

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 3, 2022**

At 4:01pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi; this meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231, on January 22, 2022.

Municipal Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“Based on CDC guidelines related to Covid-19, the City of Northfield has suggested that everyone two years or older who is not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in indoor public places, and visitors are made aware of this decision with signs at the entrances to the building.

To ensure the health and safety of our employees and visitors, we are also continuing to adhere to social distancing requirements in our indoor public spaces, and as a result there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public this evening. In order to ensure that the public may fully participate despite the limited in-person capacity, this meeting is also being presented simultaneously as a remote public meeting, live-streamed, using Zoom conferencing service.

Zoom meeting participants can dial in by telephone and listen to the proceedings, or they can access the meeting using a web-browser, and be able to view and listen.

Instructions on how members of the public could reserve one of the limited seats, as well as how they can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and were published in the Press of Atlantic City. The full text of the public meeting notice has been posted at the entrance to the municipal building and includes Zoom instructions, information on where to find the meeting agenda and relevant documents, as well as instructions on how members of the public could submit comments in advance of tonight’s meeting.

For those participating via Zoom, all participants will be ‘muted’ upon entry to the meeting. Web-browser participants will not be able to share their screens or see the camera-view of anyone other than the host, which is the City of Northfield.

Zoom participants wishing to exercise their right to participate during the public comment portion of the meeting should wait until the specific announcement is made to open the public comment period. At this time, one by one, any telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. For web-browser participants, comments or questions may be submitted via the chat function and will not be acknowledged outside of the designated public-comment portion of the meeting; chat-users must also provide his/her name and address for the record in order to be heard.

Any written comments submitted in advance will be read aloud and addressed during the public comment portion of the meeting.”

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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

CFO Stollenwerk and Police Chief Newman were also in attendance.

Fire Chief Cummings and Volunteer Fire Company Assistant Chief Shenkus were in the audience.

2022 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Council President Polistina stated that as we begin this next budget season we are in a pretty good position. He hoped everyone reviewed everything so we could get through some of these department and capital items. He deferred to CFO Stollenwerk.

CFO Stollenwerk reported on the timelines; the budget deadline was extended again. We need to introduce by March 31st and adopt by April 29th. The sooner we do that the sooner we can start our projects. She explained we can increase the budget by 2.5%; we were inside the cap increase. She added that we are under local exam this year. She noted several key issues for this year, including a \$200,000 wastewater increase, and the revenue from added assessments. Revenue declines have been leveling off. Our collection rate was 98.46%, which was very good. There was an increase in surplus of \$946,000. There is an additional \$197,000 in miscellaneous revenue due to sewer connection fees for Cresson Hill, we can't anticipate that in future years. Half of the Coronavirus Local Recovery Funds (CLRF) were received last year, we would get the second tranche this year. Based on their calculations we experienced a revenue loss, and therefore we have more latitude with the use of funds. There is a surplus balance of \$3.4 million. CFO Stollenwerk reviewed highlights in appropriations and revenues. Our budget was presently set at a zero-tax increase; using ARPA funds as revenue you are not allowed to decrease taxes. Zero is fine, but we can't decrease. We also can't use the funds to offset debt service. The balance of the budget was pretty standard. Staffing levels were the same. The City was still negotiating with two union groups.

Council President Polistina asked if the \$400,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds could be used for general expenses?

CFO Stollenwerk replied yes, within reason.

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CFO Stollenwerk added a line this year for park maintenance; we used to use money from the park trust, that was no longer available because we have no camping, etc. This would give a better idea of what we were spending on the park.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone from Council had questions.

Councilman Utts asked where would use of surplus leave us at the end of the year?

CFO Stollenwerk replied the ending balance was \$258,000 higher than last year. We were using more than last year, but we had more to use. That was subject to change based on valuation, she waiting for the Deputy Tax Assessor to give her the final figure. She asked Council for a general idea on capital projects.

Councilman Notaro asked if CFO Stollenwerk received a quote for the football snack bar roof.

CFO Stollenwerk replied, yes, it was around \$7,000.

CFO Stollenwerk asked if Council wanted to go down the CLRF list?

Councilman Dewees advised CFO Stollenwerk that she could remove the \$287,000 playground option. The \$110,000 option would increase a bit because we need site work.

Councilman Smith asked who chose the playground option.

Councilman Dewees replied, he did.

Councilman Utts asked if there was any further talk of pickle ball.

Councilman Dewees advised that was still being discussed.

Councilwoman Bucci asked if safety inspections are performed; were there reports that should be considered?

CFO Stollenwerk responded that we get the loss control reports but there was nothing serious.

Councilman Notaro asked had additional bleachers been budgeted; we are moving them from field to field.

Councilman Dewees replied, not at this time.

Councilman Dewees noted that the stormwater system had to have GPS coordinates; to truly map the stormwater system was intensive.

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CFO Stollenwerk continued to review the CLRF project list. She reviewed a quote provided by the architect for City Hall and Fire Department roof.

CFO Stollenwerk noted the need for a vehicle for code enforcement.

Councilman Dewees added there had been discussions regarding scanning.

Clerk Canesi suggested permanent records only; \$100,000.00 as a placeholder number.

Council President Polistina added we needed a price for the boiler.

Councilman Dewees reported the picnic area at the park was not ADA compliant; he suggested paved walkways, pavilions, and replacing the chain link fence with post and rail; the cost was approximately \$105,000 for that. Also discussed were basketball and pickleball courts: two full basketball courts and four pickle ball courts, with parking at an approximate cost of \$200,000. He also suggested exercise equipment consisting of a concrete pad with three to four pieces of outdoor rated equipment at an estimated cost of \$40,000. He felt it would be nice to do something in these areas.

CFO Stollenwerk suggested Community Development Block Grant funds for senior exercise equipment.

Councilman Smith asked if frisbee golf was discussed.

Councilman Dewees replied no, but he was looking for a three-to-five-year plan. He needed more information.

Councilman Utts suggested a consultant to master-plan the park.

CFO Stollenwerk announced she would put all of the suggestions together and Council could decide what they wanted to pursue, what would be long term and what would be short term. She moved to page seven of the capital plan.

Discussion ensued regarding potential sewer pump station upgrades in the next five years; it was likely there would be two. The Zion station, and one other.

CFO Stollenwerk referred to page 11 and said these were preliminary capital requests; she received more today so this would be updated. She reviewed potential plans.

Council President Polistina state that he believed the number for the ladder truck was increasing.

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Assistant Chief Shenkus replied yes, the numbers were increasing, right now it was around \$1.2 million.

Councilman Utts urged sharing a ladder truck with Linwood, they got one from Ocean City.

Chief Cummings noted that Ocean City got rid of it for a reason, and Linwood had spent significant money on repairs. It would also only work if the ladder was here, otherwise it would be Linwood's staff responding.

Councilman Utts asked, if purchased, when we would accept delivery?

Chief Cummings replied, two years.

Councilman Smith asked if we were actively looking for used trucks/

Chief Cummings replied no; he offered that you don't know what you are getting with a used truck.

Councilman Smith asked if there was an active used truck market; he asked why we weren't pursuing.

Assistant Chief Shenkus responded that there was a used market, most ladder trucks tend to be at the 10 to 15-year mark, and a 100-foot ladder is hard to find. Based on the composition of the town, a 100-foot ladder is what was needed due to setbacks and height of buildings.

Councilman Utts asked CFO Stollenwerk how long the bonding process takes. The Fed is going to raise rates.

CFO Stollenwerk noted it takes a few months.

Council President Polistina asked if there was anything else on capital.

CFO Stollenwerk would update with everything else she got today.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone from Council had further comment.

Councilman Leeds asked was one of the Public Works trucks was being removed.

CFO Stollenwerk replied yes, one.

Council President Polistina clarified that they were not replacing the dump truck.

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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.

Seeing no one wishing to make a comment Council President Polistina closed the public session.

Council President Polistina read the meeting notices.

At approximately 5:30pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk