

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

At 6:00pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 13, 2018, in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present: Korngut, Lischin, O'Neill, Perri, Dewees

Absent: Murray, Travagline

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Nassar and Chief Newman were also in attendance.

PRESENTATION: Lisa Hibbs, VP of Operations, Commercial Utility Consultants

Council President Dewees welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Lisa Hibbs.

Ms. Hibbs explained that since CUC's last visit in 2015 they had 3 unsuccessful auctions. The market was more favorable now. She informed everyone that Title 14 was the statute that allowed energy aggregation for residents. She was here tonight to give an update; there were 10 towns in a current cooperative in Morris County, reaching \$1M in savings. Another territory is Burlington County, where the savings were not as aggressive. Sussex and Warren Counties have also seen successes. Northfield was one of the first towns out of the gate and was not able to see the savings in 2015. Ms. Hibbs commented on the opt-out provision, which was part of how the statute was written. The opt-out period was for 30 days after the auction, there would be outreach presentations and videos that can be posted for residents. Residents can now opt-out before the auction, and there is a permanent opt-out list that residents can become a part of, to avoid them having to opt-out from any future auctions. Anyone now who currently has a third-party supplier or who has solar is not included in the auction.

Mayor Chau asked how CUC would get the information on who has solar or a third-party supplier.

Ms. Hibbs replied that information comes from the utility.

Mayor Chau asked how residents find out.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

Ms. Hibbs explained that information was mailed to residents in the form of a kit. Residents who are on the eligible list from Atlantic City Electric get the kit. The program was just for residential service, no other accounts.

Mayor Chau asked had CUC approached Linwood or Somers Point.

Ms. Hibbs noted that Linwood was part of the original cooperative, along with Northfield. CUC had not approached Somers Point.

Solicitor Facenda asked if the other towns who were in with Northfield in the beginning, were still involved.

Ms. Hibbs replied that she was waiting for an appointment with Linwood and had not heard back from Margate.

Councilwoman Korngut asked if there was a maximum number of accounts that can opt-out.

Ms. Hibbs replied no.

Councilman O'Neill asked if residents would get one bill or two.

Ms. Hibbs replied one; noting there was also the ability to have online access to track Northfield's savings.

Councilwoman Korngut asked what the average savings was.

Ms. Hibbs replied about 10%.

Councilwoman Korngut asked do residents need to do any work on their homes to participate.

Ms. Hibbs replied no, and if upon renewal, the pricing did not yield a savings, everyone just goes back to the Atlantic City Electric rate.

Councilman Lischin asked Solicitor Facenda if our agreement expired.

Solicitor Facenda replied yes.

Ms. Hibbs noted that if Margate was not interested in being the lead agent, then the coop no longer exists.

Councilwoman Korngut asked how this affected power outages, etc.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

Ms. Hibbs replied that it would not; Atlantic City Electric was still the supplier.

Barbara Madden, 403 Park Lane, asked about the auction process.

Ms. Hibbs explained that it begins with a list of eligible accounts from Atlantic City Electric, and their historical usage; this was shared with other suppliers, who in turn, bid on the ability to provide electric power to the list of accounts.

Mrs. Madden asked about solar.

Ms. Hibbs replied that solar customers were not included.

Council President Dewees thanked Ms. Hibbs for her time and advised that we would get back to her.

Ms. Hibbs stated that if Northfield wanted to go out on their own they could, they could be the lead agent of a new coop, whatever Northfield wants to do.

WORK SESSION TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS

Council President Dewees deferred to Solicitor Facenda for an update on the potential land sale.

- Potential Land Sale – Update

Solicitor Facenda reported that much would depend on the discussion in tonight's closed session.

Request for County Assistance - Signs for the Casto House and Museum on Shore Road and Rt. 9

Council President Dewees did not have an update.

Councilman Lischin wanted to discuss field use; we allow other teams, travel teams, etc. to use our fields. Certain groups, we don't mind, but Councilman Lischin felt it was getting out of control and asked where did it stop?

Council President Dewees had a concern with tonight's application with regard to the number of fields that were being requested, they were asking for 3 different fields, depending on what is available. In particular, the softball field had lights, and he did not want anyone to have access to the lights. He recommended amending the application to remove the softball field, and to disallow night play.

Councilwoman Korngut asked what the issue with the lights was.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

Council President Dewees explained that taxpayers pay the bill, and there was no way to recoup the costs from the sports groups.

Councilman Lischin felt that the other issue was policing it. We had no way to manage who should be there and who shouldn't.

Council President Dewees agreed, and with this number of fields being asked for, how do we tell.

Councilwoman Korngut noted that the majority of the kids were Northfield residents.

Council President Dewees suggested that the applicant be told to resubmit with the softball field removed; the application would also specify no night play.

Council President Dewees asked to remove Resolution 67-2018 from the agenda.

Municipal Clerk Canesi advised Council of a proposed change to the Use Agreement that specifies that field use is only for dates requested and approved, and that if the approved user does not use the field on a given date, that the date is not "theirs" to give away.

Councilman Lischin suggested revocation language as well.

All present were generally in agreement with the language change.

Councilman Perri asked if other towns have a board that oversees these activities.

Council President Dewees knew that Linwood did.

Solicitor Facenda added that Somers Point did as well.

Councilman Perri felt that we should start charging for electric, bathrooms, etc. as well.

Councilman Lischin suggested the advisory board.

Councilman Perri replied that they were only advisory, they had no authority.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Veterans Park

Council President Dewees updated all on Veterans Park: trees are in, basins are in, and the paved walkway is there. Mr. Webb had a nice structure installed over the missing soldier chair.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Dewees opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to speak on any topic.

Councilwoman Korngut mentioned there was discussion about placing benches around the park.

Council President Dewees responded yes, but, we will wait until we do a construction project to get a better rate on the concrete, possibly August or September.

Councilwoman Korngut reported that she got an email from a resident complaining about 106 Vernon Avenue that there were numerous cars on the lawn; she had heard that there was a complaint in the past.

Councilman Lischin advised that there was a complaint about another address and a summons was issued, but not this address.

Councilman O'Neill noted that he would bring it up with the Code Enforcement Officer.

Councilwoman Korngut stated that if you are an honorably discharged veteran there was a tax exemption for 2017, this should be on the website. She congratulated the MRHS swim champs and their coach, Brian Booth, who was a Northfield resident. She asked if we ever bring these kids in to congratulate them.

Mayor Chau replied yes, noting that he did speak with Coach Booth today.

Councilman O'Neill asked that hours of operation for City Hall be added as a new business item for the next agenda.

Bob Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue, stated he was pro-life, pro God and pro guns, but was against teachers having guns. He added that we've been trying to get Veterans Park done for 10 years, if it is not finished soon he is going to go out and put blocks out there himself.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

Council President Dewees asked what Mr. Webb wanted done.

Mr. Webb replied that he didn't see anything being done at Veterans Park, he wanted benches. The trash cans were overflowing and finally got emptied. He wanted signs that say no parking from dawn to dusk. It's already that way for Birch Grove Park.

Clerk Canesi believed the ordinance did specify this for Birch Grove; we'd just need to make sure it extended to the Veterans Park.

Mr. Webb informed Council that we need to start planning for what to do with the Casto House when the people taking care of it aren't here anymore. He thanked Councilman Perri for what he does for the seniors, and thanked Councilwoman Korngut for coming to the seniors' meetings. He would like the school board to go back to an appointed school board, felt they were not spending money appropriately and an appointed school board would be less expensive. He felt that shared service does not save money. There should be someone in the Police Department 24/7 if someone comes to the door. He also asked when Revere Avenue would be paved.

Engineer Nassar noted that he would check.

Mr. Webb added that too much attention is paid to the ball fields.

Barbara Madden, 403 Park Lane, said her taxes went up this year \$300.00 and \$200.00 last year. She referred to an article in the paper that indicated taxes would go up again this year. The Council's priority should be to bring in ratables. Council needed to be more aggressive in collecting uncollected taxes, Council was not prepared but should be. She talked about FAN and asked where the money was going.

Councilman O'Neill informed Mrs. Madden that since the article was written, the funding to the sports groups had been eliminated.

Mrs. Madden felt Council should look into sharing services.

Mayor Chau responded stating that shared services were not always the answer to everything. Some programs work very well but that was not always the case. He cited that Mr. Webb felt that we should have our own 911 dispatch facility, services, and personnel.

Mrs. Madden asked did it save money.

Mayor Chau replied it did in the beginning but the downside is that we can never go back to our own facility again, we just can't afford it. He related the story of

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

\$6,000.00-7,000.00 in damage to the bathroom during a court session, and we had to pay for that. We couldn't prove it was a Linwood person.

Councilman O'Neill added that his view of shared services is that you join in with another municipality and each save money, but some towns look at it as a way to make money.

Mayor Chau related the story of the recently disbanded Linwood interlocal. Northfield did not disband it but we had no say in it and we did lose revenue. As a result, Council President Dewees had to revamp the Public Works and Birch Grove Park and Sewer Departments to combine to one whole department, but this was the result of losing the interlocal and trying to save taxpayers money. No one here wants to raise your taxes. The affect of tax appeals is seen every year.

Mrs. Madden replied that Council would have to cut taxes or services. She asked why we have so many police cars.

Mayor Chau explained that you can't use cars 24 hours per day; the operational expense would be too much.

Mrs. Madden felt that Council had to look at expenses and needed to try harder.

Helen Havlick, 203 West Revere Avenue, said, on behalf of the Council that she knows they have tried and they are doing a good job. To Mrs. Madden, Mrs. Havlick said she needs to go to the schools if she felt her taxes were too high. She defended Council and told Mrs. Madden to go to the school to voice her concerns.

Mayor Chau noted that the municipal tax was only 30-32% of your taxes, the balance is the schools and the county. He felt the superintendents should be shared, and said he has suggested that in the past.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak Council President Dewees closed the public session.

Councilwoman Korngut, referring to Resolution 63-2018 for body worn cameras, asked the Chief if he felt they were necessary.

Chief Newman replied yes, this was something he'd pushed for, there were pros and cons, but in the long run, for the sake of transparency, use of force situations, litigation, etc. it protects the officer and it protects the public. There were expenses; if there had to be a redaction there were man-hours involved, we had to increase our video storage capability.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

Councilwoman Korngut asked how many Internal Affairs complaints we have had this year.

Chief Newman stated that on average there were maybe ten to twelve, he did not know off the top of his head. The summary is posted on the municipal website every year, but it only takes one.

Mayor Chau spoke, and said he was an advocate for the cameras and noted that the purchase was partially grant-funded. We live in a very litigious world. He has seen examples where citizens claim something but when you watch the car video it's completely apparent that something else happened.

Chief Newman added that the body cameras were completely different; they were going into people's homes. There's all this "he said she said".

AGENDA REVIEW

Council President Dewees reviewed the agenda and made assignments.

Councilman Lischin requested that Resolution 62-2018 be voted on separately.

At 7:09pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk