

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JANUARY 22, 2019**

At 6:03pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 5, 2019, in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

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

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

Council President Lischin welcomed everyone and announced that we would start the meeting with a presentation by Dave Forcinito, Senior Director of Operations, New Jersey American Water (NJAMW). Afterward, Council President Lischin stated that he may open the meeting for public comment, take questions from City Council, and take it from there.

6PM: Mr. Dave Forcinito, Senior Director of Operations NJ American Water Company

Mr. Dave Forcinito introduced himself and apologized to customers and to residents of Northfield for what everyone had been experiencing for the past year. He said NJAMW will work on the issue until the problem is solved, and described it as intermittent, in isolated sections, that move around. The water company was trying to deal with it and to resolve it. The discoloration was due to iron and other mineral sediment in the system. The distribution systems are complex, the causes were not always obvious and it was sporadic throughout the system. Some activities that could result in water quality issues were main breaks, but these were infrequent, and hydrant use, especially illegal hydrant use that is not done properly. He also noted that infrastructure work that changes the profile of the system, such as main work, can also cause it. They had been adjusting flows, checking main valves, and have used special equipment to isolate and flush the system. This process, however, generated problems for other customers and resulted in complaints. They want to conduct a thorough review of aging systems, they will review their annual flushing system, and they will reevaluate their current treatment processes. NJAMW had been working with customers, had provided bottled water, bill credits, and had also offered the services of a plumber to flush the interior of their home's systems to several residents with complaints. Customers can file a claim for any damages done to their homes, he offered several methods to do so, including email, phone, or in person

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tonight. Mr. Forcinito introduced other members of his team that were present, and offered to answer questions.

Council President Lischin thanked Mr. Forcinito.

Engineer Nassar asks Mr. Forcinito how often the system in this area was flushed, referring to Shepherd Drive and nearby areas.

Mr. Forcinito replied annually.

Engineer Nassar advised that the area would be paved in the summer, he cautioned about road openings once the road goes under moratorium.

Councilman Perri asked the effect on health; is the discolored water drinkable?

Mr. Forcinito replied that their tests indicated no health risks, but they do tell customers to run the water until it runs clear.

Councilman O'Neill, on behalf of residents he'd spoken to, expressed that residents felt they were not getting the resolution they wanted, they also felt there was not a single point of contact. He suggested coordination with contractors or the Fire Department when hydrants were opened. The residents also felt they were not given proper notice when work was being done.

Mr. Forcinito replied they have a reverse phone system that can put out automated messages.

Councilman Lischin asked how many customers were affected recently.

Mr. Forcinito replied that since August they are aware of 36.

Councilwoman Madden asked how often the water was tested and what was the source of the water?

Mr. Forcinito replied that the source was ground water, the Cohansey aquifer.

Anthony Matorazzo, Director of Water Quality, explained that the main sources extract water from the ground. Both facilities have levels of iron and manganese that are above the secondary standard levels - secondary levels are aesthetic, health issues would be a primary level. They do treat for these minerals and are going to reevaluate their treatment methods to do a better job of binding and or removing it from the water supply. Water was tested once a week. This facility in Northfield is used as a test site because of the 24/7 access via the Police Department, they also test at point of entry at the facilities in Northfield and Linwood.

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Councilwoman Korngut asked if Mr. Matorazzo agreed that once the water has run clear, that it's safe to drink.

Mr. Matorazzo would not advocate drinking discolored water; once it runs clear it is safe. Water safety was relative, it was relative to an individual's health, and clear water doesn't necessarily mean it's safe, but to their standards it was.

Councilwoman Korngut reiterated the question, and asked if once it runs clear is it the same as the water other customers are getting who did not have brown water.

Mr. Matorazzo replied, yes.

Councilwoman Korngut asked if there was a timeframe that can be given to residents so they know what to expect; Three months? Six months? Can they provide a realistic timeframe so customers know what to expect.

Mr. Matorazzo encouraged communication with residents to try to pinpoint when and why it happens.

Councilwoman Korngut asked again if there was a timeframe.

Mr. Forcinito replied. He said unfortunately the answer is that they don't have a timeframe, because they didn't yet know what was causing it.

Councilwoman Korngut suggested that the code red updates be provided to the Mayor, we can put it on our Facebook page.

Mr. Matorazzo agreed to do so; he had Clerk Canesi's contact information as well.

Councilwoman Korngut asked what the Council could do.

Mr. Matorazzo responded curbing unauthorized use by contractors, etc.

Councilwoman Korngut asked what was the effect of flushing and when does the water company do it.

Mr. Matorazzo advised it was usually done during the overnight hours and can cause brown water.

Engineer Nassar asked if the system pressurization fluctuated, and could controlling the pressure help?

Mr. Matorazzo replied if caught early on controlling the pressure could help.

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Mayor Chau asked if the brown water issue had to be reported to any state agencies.

Mr. Matorazzo replied it had not been reported, they were regulated by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and NJAMW has to report monthly to the DEP on water quality issues; discolored water had not been reported.

Mr. Forcinito clarified that discolored water issues are not reported to the BPU or DEP.

Mayor Chau asked if the mineral levels vary.

Mr. Forcinito replied that they could vary but were relatively consistent.

Mayor Chau asked if there were health hazards associated with this if it continued.

Mr. Matorazzo replied if you took too much iron vitamin, you could overdose, but he did not see that potential in brown water.

Mayor Chau asked if the water had been tested.

Mr. Matorazzo replied yes, it was and had been tested.

Mayor Chau asked had NJAMW experienced this problem before and asked where it was coming from.

Mr. Matorazzo replied it's been going on for a while.

Mr. Forcinito noted that older pipes were not lined and can create the issue, but we don't have that issue here in Northfield.

Mayor Chau asked when the first complaint occurred.

Mr. Matorazzo believed it was July 15, 2018, when John Brenner reported it; the system was flushed and it was resolved by July 18, 2018. He believed it began happening again in October.

Mayor Chau asked what measures were taken to prevent hydrant flushing from causing ice and hazardous street conditions.

Mr. Matorazzo described the process, including diversion of water to storm drains.

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Councilman Smith asked if there was a policy in place to communicate with local officials.

Mr. Forcinito stated they don't really have a policy but their governmental affairs person, Kevin Watsey, would reach out if it's a specific incident. He described how the brown water issue happens sporadically, and in clusters.

Councilman Smith asked if a timeframe can be given for the evaluation of their infrastructure.

Mr. Forcinito replied they have an inventory but need to review it.

Councilman Smith asked if a link to NJ American Water's website could be put on our website.

Clerk Canesi advised a link could be put on our website to NJAMW on website, but it may be more meaningful to have one central repository for complaints.

Mr. Matorazzo agreed, saying if complaints don't go through their call center it was difficult to track the volume and area of complaints over time. If residents called Mr. Forcinito directly their problem gets solved, but the call center does not have a record of it.

Council President Lischin stated he felt the isolated incidents seem to be the same blocks over time, the pump keeps turning on and off and the main distribution runs down the block; everyone having the same problem is near the pump station before and after the replacement of the main.

Council President Lischin opened the meeting for public comment, and offered residents the opportunity to speak with water company representatives in the lobby.

Jim Shippen, 2306 Shepherd Drive, said everyone's problems have been different. He disagreed that hydrant flushing occurred overnight. In the past 10 days it has happened in the daytime. He had heard that abatements on bills and plumbing services had been offered; Mr. Shippen stated he had never received any such information and didn't know anyone who did.

Council President Lischin urged that the customers go out in to the hallway to speak with NJAMW directly; they were a private entity.

Mr. Shippen wanted City Council to hear the types of complaints that individuals had. There was no one prepared to speak for everyone here.

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Councilwoman Korngut asked for a show of hands as to how many people had gotten an offer of plumbing service, or bill credits (there were 2 present who said they'd received such an offer). She stated she was willing to sit here and let each person speak.

Mr. Shippen continued; he understood that Council had no control over the water company, but felt that there was a lot of frustration on the street. Residents wanted to know why they were the only ones with an issue.

Council President Lischin agreed with Mr. Shippen that everyone should have their say.

Solicitor Facenda wanted to be sure everyone understood that this is an issue between a customer and private utility, and complaints would need to go to the BPU.

Kerrie Marrone, 114 West Rosedale Avenue, also identified herself as a member of the School Board. Her home was affected as was the school.

Councilman O'Neill asked for confirmation that the school was affected.

Mrs. Marrone advised that water was tested last year; she did not know the scope. The custodial staff had been instructed to run the water till it runs clear.

Councilman O'Neill asked had the School Board reached out to the water company

Mrs. Marrone noted that the custodial staff had contacted NJAMW.

Councilman O'Neill suggested that Mrs. Marrone have the school notify the Mayor if there were any issues with the water at the school.

Council President Lischin suggested that the school have NJAMW come to a School Board meeting.

Carmine Guidara, 2304 Shepherd Drive, said he has brown water in his home as well. He said it has been an issue for about 10 years; he had called numerous times over the years, his neighborhood had been flushed twice in the past month but it continues to happen. He understood that there was no recourse, nothing the Council can do.

Councilman O'Neill suggested we coordinate or eliminate hydrant flushing by the Fire Department and be proactive with contractors about hydrant use.

Engineer Nassar advised that we can control and direct our contractors.

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Amy Hughes, 2036 Shepherd Drive, showed Council a small jar of water she'd drawn from her faucet. She said it has been 10 years almost every day. Every faucet had to run. She doesn't cook with it or drink it. It was unacceptable. She was now speaking with Thomas Hoffman, who was a customer advocate for NJAMW. Mr. Hoffman advised her that the next step would be the BPU, but that a BPU complaint would be routed through Mr. Hoffman for action. She was not sure about checks and balances. We need clear, clean, fresh water that doesn't have to run.

Council President Lischin clarified that the brown water was oxidized, that the chemical process used by NJAMW creates clear water, but it's the same water.

Mr. Matorazzo confirmed.

Mrs. Hughes stated that the hydrants on her street were flushed every two weeks, in the middle of the day, at night, whenever. She also had to call the City because the base of her driveway was eroded, and the City had to come put material down, and it only gets washed away again.

Council President Lischin asked Engineer Nassar if he knew about the driveway issue.

Engineer Nassar knew the road needed to be paved, but he did not know it was caused by the hydrants.

Solicitor Facenda asked if there was single point of contact residents can call regarding this particular issue.

Mr. Matorazzo advised that an email address was provided.

John Cummings, 2326 Shepherd Drive, asked about the grade of the pipes that supply these residences; was the grade to cause? His home also has brown water.

Mr. Forcinito replied that he could look into it, but he doesn't think it is, it's a pressurized system, not a gravity system.

Jaclyn Roesch, 2301 Shepherd Drive, has had brown water for 5 years. She described the water coming out of her toilets in June 2018 as being as brown as the table. She was still waiting for a call back from the water company.

Councilwoman Korngut asked NJAMW representatives if they can come to the next School Board meeting, and provided dates.

Mr. Forcinito replied that he could make the February meeting.

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Council President Lischin asked for the one point of contact to go on the record.

Mr. Forcinito gave the information for Tom Hoffman, as follows: thomas.hoffman@amwater.com, residents should use the subject line “Northfield”. Mr. Forcinito stated that Mr. Hoffman works normal business hours, and provided 856-782-2324 as the number for Mr. Hoffman.

Council President Lischin asked if anyone else in attendance wanted to speak on the record. There were none, and this public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

He encouraged all residents who still wanted to speak with NJAMW to do so in the lobby.

WORK SESSION TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS

Council President Lischin moved to the balance of the topics on the work session agenda and deferred to Solicitor Facenda for an update on the potential land sale.

- Potential Sale of Landlocked City Owned Property
 - Final adoption of amendment to ordinance on 1/22/19 agenda

Solicitor Facenda advised that Council would finalize the land sale ordinance tonight. We would notify the affected property owners, he suspected we'll get a bid, and then move to the public auction.

- Sign Ordinance Changes
 - Update from Committee, if any

Council President Lischin reported that the new sign committee members were Councilman O'Neill, and Council President Lischin, along with Planning Board members: Dr. Levitt, Mr. Shippen and Mr. Scharff. The committee would be meeting tomorrow at 6pm.

- Bike Trails at BGP – *Grant Application Denied*

Councilman Dewees reported that the Advisory Board met about the bike trails, they would identify trails to be used.

- Cresson Avenue Paving Project – Tree Conflicts on Walnut Avenue

Councilman Dewees had to reach out to residents to speak to them about the Walnut Avenue tree conflicts. He asked Councilman Perri to assist; would discuss with him.

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WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Lischin wanted to put a new standing item on the agenda regarding new grant opportunities. Engineer Nassar had done a great job, but if anyone from Council sees or hears of a new grant, they are encouraged to bring it to a meeting, and run it through the appropriate committee.

Councilman O’Neill added that he has had state representatives that are friendly to our town who would like to be notified if we are putting in for any grant.

- Selection of Dates for Budget Workshop Meetings

Council President Lischin announced the dates for budget meetings: February 7th at 4:30pm, February 21st at 5pm, and March 7th at 4:30pm.

- ACUA Pump Station – Catherine Place and Vicinity

Council President Lischin brought Council up to speed regarding the ACUA pump station failure in the area of Catherine Place, on January 8th. Representatives from the ACUA would be here at the next meeting to answer questions from Council.

Councilman Smith advised that he lives in that area, and said the ACUA had been there three times in the last three months.

Engineer Nassar stated he only knew about the January 8th incident; he was told that controls failed.

- Museum Electric Bills

Council President Lischin explained the museum electric bills, they are high every year, we've asked Atlantic City Electric to do an energy audit.

Councilman Dewees added that 6-7 programmable thermostats had been purchased to replace the ones already in the building and that the energy audit was in the works.

Councilwoman Korngut said she’d noticed that there were field use applications on the agenda again, and recalled that last year we said we would have a plan in place to make sure this was uniform.

Councilman O’Neill advised that except for some outside groups it's mostly existing teams that have been here for years and years.

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Councilman Smith wanted to look at it, and wanted to consider options. He would like to see what other towns did.

Councilman Dewees noted that the process in place is better than it was a few years back, as long as Council still has control.

Councilwoman Korngut continued, and said last year she'd created a program for seniors to get assistance with shoveling, if anyone knows of anyone, adults or kids, who would be willing to volunteer, let Councilwoman Korngut know. Also, if you know of anyone who needs assistance please advise her of this as well.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Lischin reviewed the regular meeting agenda and asked that Resolution 43-2019 be voted separately from the consent agenda.

PRESENTATION: Northfield Community School, Principal Morrison – Butterfly Garden

Council President Lischin announced that the presentation from the school had been canceled.

PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Lischin opened up this portion of the meeting for any member of the public to speak on any subject, announcing a five minute per-speaker time limit.

Joe Goukler, 14 Jack Sloan Court, identified himself as a Family Association of Northfield (FAN) board member, and said he'd put in an application for the minor league field that was rejected based on times. The explanation he was given was that only one 9U team can use it; he was later told it was a time conflict.

Council President Lischin said the first he'd heard of it was today, and commented that the resolution that Council President Lischin wanted to vote separately was related to this. Council President Lischin said he was against any AAU team, but others wanted to proceed. He did not understand how we can give our field away to an AAU team when we didn't have our schedule for little league yet.

Councilman O'Neill believed there were two applications for the same dates and times.

Clerk Canesi replied no.

Mr. Goukler also replied no.

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Councilman Smith wanted to see fields used by as many residents as possible and we needed to find a way to accommodate that.

Mr. Goukler asked who he should speak with about the condition of the football field.

Councilman O'Neill identified himself as the contact, and said he had spoken to some people about it.

Councilwoman Korngut announced that she would like to have Resolution 42-2019 voted separately from the consent agenda.

George Livingston, 419 Davis Avenue, said he was here for the field request for Mainland Lacrosse. The group will comply with any requests from the Council, and Mainland Lacrosse would be happy to reseed the field; he knew the condition was poor.

Council President Lischin thanked Mr. Livingston.

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

At 7:47pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk