

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD ANNUAL REORGANIZATION
JANUARY 3, 2023**

At 6:01pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi, who welcomed the audience. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on November 26, 2022 and in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau followed by a moment of silence.

Roll Call: Mrs. Bucci – yes; Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mr. Leeds – yes; Mr. Notaro - yes, Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Smith – yes.

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda and Chief VonColln were also in attendance.

CEREMONIAL OATHS OF OFFICE TO NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Administered by the Honorable Joseph Visalli

• **Council, 1st Ward, Reneé Carfagno**

Clerk Canesi announced the Oath for Reneé Carfagno, to be administered by the Honorable Joseph Visalli.

Councilwoman Carfagno was accompanied by her family, including husband Len, and children, Vito, Nikko, Isabella and Sage, son-in-law Christian, grandson Luca, and mother-in-law Natalie.

Judge Visalli administered the Oath of Office; her husband Len held the bible.

Councilwoman Carfagno thanked all and hoped she would do the best to serve the City of Northfield.

Administered by Lisa Tilton, RMC, BA – Buena Vista Township

• **Council, 2nd Ward, Eric Leeds**

Clerk Canesi announced the Oath for Eric Leeds, to be administered by Lisa Tilton, Registered Municipal Clerk, and Business Administrator, in Buena Vista Township.

Councilman Leeds was accompanied by Councilman Dewees who held the bible.

Ms. Tilton administered the Oath of Office to Councilman Leeds.

ELECT COUNCIL PRESIDENT FOR 2023

Clerk Canesi opened the floor for nominations for Council President for the year 2023.

Councilman Dewees nominated Councilman Polistina, seconded by Councilman Smith.

Clerk Canesi asked if there were any other nominations, seeing none, the floor was

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closed for nominations.

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman Smith seconded, to elect Councilman Polistina as Council President for 2023.

All members present were in favor of electing Councilman Polistina as Council President for 2023.

ELECT COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE FOR 2023

Council President Polistina opened the floor for nominations for Council President Pro Tempore for the year 2023.

Councilwoman Bucci nominated Councilman Dewees, with a second by Councilman Leeds.

Seeing no other nominations Council President Polistina closed the floor.

Councilwoman Bucci motioned, Councilman Leeds seconded, to elect Councilman Dewees as Council President Pro Tempore for 2023.

All members present were in favor of electing Councilman Dewees as Council President Pro Tempore for 2023.

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

“Good evening members of City Council, honored guests, friends, family, and residents of Northfield.

In 2022, I am proud to announce that the City of Northfield started to see what is hopefully a recovery from the lingering economic effects of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Due to the hard work of our City Council and employees, in 2022 we saw no increase in the municipal tax rate. By being creative with revenues and sharing services we continue to uphold the high level of service that our residents expect, at a cost of less than 28 cents of every tax dollar.

We also maintained a strong surplus balance and stable financial position. In April, Standard and Poor's confirmed the City's AA- credit rating.

As of today, all tax court appeals matters have been resolved, and our tax collection rate is strong, at 97.32%. Our total assessed value in 2022 was just over \$869 million dollars. The housing market made an astonishing rebound, and values continue to trend upwards, which supports the current assessed values in the City of Northfield.

The commercial sector rebounded as well, with Northfield welcoming no fewer than 21 new businesses to town last year. Building department revenue was up an astonishing 38% over 2021, due to increased commercial development and residential home improvement projects.

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We saw several employee-retirements this year, a collective, an impressive total of 121 years amongst five employees. We congratulate them all and wish them well.

We saw numerous staffing vacancies in 2022, and despite significant challenges in the labor market, we recruited and hired qualified staff for the positions of Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, Building Department Technical Assistant, Electrical Inspector, and Housing Officer.

And as of January 1st, a new Police Chief as well.

Last year, we also saw tragedy, when the Northfield Police Department lost one of its own. It is often the darkest times that bring out the best in people, and the support from the Northfield community was remarkable. For that, we are grateful.

Other Key Accomplishments for the year 2022 included:

- In 2022 the City Council adopted 234 resolutions and 12 ordinances.
- We were awarded \$412,000 in grant funding for roadway improvements, public safety, recycling efforts, community education, and more.
- We paved 3 ½ miles of local roadways.
- We used \$411,000 in American Rescue Plan funds on one-time expenses for public safety, cyber security, and new playground equipment at Birch Grove Park.
- We purchased new pagers and radios for our Volunteer Fire Company and Emergency Management volunteers to ensure their ability to provide timely responses when needed.
- Northfield made history by joining several other Atlantic County municipalities in the creation of a first-of-its-kind “Central Municipal Court” hosted by the County of Atlantic.
- We saw the financial benefit of our 2021 sanitary sewer slip lining project in the form of a reduction of approximately 14% in sanitary sewer flows – this resulted in significant savings for 2022 that will carry on in years to come.
- We promoted a part time firefighter / EMT to full time status, to supplement the City’s ability to provide Emergency Medical response.
- We increased our social media presence using Facebook, the City’s website, and email-blast tools to increase transparency and to help our residents stay informed about upcoming events, City happenings, and emergency information.
- We held our 3rd annual Trunk or Treat Celebration at Birch Grove Park; it was an incredible success, hosted by the Northfield Police Department and funded by the Northfield Municipal Alliance.

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- The Connolly mile, 4th of July Parade, and annual holiday tree lighting events were held to the delight of pre-Covid-sized crowds. All events were well organized and we thank those responsible.

Year 2023 Objectives include:

- Phase II of the Sanitary Sewer Slip Lining project
- A newly designed sanitary sewer pump station at Zion and Mill Roads
- Paving additional municipal roadways using a combined total of \$545,000 in funding from the NJ Department of Transportation
- Implementing digital imaging technology to scan permanent government records
- Several new sets of bleachers at the City's athletic fields
- Applications for multiple grants for recreation improvements at Birch Grove Park

As we move on into a new year, we will face our share of challenges as well. Health Benefits and pension contributions are anticipated to increase significantly, along with the generally increasing cost of goods and services nationwide.

The backbone of any community is its volunteers, and here in Northfield we are truly blessed. I would like to thank the many volunteers who dedicate time in service of our residents.

Thank you to the members of the Volunteer Fire Company and Ladies Auxiliary; these men and women spend countless hours away from their families to ensure the safety of ours, and for them, we are all grateful.

Thank you to the members of the Planning Board, the Birch Grove Park Advisory Board, Cultural Committee, Library Board of Trustees, and those who plan and organize City events, such as the 4th of July Parade and Annual Holiday Tree Lighting.

Thank you to the Veterans of our community, for their past service, and for their dedication and effort to honor all who serve and have served.

Thank you, as well, to the many parents who spend their time on the City's athletic fields, coaching our youth sports, helping the children of our community to develop physical skills, make friends, have fun, learn teamwork, and to learn to play fair. These are life-lessons that extend well beyond their time here in Northfield, and that will benefit future generations to come.

Thank you to the members of City Council, and to our municipal employees, for their ongoing hard work and commitment, without whom none of this would be possible.

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I look forward to working together with everyone to continue to provide excellent services to the residents of Northfield.”

Mayor Chau thanked Council and moved to the Oath of Office for Chief of Police, Mark VonColln.

OATH OF OFFICE – CHIEF OF POLICE MARK VONCOLLN

Mayor Chau read the following statement:

“Throughout this process we've heard from our community residents and businesses a clear expectation for the Northfield Police Department: effective public safety, meaningful community engagement, and a commitment to accountability and continuous improvement. I am confident that our next Police Chief will provide the leadership necessary to advance these critical priorities and make Northfield safe for all its residents and community. The selection committee, the Council President, City Clerk/Administrator and myself, looked for candidates that elevated the voices of the community, and closely examined applicants' qualifications and skills. Chief VonColln was the clear choice to respond to concerns about crime and safety and to drive the effective response that will make a real impact.

The Chief search process is set by Charter, which has the responsibility to assess all qualified candidates. Those individuals then proceed to a competitive examination. The search committee helped formulate the questions for the oral portion of their examination.

The selection committee felt that Chief Voncolln will instill values-driven leadership, big picture thinking, and a commitment to safety, respect, reform, and justice, they can help us set a new standard for public safety, reach our recruitment and retention goals, build officer morale, and make this a welcoming and safe city for every community.”

Mayor Chau continued, noting some of Chief VonColln’s accomplishments, “Chief VonColln was born and raised in West Cape May NJ, he attended Lower Cape May Regional High School graduated in 1990. He Graduated Stockton College in 1997 with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and started his career in Law Enforcement with the Wildwood Police Department as a Class II Officer. Chief VonColln was hired with Northfield Police Department in November of 1998. He met his wife Heather in Northfield in 2001 and moved to Northfield in 2003 where they raised their three children. Chief VonColln coached baseball, and street hockey for 14 years in Northfield and Linwood. He received a Master's Degree in Human Resources from Seton Hall University in 2006. In 2007, he was promoted to Sergeant of Police and has since served in many different roles with the department. He was elevated to Acting/Lieutenant in November of 2022 and January 1st of this year received the title Chief of Police. Chief VonColln held certifications as Firearms Permits Rangemaster, Crisis Negotiations, Bike Patrol and Field Training Officer.”

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Mayor Chau called Chief VonColln forward along with his family.

Chief VonColln introduced his wife Heather, daughter Brielle, and son Eric. His parents, niece and sister were in the audience.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Chief VonColln while his son Eric held the bible.

Mayor Chau presented Chief VonColln, and commented that he was the 15th Chief of the City of Northfield.

Chief VonColln addressed the audience and made the following statement:

“Before making a few comments, I would like to take the opportunity to thank a few people.

Thank you, Mayor Chau, City Council, and the Police Committee for this opportunity.

I would like to congratulate Chief Newman on his retirement and Mrs. Carfagno on becoming the newest member of Northfield City council.

Tonight, is a very special night, not just because of the promotion to chief, but my son Eric is here to be a part of it. Eric leaves tomorrow to complete his advance combat training at Fort Benning, Georgia, at which time he will be deployed to Vilseck Germany for three years, I'm so proud of you!

I would not be here tonight without the loving support of my beautiful wife Heather, my wonderful daughter Brielle, my Mom, Dad, Sister, and niece who are all here to support me tonight.

I would also like to thank my friends, neighbors, community, and everyone else who took the time out of their busy schedule to be here. Serving as a police officer today means facing adversity and overcoming challenges. We ask more of our officers today than at any other time in history. Policing is more than investigating crime and arresting those who do harm.

It's providing counseling to families in distress, assisting those suffering from mental illness, resolving neighbor disputes, and building the relationship and trust within the community we serve.

I believe the Northfield Police Dept. are an excellent group officers who are ready to tackle these obstacles to serve this wonderful community. With that being said, I need your help. No chief of police can be successful without the input from officers and staff members at every level. I want to hear your ideas, and be a part of the decision-making process in the years ahead.

I would like to make a pledge to our residents and to the members of our community: Please know that the Northfield Police Department is committed to working with you, keeping the community safe, and maintaining your trust.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your Chief of Police for the City of Northfield.”

At 6:32pm, on motions properly made and seconded, Council President Polistina called for a recess.

At 6:45pm Council President Polistina resumed the meeting.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Councilman Leeds with a second by Councilman Dewees, all members present, with the exception of Councilman Notaro who abstained, were in favor of approving the minutes of December 13, 2022, without formal reading.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Polistina opened this meeting for any member of the public to speak on any topic.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak the public session was closed.

RESOLUTIONS / CONSENT AGENDA

On motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Leeds all members present were in favor of voting on Resolutions 1-2023 through 31-2023 by Consent Agenda.

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| 1-2023 | Annual Schedule of Meetings |
| 2-2023 | Temporary Appropriations |
| 3-2023 | Designation of Official Newspapers for the Publication of Legal Notices for the City of Northfield |
| 4-2023 | Annual Appointments |
| 5-2023 | To Authorize the Tax Assessor to File a Petition of Appeal or Appeals for the Tax Year 2023 |
| 6-2023 | Safety and Health Committee Appointments |
| 7-2023 | Establishing Charges for Municipal Public Records |
| 8-2023 | Appointing Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner for the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund |
| 9-2023 | Appointing Public Agency Compliance Officer |

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- 10-2023** Appointment of Risk Management Consultant in Accordance with the Bylaws of the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
- 11-2023** A Resolution Authorizing the Contact Persons to Access the Employment Practices Liability Consultation Service (EPL) / ACMJIF
- 12-2023** A Resolution Adopting Robert's Rules of Order
- 13-2023** City of Northfield Local Emergency Planning Committee (L.E.P.C.) Appointments
- 14-2023** A Resolution Adopting a Cash Management Plan
- 15-2023** To Establish the Rate of Interest for Nonpayment of Taxes or Assessments
- 16-2023** Authorize Delinquent Tax Penalty Charges
- 17-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Registered Municipal Accountant through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 18-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Licensed Land Surveyor through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 19-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Bond Counsel through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 20-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Labor Relations Attorney through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 40A:11-5 and N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 21-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Tax Appeal Attorney through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 40A:11-5 and N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 22-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Municipal Engineer through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 23-2023** Authorizing Award of Contract for Municipal Solicitor through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
- 24-2023** Resolution Authorizing the Public Auction of Abandoned / Unclaimed Vehicles
- 25-2023** Resolution Recognizing Members of the Northfield Volunteer Fire Company
- 26-2023** Resolution Recognizing Members of the Northfield Volunteer Company Ladies' Auxiliary

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- 27-2023** Resolution Authorizing Contracts with Certain Approved State Contract Vendors for Contracting Units Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12a
- 28-2023** Authorizing Award of Professional Services Contract for Continuing Disclosure Agent Services and Independent Registered Municipal Advisor of Record
- 29-2023** Memorialize Resignation of Construction Official and Building Inspector
- 30-2023** Transfer of Funds
- 31-2023** Authorizing the Award of Contract Without Public Advertisement for Bids to Trinity Code Inspections, LLC, to Perform Private on-Site Plumbing Sub-Code Inspections, Pursuant to the Provisions of N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman Leeds seconded, to adopt the Consent Agenda.

Roll Call: Mrs. Bucci – yes; Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mr. Leeds – yes; Mr. Notaro – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Motion carried.

ORDINANCE

Councilman Smith motioned, Councilwoman Carfagno seconded to introduce Ordinance 1-2023.

- 1-2023** Ordinance Providing for and Establishing Salary Ranges of Officers and Employees of the City of Northfield and Repealing All Ordinances Heretofore Adopted, the Provisions of Which are Inconsistent Herewith
*Introduction / No Public Input / Published in the Press of AC 1/07/2023
2nd Reading / Public Hearing / Final Consideration 1/17/2023*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, stated that this is the first reading, and announced the publication, public hearing, and final consideration dates. The full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requests same.

Council President Polistina announced the ordinance was just a salary range, he asked if there were any questions.

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Roll Call: Mrs. Bucci – yes; Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mr. Leeds – yes; Mr. Notaro – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS \$77,639.74

Councilman Leeds motioned, Councilman Notaro seconded, for payment of bills.

Roll Call: Mrs. Bucci – yes; Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mr. Leeds – yes; Mr. Notaro – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Motion carried.

MEETING NOTICES

Council President Polistina read the meeting notices.

At approximately 6:50pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi RMC

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk