

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

At 4:05pm, this meeting was called to order by Shannon Campbell, Deputy Clerk. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 23, 2016, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL Present: Dewees, Lischin, Murray, Perri, Piergiovanni, Travagline

Absent: O'Neill

Also in attendance were CFO Dawn Stollenwerk and Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi.

Council President Travagline welcomed everyone to the meeting and turned the meeting over to Councilman Murray.

Councilman Murray announced that CFO Stollenwerk went over the budget and scaled it back, she made recommendations, the increase is over 1 penny, not using any of our surplus.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that we are at a 3.6 cent tax increase mostly generated by a loss of revenue.

Council President Travagline asked about the Atlantic City Country Club, Council recently found out about it.

CFO Stollenwerk asked Mayor Chau if he would like her to give a summary on what happened.

Mayor Chau replied yes.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that when an appeal is filed we get orders of judgements and stipulations; the Tax Collector is aware the changes are coming to our tax books. When cases are settled outside of court we don't see the paperwork, only the change in the book. CFO Stollenwerk stated she has tried to get in touch with Tax Assessor Mark Sykes for a list of the settlements outside of court so we are aware of them.

Council President Travagline asked if there were any discussions prior to the settlement with our attorney and if there was anything Council could have done, did anyone know about the settlements. He stated he did not have a problem with the settlement but thought that Council or the CFO should have been made aware of the agreement.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

CFO Stollenwerk agreed.

Councilman Perri inquired as to why this happened.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that golf courses are not worth as much as they were in the past; part of the settlement was that enhancements would not be added to the assessment.

Council President Travagline stated he understood what was done he would just like more transparency from our employees.

Councilman Perri noted we had \$12.8 million in appeals and as elected officials we don't have control of the appeals.

All Council discussed the appeals process and fair market value.

Municipal Clerk Canesi stated that she and CFO Stollenwerk were in the process of making changes for more transparency.

At 4:16pm Councilman O'Neill entered the meeting.

CFO Stollenwerk stated the final book is struck on January 10th, this year it was the week after due to software issues with the County.

Council President Travagline noted the economy is still down and most likely will be for 3-5 more years, he had reached out to chairs of the departments and will have meetings with department heads and supervisors pertaining to each department and what could be done to avoid increases. Sacrifices may need to be made. Council President Travagline asked all to contact supervisors to set up a meeting in the next week or two. A few departments have been upset in the past; does not want departments hearing things from outside.

Councilman Murray deferred to CFO Stollenwerk to go over the changes presented to Council.

CFO Stollenwerk noted the changes since the last meeting. They included: \$18,000.00 for EMS, funding for court recording equipment and police evidence equipment. She went through salaries, no new positions, this was not a surplus generating budget, anticipated revenues and expenditures are what they are going to be. She cut back spending and operating budgets to the 2015 figures. The total salaries for non-aligned employees increase is a total \$28,000.00.

Councilman Dewees stated that CFO Stollenwerk could remove the full time person for Birch Grove.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

Councilman Perri stated the salary values don't show taxes etc. so this is not a true salary.

CFO Stollenwerk noted that information can be found online, on the user friendly budget.

Councilman Perri asked if the report shows what was owed when a person retires.

CFO Stollenwerk replied that we are not required to keep those figures but the State does do them; we don't get the breakdown just for Northfield. We don't count it as a liability until it is actually accrued.

Council President Travagline asked if the Deputy Clerk gets an increase of 2%.

CFO Stollenwerk stated she gets what's awarded by the governing body.

Municipal Clerk Canesi stated that the increase at the discretion of the governing body.

Council President Travagline inquired as to why one position should get a raise when they are doing the same duties.

Mayor Chau disagreed, the salary ranges in other municipalities are higher, the position does a lot of work, and Mayor Chau felt there should be an adjustment to bring the salary up to par. Mayor Chau stated he would provide salaries from other towns if Council wished. He stated he appreciated all of the work from the Deputy Clerk.

Council President Travagline stated it was not fair to raise the salary of one position; it should be 2% like the other departments.

Mayor Chau felt this position and amount of work deserved more than 2%.

Councilman Lischin stated he could vouch for the work that position does, the Deputy Clerk helps cover other departments in the entire city.

Council President Travagline noted he was trying to be fair, if keeping the same duties why increase the salary. He took a straw poll Deputy Clerk will get a 2% increase.

Councilman Perri stated the economy is the worse he's seen and using surplus scared him.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

Councilman Perri noted the loss of funds for the library due to tax appeals; operating expenses should stay the same for all departments unless critical.

Council discussed the raise for Office of Emergency Management Coordinator and Deputy. The OEM needs a good person, deserves an increase. After a straw poll vote of 4-3, the coordinator and deputy stipend would be increased.

Mayor Chau stated that Council could give the position to salaried employee. Linwood has Councilman as OEM coordinator; he asked if anyone wants OEM as part of their Councilmatic position. Mayor Chau asked for a volunteer from Council, he is fearful that we will lose our coordinator; there hasn't been a deputy since Chief James left.

CFO Stollenwerk asked Council about the requested increase for code officials, they also asked for 2% increase. After conducting a straw poll vote, no raise would be given.

Clerk Canesi requested and received from Acting Chief Newman permission for the Council to publicly discuss his salary.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that his salary was set, he has been acting for over a year, she included a 2% increase in the budget. March 1st will be his one year anniversary.

Councilman Perri asked if there were any conditions in resolutions for raises, if he were in an acting position in the union would the raise be 2%.

CFO Stollenwerk stated yes.

Mayor Chau noted that due to pending litigation we may have a different situation. He asked if Acting Chief Newman would he be able to renegotiate if the position became full time.

Council President Travagline said that would be another issue and he can renegotiate should it come to that. After conducting a straw poll vote, Acting Captain Newman would receive 2% increase as of March 1st.

Mayor Chau asked to speak about personnel requests, he is an advocate for public safety, he would leave it up to Council regarding hiring of new officers, and he asked Chief Newman about vehicles.

Acting Chief Newman stated the department has a couple of vehicles with high mileage, he asked that Council to keep on their radar, and that a decision will need to be made, maybe 1 this year, 1 the next.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

Councilman O'Neill asked where do new vehicles go and who uses them.

Mayor Chau replied that the new ones are on the street; supervisors do use some.

Acting Chief Newman stated that the priority is patrol, unmarked vehicles are used for the chief and detectives.

Councilman Lischin stated that new vehicles were purchased last year in hopes of getting new ones each year so we don't have to replace too many at one time; we need plan to retire cars at certain mileage.

Acting Captain Steinecke noted that the detective cars were seized vehicles.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that Council had a laddering lease plan in place 4 years ago, until Council went another direction due to the budget.

Acting Chief Newman stated that the Police Department has 11 vehicles plus 4 seized vehicles. The Federal seizure money used to purchase vehicles in the past is no longer available.

Council President Travagline asked what would be done with a new vehicle.

Acting Chief Newman said the Department would replace the vehicle with 100,000 miles.

Councilman Dewees stated they should recycle the vehicle to another Department.

Council President Travagline took a straw poll vote to lease one new vehicle all members voted yes.

CFO Stollenwerk noted there was a large increase in Police Department for equipment and maintenance agreements.

Acting Chief Newman reminded Council that dash cameras are required. This was the last year for the warranty extension, he believed the warranty has paid for itself; the cameras are moved from old vehicles to the new ones.

CFO Stollenwerk noted this would be an ongoing expense; cameras will need to be replaced.

Councilman O'Neill asked Acting Chief Newman if he had checked with any local vendors for repairs.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that the cameras are under a state contract.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

Councilman Lischin asked what the LPR is and how it worked.

Acting Chief Newman explained the License Plate Reader and the warranty.

At 5:08pm Councilman Perri left room the room, he reentered at 5:11pm.

At 5:11pm Mayor Chau left the meeting left the meeting.

Council President Travagline thought the equipment would pay for itself if the economy were better.

At 5:15pm Councilman O'Neill left room and promptly returned.

Discussion ensued amongst all of Council regarding the warranty of the License Place Reader. Council voted and will leave the \$5,000.00 in the budget and leave it up to Acting Chief Newman to decide how he wanted to use it.

CFO Stollenwerk included \$25,000.00 in the operating expense line of the budget for the evidence and court equipment. This included one new work station, possibly 2 depending on cost of the recording system.

Acting Chief Newman explained the evidence system. The system in place is 9 years old, an upgrade is needed.

Acting Captain Steinecke noted it would cost around \$700 for Acting Lieutenant Dettinger to rebuild the tower.

Councilman O'Neill stated it is usually less expensive to upgrade than buy a new product.

Council President Travagline conducted a straw poll vote; all in favor of the upgrade to the evidence system.

CFO Stollenwerk reminded Council that they needed to introduce the budget by March 22nd and that money was needed in the Capital Improvement Fund.

Council President Travagline asked if there was anything else to discuss tonight, Council would do Capital Improvements at the next meeting.

CFO Stollenwerk spoke regarding the handicap ramp at the museum, the City can use ACIA money for it; an architect was drawing plans.

Councilman Dewees noted that there are structural issues. Replacing/removing the ramp may expose some other issues to the building; we need to be careful.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

Council President Travagline asked Councilman Dewees to check the budget for buildings and grounds.

Councilman Dewees stated that the lights on the bike path were being retrofitted to LED lights.

Councilman Perri questioned the insurance lines.

CFO Stollenwerk stated money was reallocated due to a clerical mistake.

Councilman Perri asked if FAN had become self-sufficient.

Council President Travagline stated that Little League was pushing to become independent, minus the maintenance of the fields. He asked CFO Stollenwerk if we need to do audit for the Volunteer Fire Company year.

CFO Stollenwerk stated the audit is done every 2 years and recommended doing the audit.

Councilman Dewees questioned the County Tax Assessors Program. He told Council that the County was talking about eliminating City Assessors and going to the County.

Councilman Perri is on board with any plan that keeps us at 100%.

Council President Travagline asked Municipal Clerk Canesi to do a Resolution to support the County Assessor Program.

CFO Stollenwerk stated that they still need State Legislature.

Clerk Canesi state that it was done several years ago, we would do another one to support the County.

Council President Travagline opened the meeting to the public.

Seeing no one wishing to speak he closed the public session.

At 5:40pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Campbell, Deputy Clerk