

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

At 4:02pm this meeting was called to order by Deputy Municipal Clerk Shannon Campbell, who welcomed the audience. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 24, 2026, and in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

Present: Councilwoman Carfagno; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Polistina; Councilman Smith; Council President Bucci

Municipal Clerk/Business Administrator Canesi, Chief Financial Officer Stollenwerk, Police Chief Pollak, Fire Chief Cummings, Fire Captain Nixon and Superintendent of Public Works Boyd were also in attendance.

2026 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Council President Bucci deferred to CFO Stollenwerk for an updated explanation of the proposed budget.

CFO Stollenwerk referred to the summary of changes provided to Council, noting we were struggling with the appropriations cap. She explained by using \$125,000.00 from the CAP bank, it would leave \$75,000.00 moving forward. We have some one-time expenses this year, Council can still do 3.5% cap increase on that. She left the non-aligned employees at 4%, a new patrol officer with benefits, \$1,000.00 for community policing. The requests in public works and the police department were moved to capital. Regarding fire truck maintenance, she reallocated the request to vehicle maintenance and created a Fire vehicle line, she increased the equipment line to include this change. CFO Stollenwerk went through the negotiations and salaries.

CFO Stollenwerk announced there was discussion regarding the asset management equipment at the last JIF meeting, we may be eroding Title 59 immunity if issues are not addressed – she would send minutes from the JIF and the comments of the JIF attorney. She listed the unfunded requests; if there were any changes Council would need to make cuts.

Mayor Chau asked what were the savings from the change to health benefits?

CFO Stollenwerk recalled around \$180,000.00; employee increases went up but less than if we stayed with the State.

Mayor Chau wanted money to fund an additional plaque in Council Chambers for Police, he suggested \$1000, he gave history of the plaque.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

Councilman Notaro, regarding the non-aligned employees, are they always near the police and fire?

CFO Stollenwerk noted that Council had been doing that, police and fire average about 9%, there were some statutory positions. There are only a handful of non-aligned employees, this is not setting the salary, Council would do that by resolution.

Councilman Polistina felt all contracts needed to be looked at, steps on top of increase is generating this. It's fair to the non-aligned to keep them at the same % increase, they were not in a step program.

Councilman Polistina, to all, if we want any of the unfunded requests, we need to take something out, we were at max appropriations.

Councilman Dewees stated if we are not adding, we need to move on.

Superintendent Boyd asked about his request regarding part-time for all positions?

CFO Stollenwerk reiterated, Council would need to remove something, they were not funded.

Councilman Dewees referred to the part-time mechanic and full-time administrative assistant.

Councilman Notaro asked what the cost for a part-time mechanic would be?

CFO Stollenwerk reminded Council that the contracts haven't been settled for two years, adding employees is not something for this year, most of the budget is staffing.

Superintendent Boyd referred to the budgets for roads, salaries and wages, where'd the money go?

CFO Stollenwerk advised she had to move money to make the budget legal; the ACUA is also expiring in April, there would most likely be a big increase, she moved some money from solid waste – we planned on moving to new machines to pick up toters, we would need to purchase toters, she would come back to this after the contract was negotiated.

CFO Stollenwerk asked if Council was ok to introduce this budget? She did not think we'd get more state aid.

Councilman Polistina noted we still didn't know the school budget.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

CFO Stollenwerk added that the local district took tax abatement, she didn't think it would be available this year.

CFO Stollenwerk moved to capital, she suggested Council remove things they didn't think were necessary.

Councilman Polistina asked about recreation for 26-27 regarding the pedestrian path, was it a long-term goal to improve bike path?

CFO Stollenwerk advised the input came from public works.

Councilwoman Kern asked about striping?

Councilman Dewees replied, that was years ago to connect the bike path to Birch Grove, there would have been a bike lane on some of the streets.

Council President Bucci suggested leaving in slip lining.

CFO Stollenwerk explained what we do in a 5-year period so the bond is stretched out.

All discussed Argo Lane and felt it should be left in; Councilman Dewees suggested getting the engineer to look into it again.

CFO Stollenwerk advised Council did not need to decide which projects to do now, we just needed a lump sum, what was important to each department; we didn't need to go line by line. Police asked for vehicles, we may be able to get smaller vehicles, that was a priority for them. We can combine the public works truck with some smaller projects. Take the lighting projects – that will add to your yearly operating budget, some items you may be able to potential grants for. Council needed to cut this plan in 1/2, we need to stay below five million dollars.

All discussed projects at Birch Grove Park.

Council President Bucci did not feel the farm league needed to have night games.

Councilman Polistina suggested deferring another year.

Councilwoman Carfagno asked about a grant for the First Street Playground, she thought we got one.

Councilman Dewees commented that there are grants that we could apply for, we are doing Birch Grove Park first.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

Councilman Notaro asked about the pump station?

Councilman Polistina noted we were waiting to hear from the Tunnels to Towers engineer.

Councilman Notaro felt the number was high.

CFO Stollenwerk announced we just did a contract for \$400,000.00.

CFO Stollenwerk reiterated that this was just a planning tool, we don't need to be exact at this point.

Councilman Polistina confirmed we don't need detail.

CFO Stollenwerk added Council needed to prioritize to get a handle, some items on the list don't need to be done in a bond, the smaller items could go through capital while some items were not feasible.

Councilman Dewees felt our roads needed to be looked at again, we've only paved roads through grants, Revere Avenue was in bad shape.

Superintendent Boyd asked if there was money left in capital from paving? Was there anything that could be used for other items.

CFO Stollenwerk explained that we would keep that money aside to match the grants, Engineer Nassar was good at maximizing our funding, we haven't had that in the last two years. There was \$79,000.00 left in sewer; the ordinance for this year would need substantial funding for the road program.

Councilwoman Kern asked if we had a list of roads, we used to have a list.

Councilman Dewees replied, yes, it needed to be revised.

CFO Stollenwerk suggested Council pick some projects for 2026, then fill in with sewer and roads, then recreation. Council needed to make a decision on the fire truck.

Councilman Polistina commented that the truck wouldn't be until 2029, do we need to encumber now?

CFO Stollenwerk explained we needed funding in place first, Council would need to do in 2026 or 2027.

Mayor Chau added that a committee needed to be formed.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

CFO Stollenwerk stated we could buy from a co-op, that's the easiest way to do it.

Councilwoman Carfagno was advised it was not at standard.

Captain Nixon added that the truck was almost 40 years old, if one truck was out for service, we needed another truck. A new one would replace this one – it's from 1989. It won't go out of service until a new one comes in.

Councilman Polistina felt it needed to go in the plan for 2026 or 2027.

Captain Nixon added that \$700,000.00 was not realistic anymore, it's probably closer to \$850,000.00-\$900,000.00.

All discussed the previous fire truck purchase.

Council President Bucci suggested funding in 2026.

Councilman Smith asked about buying used.

Captain Nixon was not in favor, his goal was to replace every 7 years.

Chief Cummings advised we should have 3 under 21 years.

Councilman Smith stated we may have a regional fire department in coming years.

CFO Stollenwerk commented that adding the pumper in the 5-year plan is about 22% of what Council will spend in the next 5 years.

Clerk Canesi suggested a straw poll.

Council President Bucci conducted a straw poll, all yes, but Councilman Polistina and Smith for adding it in the 2026 plan.

CFO Stollenwerk moved to the truck for public works.

Councilman Dewees thought we needed it this year, he deferred to Superintendent Boyd.

Superintendent Boyd noted the truck was out of commission now, the body was rusting away, the mechanic was working on it now. He would keep it in the fleet as an extra vehicle, a stake body was convenient piece of equipment.

All members present were in favor of keeping the truck in for 2026.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

All discussed police vehicles, CFO Stollenwerk explained we leased three vehicles, capital can only purchase SUV's. Chief Pollak received quotes for 3 small SUVs for the same price. The patrol vehicles could come from operating budgets.

CFO Stollenwerk moved to the Facility Study requested by OEM to be done at all facilities to see if we need improvements or changes, was anyone interested in adding that to the plan, the cost was around \$15,000.00.

BA/Clerk Canesi felt there may be recommendations we can't afford at this time.

At 4:54pm, Councilman Dewees left the meeting.

Discussion continued regarding the facilities study.

At 4:55pm, Councilman Dewees returned.

CFO Stollenwerk would remove the recreation projects, when we review the capital plan as whole, we can pick one or two recreation projects, this would give framework for Council to work with. Anything not funded would be put aside for the next five years.

BA/Clerk Canesi noted that this would give us a predefined list for LRIG grants.

CFO Stollenwerk announced we did not need to meet on the 19th and the budget introduction would be on March 24th.

BA/Clerk Canesi, to Council, asked who were the 3 members meeting with the ACUA? Our solid waste contract was extended last year, it expires April 30th.

Councilman Dewees replied that he, Councilman Notaro and Councilman Polistina would be the members going.

BA/Clerk Canesi suggested Thursdays, she asked all to please check their calendars now, if not available a certain date, please let her know.

Councilman Dewees preferred around 10am.

Councilman Polistina and Councilman Notaro would make themselves available at any time.

BA/Clerk Canesi would firm up the date and time and a send meeting invitation, she already had Mayor Chau's availability.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION/FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Bucci opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject, she asked that they state their name and city of residence for the record and observe the five-minute limit per speaker.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, Council President Bucci closed the public comment portion of this meeting.

MEETING NOTICES

Council President Bucci read the meeting notices.

At approximately 5:02pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Campbell
Deputy Municipal Clerk