

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 9, 2017**

At 5:04pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. This meeting has been properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 28, 2017, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Lischin, Murray, Piergiovanni, Perri, Dewees

Absent: O'Neill, Travagline

Mayor Chau and CFO Dawn Stollenwerk were also in attendance.

Council President Dewees asked all to refer to their budget worksheet, and introduced Councilman Murray, Finance Chair.

Councilman Murray explained that we were at a 3 cent increase with the way the budget was now. He stated that the change in ratable base resulting from tax appeals has caused 1.3 cent loss in taxes receivable. He introduced Chief Financial Officer Stollenwerk for further explanation.

CFO Stollenwerk announced that the budget needed to be introduced by March 17th and adopted by April 21st. The City generated \$1.3 million in income due to the increase in sewer revenue and tax collection; that gave the City \$62,500 more in surplus than last year. The City has lost \$86.9 million in taxable ratables since 2010, which equated to approximately \$748,000.00 in lost revenue due to tax appeals. From 2016-2017 we lost \$119,000.00 which equates to the 1.3 cents. The State Health Benefits Program decreased by .1 percent for employees, but the rate for early retirees went up 8.6 %. The City did bond with Atlantic County Improvement Authority this year, so all prior authorizations were funded; the Emergency Medical Services was funded a full year this year because we entered into the new contract mid-year in 2016. The 2% increase for union employees was due to the contract, and 2% has been budgeted for non-aligned. The City used \$10,000.00 more in surplus than last year; that left us within our goal. There were contingencies due to decisions that have not yet been made with regard to staffing in the Fire Department, Public Works, and the Park. CFO Stollenwerk also referred to the capital budget worksheet and reviewed requests.

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Mayor Chau requested additional monies for the senior citizens, in the form of a \$1,000.00 increase.

Councilman Perri explained that the program was currently funded at \$1,000.00 and half of that goes to another organization in town.

Mayor Chau also asked for an increase for the Deputy City Clerk and reviewed the salaries of several of the other area Deputy City Clerks. He would defer to the Council as to the amount of increase, felt she was underpaid and deserved more.

Council President Dewees asked CFO Stollenwerk for opinion on the \$1,000.00 for the seniors.

CFO Stollenwerk noted that there was \$1,000.00 in the Economic Development Commission that hadn't been used in a number of years.

All of Council generally agreed that that money should be moved to the Senior budget.

Mayor Chau referred to the 4 positions held by the Assistant Fire Chief and asked for any interest from employees and no one responded. He suggested a \$1500.00 stipend per position.

Mayor Chau and Councilman Lischin engaged in discussion regarding the responsibilities of the Right to Know Coordinator, the duties, and whether to create a stipend.

Councilman Lischin also advocated for an increase for the Deputy Clerk.

Councilman Lischin and asked if Council would like to discuss the staffing of the Fire Department since there were representatives from the leadership in the Volunteer Fire Company in attendance, referring to Chief Cummings and Deputy Chief Shenkus.

Council President Dewees asked that it come through committee.

CFO Stollenwerk referred to Chief Newman and the IT Maintenance of the department. The Police Department had a police officer who performed all of those tasks. They got a price from our current provider of \$1,040.00 monthly to have this work done by an IT provider, and free up the police officer to do police work.

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Chief Newman explained that we were paying a lieutenant's salary to do IT work.

Chief Newman was in favor of outsourcing.

Council President Dewees opened the meeting to public, seeing no one wishing to speak he closed the public session.

Council President Dewees read the meeting notices.

Councilman Dewees asked Councilman Lischin for a recommendation for Fire Department at the next meeting; and noted that the issue of stipends needed to be resolved.

At 5:38pm on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk