

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION  
FEBRUARY 9, 2012**

At 4:00pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised according to Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mrs. Brown, Mr. Dewees, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Perri, Mr. Polistina, Mr. Vain, Mr. Carew

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor Mazzeo; following the flag salute a moment of silence was observed.

Council President Carew noted for the record that the agenda has been revised to reflect the postponement of the closed session that was advertised.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion of Councilman Polistina, second of Councilwoman Brown, all in favor of approving the minutes of January 3, 2012 and January 30, 2012.

**2012 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Councilman Polistina announced that Registered Municipal Accountant Ken Moore was in attendance this evening to provide information.

Mayor Mazzeo reported on Police overtime, as requested by Councilman Perri at the last budget meeting. In 2011 total OT was \$83,000 with \$38,000 funded by grants.

Councilman Perri asked if the Annual Financial Statements have been completed for 2011 and if 2011 had been fully reconciled. Moore responded yes to both questions. Perri requested a report of overall overtime for all departments.

Council President Carew said Moore would present first, and then Council will review proposed capital. Moore began his presentation. He distributed budget sheets and stated that he would be reviewing appropriations first, found on pages 12 through 29. Moore reviewed the budget, noting changes to certain line items.

Public Works Manager Jim Clark stated that a staffing change may result in reduction to his salaries and wages budget by approximately \$13,000.

At the request of Councilwoman Brown, Court Administrator Donna Clark reviewed her budget, including a proposal to move the court to the former administrator's office. The proposal includes an ADA compliant service window and has a cost

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estimate of \$15,000. The budget includes a staffing increase in the form of a part time employee for 12 hours a week, to be shared with Linwood. Moore asked if the shared court split would change; Clark responded that this is Council's decision.

Mayor Mazzeo stated that there may be a flat service fee for everything other than wages, and as an example referred to the 10% administration fee that is provided for in the sewer interlocal agreement.

Councilman Perri said legacy costs such as pension, benefits etc. need to be included, and Linwood should share in the costs of facility improvement.

Tax Collector Cindy Ruffo said the City needs a postage machine and folding machine; an employee recently had an injury as a result of the repetitive movement involved in manually folding tax bills.

Police Chief James reviewed the police staffing with regard to shared court; he also mentioned time management software and said he has a proposal from one vendor and is looking at Edmunds as well. Council President Carew requested that Chief James prepare a presentation for the next meeting.

Assistant Fire Chief Lauren Crooks said his department has put in for a new hydraulic generator; the existing generator is out of service and is most likely damaged beyond repair. He also noted a need for new turnout gear.

Mayor Mazzeo said that there is a backlog of filing in certain departments, such as the City Clerk's Office and Building Department. We may need to hire a part time employee to assist with filing. Council President Carew added that Northfield is very lean, compared to other municipalities. Councilman Dewees expressed the need to determine if each department is running efficiently.

Councilman O'Neill requested a breakdown of all overtime. Perri asked if the City has received any reimbursements for storm-related overtime. Carew replied that we got funds for two storms in 2010. Jim Clark added that he is not sure if we got the funds yet for the 2011 storms. Moore spoke, saying the City recognized \$36,000 in 2011.

Moore continued to review the appropriations budget. Councilwoman Brown noted that the City gave Little League \$1,000, and paid \$3,000 for their audit. Moore replied that a full audit was not conducted; it was downgraded to a review. Mazzeo clarified that the audit is not just for what we gave them; it's for all the money that comes in and out. Councilman O'Neill suggested spot audits in the future. Brown requested five years of audits for Little League and All Sports. Perri asked if these organizations file tax returns; Moore replied, saying they probably don't have to file a state return but should file federal. Moore continued, saying what the audits have

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done in the past is bring out deficiencies. In the past, areas such as the snack bar have proven to be possible risks for a problem. Brown asked if funding be conditioned upon compliance with recommendations made in the audit.

Moore continued with his review of appropriations. Councilman Perri said he feels labor attorney fees could have been reduced if we had an administrator in-house. O'Neill urged careful consideration of increased expenses when considering the shared court fees we will ask from Linwood. Perri asked for clarification on the difference between shared court and combined court. Donna Clark replied, and said the Governor would appoint judge; that's the only real difference, aside from a few differences in expense allocation.

Moore continued. Chief James suggested privatizing some of the fleet maintenance; he said it is no fault of the city mechanic, but he's only one person. Councilman Perri referred to funding for the new Senior Committee, suggesting that they be given one-half of the funding that we give to the church. Moore noted uncertainty in the future cost of gasoline. O'Neill noted a potential for reduced fuel costs due to the outsourcing of yard waste; there will be fewer city trucks running.

Moore continued. He said at the moment, the budget is at \$240,000 over last year. Salaries are up \$400,000 and operating expenses are \$170,000 down.

Councilman Dewees said he feels the Buildings and Grounds budget may need to go up; Moore noted that some improvements can be capital.

Councilman Perri asked Moore to explain why the Library levy is now broken out; Moore explained, adding that it has no real effect on our budget. We still collect the same amount. Perri asked when the sewer interlocal committee would meet again; Mazzeo replied it would be at the end of the month.

Moore reviewed the grants that the City traditionally gets, and said that others that come in throughout the year are not in the budget yet. Carew explained the in-and-out nature of grants.

Moore continued; the budget is now at \$12.4M; last year was \$12.8M. Overall it is down a little bit because of a few one-time charges we paid last year. Moore began to review revenues, noting that the surplus number will change as we go through the process. Council will decide as a last decision what that number will be. He said revenues are based on last year and explained that the City can't anticipate more than it received in 2011. He pointed out that on the revenue side the budget is a cash-basis budget. On the appropriations side it is accrual based.

Donna Clark stated that the reduction in grant funding affects Court revenue. Brown added that the programs are effective and also result in fewer violations. Clark said if fines are not paid it is out of their control; cities can go out for collection but the

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court cannot be involved. Moore said it is difficult to discount fees via a collection agency because so many entities are involved in fines it becomes challenging. Chief James explained a proposed multi-county amnesty program that will bring in substantial volume of late court revenue. Moore continued to review revenues; the City is a little bit over the levy but we need to look at some of the numbers. He said taking out surplus, revenue is down is \$200,000 but a good portion is grants and \$100,000 is tickets.

Councilman Dewees said the ACUA has given us a contract proposal for \$115,000 to collect yard waste for 9 months of the year; if we keep yard waste in house we will need to buy a trash truck.

Mayor Mazzeo noted that Egg Harbor Township is making infrastructure improvements to the communications systems, the cost of which is being proposed to be passed along to us for dispatch services; he is scheduled to attend a meeting next week.

Council President Carew initiated a discussion on capital projects. Robbie Dollard of Doran Engineering distributed a list of proposed streets to be paved, and Carew explained how the list was created and the City's systematic approach to paving. Carew said preliminary cost estimates are \$500,000 for paving; he said Stormwater improvements are already funded through 2010-2011 capital.

Councilman Perri suggested doing just the really bad sections of some of the streets, and getting a per square yard price, instead of doing whole streets. Councilman Vain suggested shared-service paving projects with Linwood to get cheaper bid prices. Councilman Carew replied that we have found success in doing large areas in town, all at once. Councilman O'Neill suggested involving Somers Point in shared-bid paving.

Carew outlined other proposed capital, including the Tax Office postage machine and folding machine at \$14,000, and a new generator for the Fire Department at \$15,000. Councilman Dewees inquired about expanding the construction office work space. Carew said the Road Department needs a new mid size truck with plow, at a cost of \$120,000, and said they may explore a bucket truck as a shared service. Carew said the Sewer Department needs piping, valves, impellers, and electrical equipment at a cost of \$25,000. Jim Clark added that he would like to buy a new sewer truck; the 1998 truck is having problems. It would be a split cost with Linwood if we can get them to agree to the purchase. Carew said the football field needs new lighting; the electrical portion would be done by volunteers and the City would buy lights and poles at a cost of \$125,000. Carew said the total for proposed capital \$845,000.

Mayor Mazzeo asked how much was in old capital. Moore responded and said there is \$1.6 million with approximately \$1.4 million committed.

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Councilman O'Neill urged all to review all of 2011's expenditures to try to find additional one-time expenses that can, for sure, be eliminated from the budget. He also suggested that the City needs a Business Administrator; Carew agreed. Mazzeo said if we have an administrator, that he would change the form of government to give the administrator more authority. Mazzeo said changing the form of government to five elected officials would provide savings to pay for the administrator. Perri suggested that all of Council read the ordinance as it relates to the administrator before the next meeting.

Carew directed the City Clerk to find out the state requirements for a Business Administrator, and advise Council via email.

Councilwoman Brown asked if the City needed to continue subscriptions to NJSA books. The City Clerk replied that online subscriptions are available, but a separate license is required for every person who needs access.

Council President Carew opened the meeting to public for anyone wishing to speak; seeing no one, he closed the public session.

Carew read the meeting notices. He noted that a Special Meeting of Council has been added to the schedule, for February 15<sup>th</sup> at 4pm to discuss the hiring of a new part time CFO based on the recommendation of the Mayor and Finance Department chair.

At 7:20pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk