

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JULY 19, 2022

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 8, 2022, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilwoman Bucci; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Leeds; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina; Mayor Chau

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

Council President Polistina welcomed all to the meeting, and announced the presentation from Paul Miola, with the JIF.

6PM PRESENTATION: Paul Miola, Executive Municipal JIF Strategist

Paul Miola introduced himself, as well as Ms. Kamini Patel. He distributed a handout to the Council and referred to recent issues that have significantly affected the JIF. He cited Covid, with Workers Compensation losses in excess of two million dollars. Guidance is being sought regarding marijuana use by employees, land use claims, police liability claims, and others. Workers Compensation takes up the lion's share of the budget; he offered suggestions on what could be done locally, including an increased focus on wellness. He explained increased claim costs associated with comorbidities; the average claim is 93% higher, and lost time was 90% higher. He noted extensive training opportunities provided by the JIF, the value of using transitional duty when available for workers compensation claims, and subrogation recovery when third parties were involved. He reviewed the loss ratio trends, returns of dividends to members, and the current surplus balance. Northfield's premium was less today than it was 10 years ago, with a dividend just this year of 18% to Northfield. He moved to cyber initiatives, and introduced Kamini Patel.

Kamini Patel explained employee cyber hygiene training, phishing testing, and penetration testing. She stated that Northfield was doing well, and she encouraged Council's continued support of employee participation in the program. Member municipalities get a cyber budget to offset implementation costs, posters have been printed for distribution, and the ACMJIF is looking at hiring a cyber professional.

Mr. Miola noted the JIF was constantly looking at ways to improve, and encouraged the Council to continue to support the JIF programs. These efforts help to maintain cost control.

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Mayor Chau stated that Northfield's long history with the JIF has been very positive; he thanked Mr. Miola.

All of Council thanked Mr. Miola.

Council President Polistina moved to committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Dewees – Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields; Birch Grove Park, Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Public Works: Roads, Engineering

Councilman Dewees reported the exterior painting has taken place at the museum; there was some carpentry work that needed to be done, he would deal with those and repaint as needed. He was meeting with C. Alexander at the football field to discuss the stairs at the football tower, and the columns out front. Public Works was working on the stop-bars around town and they were looking at purchasing a painting machine. The new slide for the First Street Playground should be installed soon.

Councilman Utts - Inspections, Housing/Zoning; Cultural Committee, Veteran Liaison, Mainland Regional; Technology / MRHS Channel; Planning Board

Councilman Utts reported the most recent Planning Board meeting had a full house, there were pros and cons. Due to a procedural issue the Board wouldn't hear the full issue until September. We were still in need of a housing inspector, if you know of anyone qualified, have them contact Clerk Canesi.

Councilman Notaro - Sewer Operations; Northfield Football, Cheer, Basketball (FAN)

Councilman Notaro reported that FAN would be starting their season soon, he thanked Councilman Dewees for his hard work at the fields. He would be attending the ACUA sewer meeting and would update Council.

Councilman Leeds – Fire Department/EMS

Councilman Leeds read the EMS report for June, mutual aid-out was provided on 89 occasions with 20 mutual aid-in calls.

Councilman Smith - Central Municipal Court; Little League and Babe Ruth Baseball; Northfield Community School; Shared Services

Councilman Smith reported he intended to make arrangements to attend the Court in person; if anyone had questions or concerns, please pass them along to Councilman Smith and he would bring them up. Northfield Little League was beginning the All-

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Star season. There was much success in baseball, softball and Babe Ruth with a championship this year.

Councilwoman Bucci – Insurance and Safety; Library; Municipal Alliance; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilwoman Bucci reported that Mr. Miola just gave nice presentation. For National Night Out there were 23 vendors so far for the August 2nd event. Regarding Economic Development, the next meeting would be July 28; Galloway's Mayor Coppola, and his Deputy Mayor would be attending to give input. Councilwoman Bucci would be visiting local businesses in person to invite them. She also encouraged attendees to each bring one person to the next meeting to increase attendance. The summer reading program at the Library was in full effect and library attendance keeps going up. Ms Printz, the library's longest serving employee has retired, they were looking for a replacement.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Senior Citizens

Council President Polistina did not have a committee report.

Council President Polistina moved to ongoing business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- ∞ Northfield Avenue at Rt 9 Drainage –*Update* from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar reported that he hasn't heard anything new from the State but the drainage seems to have improved. This was on the long-range plan for when the State paves Route 9.

Council President Polistina asked if Public Works had cleaned it.

Engineer Nassar replied that they were supposed to, but when they got out there they observed no issues.

- ∞ Stormwater Facilities Shared with the County of Atlantic – *Update* from Engineer Nassar*

There was no update.

- ∞ Potential Public Auction of City Owned Property Block 66 Lot 11 – *Pending * if available*

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Councilman Utts reported that he met with our professionals today, it was suggested that we reach out to developers to determine interest in developing affordable housing.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- ∞ Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar reported the State has grants available for local government, one was for bike path safety, also one for streetscaping and landscaping. They would require an in-person meeting with the State; he asked for authorization from Council to proceed.

All of Council generally approved.

- ∞ Amendment to Outdoor Burning Ordinance – Req by Councilman Notaro

Councilman Notaro stated that a resident brought to his attention that a neighbor complained about a fire pit; according to our code you can't have one, but we all know they are everywhere. He suggested we look at Ventnor's ordinance. Any feedback could be forwarded to Councilman Notaro or Councilman Leeds.

Mayor Chau added that he had received complaints about wood in a fire pit and it was a nuisance.

Solicitor Facenda asked if Council wanted him to modify the Ventnor ordinance.

Councilman Smith wanted to bring up new business item, he was in Gettysburg last week, in 2026 it is the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. We had a bicentennial celebration in 1976. If we want to celebrate it, we should look at what type of celebration we want to have for the semiquincentennial.

- ∞ Infrastructure Grants – *Req by Engineer Nassar*

This was discussed during the New Grant Opportunities agenda item.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone wanted anything voted on separately from the consent agenda.

Councilman Smith asked for Resolutions 156-2022 and 157-2022 to be voted on separately.

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Council President Polistina made the agenda assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Polistina opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject, he asked that they state their name and address for the record and observe the five-minute limit per speaker.

Pat McGowan, 2005 Shore Road, said he lives next door to Ventura's; they have had outdoor dining for the past few years. Mr. McGowan and his family have been cooperative but Ventura's gets out of hand every now and again. For example, their service bar is now advertised as a tiki bar. They have a fire pit next to the shared fence. They have cornhole, which sounds harmless but when people are drunk and it's 9 or 10 o'clock at night, it's annoying. He didn't get anywhere with Zoning Officer Nassar or with Council President Polistina. The overheard conversations border on vulgar, and it's enough.

Mayor Chau recalled a conversation with McGowan about how long the outdoor dining would last; Mayor Chau was not able to give an answer, he didn't know how long it will last.

Mr. McGowan said he was upset about the fire, the cornhole, and people sitting at the service bar. He was not trying to end outdoor dining, but believed they should have to follow the rules. He was tired of reporting this. They won't go out of business if they have to stop these things.

Mayor Chau replied he would have the Code Enforcement Officer review the corn hole, the fire pit and the seating at the service bar.

Councilman Utts asked do they cut the noise off at any point?

Mr. McGowan replied it just fades away; 10:30-11pm.

Heather Mellon, 2509 Herbert Drive, said she loved the idea of the 2026 celebration. There was a wonderful committee for the year 2000 celebration, it was formed in 1998 and worked on it for 2 years. They received around \$2,000.00 from the City and held fundraisers for the rest. All of the organizations in town, Cultural Committee, Friends of the Library, Friends of Birch Grove, they had monthly meetings and had activities every other month for that year. The whole City got together and celebrated the year 2000.

Joan Brennan, 116 Dolphin Avenue, stated that her mom ran the year 2000 event. She would will try to head up the 2026 event for the Cultural Committee, with Heather's help from whatever group she is with. She referred to the Archdiocese

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property. She just attended a County meeting before coming here. She was advised by the County Administrator that the project would be part senior housing and part would be assisted living. It would on the northeast corner of back part of property behind Meadowview; she has expressed concerns about this development, traffic concerns, etc. The County Administrator told her today that the City was on board with this, and she was told by the Archdiocese that the City can make or break this concept. This type of development would bring many many people to live there. Costs for assisted living start at \$4,000-\$6,000 per month. She asked Mr. Del Rosso how this would benefit Northfield, when they will be using our services, but not pay taxes. She was told they would be making a deal with Northfield. It will make a lot of money for the County, over \$4 million dollars a year, she asked how would the City benefit from any of this.

Council President Polistina replied they would make a payment in lieu of taxes.

Ms Brennan added that we all need to think about this, Cresson Hill was \$2,000 a month for a 3 or 4 bedroom. How is that affordable? She urged Council to check social media, there aren't a lot of people who are in favor of this. If you want to be reelected you need to start thinking about this.

Ms. Brennan commented that she knew the painting at the museum was just about finished.

Councilman Dewees replied it is done; some carpentry work needed to be done.

Ms Brennan was looking for someone to refinish the antique lamppost.

Councilman Dewees would look at that Thursday morning.

Ms Brennan appreciated Council listening.

Councilwoman Bucci wanted to clarify something that had been said earlier. The facility would not be an assisted living facility. She had been at all of the meetings. She read aloud the income limits for the affordable housing. The Diocese would pay the City \$40,000.00 per year in tax revenue.

David Goldstein, 116 Dolphin Avenue, stated something happened today that stressed him out. Joan posted something on Facebook that got negative comments, including that people know where they live. If something happens because of all of this, this is gonna blow up.

Solicitor Facenda asked if Mr. Goldstein filed a police report.

Mr. Goldstein replied, no.

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Mr. Goldstein continued, noting he man of Jewish faith and proud of it, he had been 'egged'. He provided a lot of volunteer labor. He wanted this on the record. He was told this was 100% affordable housing, but Council was being told something else. He was misled previously by the County when the bus shelter was built. There were bodies buried but even if there weren't we should preserve this as open space. He read a passage from the 'Who is Buried in Northfield' book, in less than one-half of the pages in the book there were more than 100 African Americans buried there. Who is going to speak for them?

Mr. Goldstein noted Atlantic County is big, they don't have to single out Northfield. this property is historic and it needs to be preserved.

Mayor Chau thanked David Goldstein and Joan Brennan for their work on the 4th of July parade.

Clerk Canesi apologized and announced that it seemed there were technical difficulties with the audio for those participating via Zoom. It had been discovered that this evening, we cannot hear Zoom attendees when they are speaking. Canesi asked Zoom participant, Mrs. Garry, to type her comments in the chat function if she wished to speak.

Ms Brennan returned to the dais. She emailed Mayor Chau about this, since the museum building is painted, on August 2nd, the night of National Night Out, can we do a re-grand opening at the museum? They would be open that night at National Night Out, all are welcome.

Alicia Garry, 202 St. James (via Zoom chat) "I would like council to empathize with residents who are affected by traffic changes due to changes in the community. If you are not directly affected it means nothing. Is mulch replenished each year? When was last replenishment at 1st Street playground? Thank you for picnic benches at playground! Please look at them, is this the best that can be offered? I wouldn't sit on them. Is there ordinance where dogs are allowed on bike path?"

Councilman Dewees responded that the picnic tables had been repurposed from the Park; he would see if they could find better ones.

Clerk Canesi replied dogs are permitted.

Clerk Canesi asked Mrs. Garry if she heard the response.

Mrs. Garry typed: "Yes I did."

Mrs. Garry "There is feces all over it is unsanitary , stinks and flies. People are not picking it up"

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Council President Polistina agreed it was an issue.

Mayor Chau added that he had spoken to offenders and had not gotten positive response.

Mrs. Garry, typed via Zoom chat: “I have to walk across grass to get to bike path, it’s disgusting. Public works does well mowing but poop flies all over”

Council President Polistina stated that people who don't pick up after their dogs are like the person on Facebook.

Mrs. Garry typed via Zoom chat: “Pets should not be allowed where do people on other side of shore rd. and new rd walk their dogs?”

Councilwoman Bucci replied, on the bike path.

Councilman Notaro stated he would never support an ordinance to prohibit dogs on the bike path.

Clerk Canesi apologized again for audio difficulty. She asked if anyone else in Zoom wished to speak.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Council President Polistina closed the public comment portion of this meeting.

At 7:20pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Leeds, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk