budget.

Councilman Perri suggested line by line, especially for the benefit of new members. In addition, Councilman Perri asked about the state aid.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that she anticipates it to be flat.

Council President Travagline suggested that sewer infrastructure upgrades need to be

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made at three pump stations and proposed a possible increase in sewer fees to fund them.

Councilman Perri suggested they dedicate sewer rents for sewer improvements.

CFO Stollenwerk noted that it isn't necessary if the governing body exercises fiscal discipline and appropriates the money each year in a sewer improvement reserve and then doesn't use it except for its dedicated purpose.

Council President Travagline referred to the Police Department request for three additional police cars noting the budgeted amount at \$33,000.00.

Chief James explained the aging fleet and that the new cars would replace 4-6 year old Crown Victorias. He also stated that prior to the recent leases it had been several years since the Police Department acquired new cars. He noted that there are presently eight cars in the fleet and there could have several cars out of service at any given time. He explained the lease purchase for three years with a \$1.00 buyout at the end. He noted that 2-4 cars are on the road, plus the detective bureau, at any given time. He offered to give a report on the age and condition of the entire fleet for the next meeting.

Council President Travagline, Councilmen Perri and O'Neill, together with Chief James and Police Sergeant Scott Pollak discussed the necessity of adding police cars to the fleet.

Council President Travagline directed CFO Stollenwerk to reduce the number of police cars in the budget to two. In addition, he directed Municipal Clerk Canesi to get a firm price from United Computer for the new computers needed due to the XP support issue, including installation for the next meeting.

Councilman Dewees explained the necessity of additional secretarial help in the construction office.

Councilman Perri inquired about a shared service for the construction office or possibly closing the office one day a week.

Council President Travagline directed CFO Stollenwerk to delete the secretary for the construction office and the increased hours for Birch Grove Park.

Councilman Perri suggested eliminating the Fire Captain's position and advocated for part-time not full-time.

Council President Travagline suggested setting up a meeting with the Fire

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Department to discuss staffing needs.

Councilman O'Neill and Perri both commented that qualified firefighters from other towns live in Northfield and would be interested in working part-time as a firefighter in Northfield.

Councilman Perri suggested that the Captain's duties be shifted to the volunteer officers.

Councilman Chau explained that firefighters who take vacation or compensatory time to have time off results in paying another firefighter overtime.

CFO Stollenwerk noted that use of overtime is still less expensive than hiring a full-time firefighter.

Council President Travagline requested an advertisement for a part-time firefighter be on the next work session for discussion. He directed CFO Stollenwerk to delete the full-time firefighter from the budget.

Councilman O'Neill suggested use of specials instead of hiring a full-time police officer.

Chief James explained the uses and limitations of a Class 2 Special.

Councilman Perri noted issues with regard to the current inter-local and lack of specificity with regard to the selection of a new Chief of Police.

Council President Travagline opened this meeting for any member of the public to speak on any topic. Seeing no one wishing to speak, Council President Travagline closed the public session.

Councilman Perri read the meeting notices.

At 7:10pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk