

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 10, 2022**

At 4:02pm 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.

**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

CFO Stollenwerk and Police Chief Newman were also in attendance.

Fire Chief Cummings, Fire Captain Nixon, OEM Coordinator Joo and Volunteer Fire Company Assistant Chief Shenkus were in the audience.

**2022 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Council President Polistina announced the first items on the list were unfunded requests. These put us at a 2.4 cent increase. Item 3, an additional patrolman, was a change that would be promoting a class II to full time and was budget neutral.

Councilman Leeds noted there was increase in cost for pension from PERS to PFRS.

Discussion ensued amongst all present with regard to impact of a class II officer being promoted to full time police officer, and the Code Enforcement duties.

Chief Newman added there could be potential retirements in the future that warrant the acquisition of a new officer at this time.

Additional discussion continued regarding funding a full-time officer, a full-time class II and elimination of the part-time class II officer.

Councilman Leeds advocated for an additional full-time fire fighter as support for EMS.

Council President Polistina asked was it for full-timers only.

Councilman Leeds felt having a first responder was vital to the city.

Councilman Dewees asked why was the first responder discontinued?

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Councilman Leeds replied it was due to reduction in staff; this was an enhancement to service.

Council President Polistina asked how did that affect the 24-hour shifts?

Councilman Leeds noted they would add a 40 hour a week fire fighter.

Clerk Canesi advised Council would have to negotiate that; the current contract is 24-hour shifts.

Council President Polistina added that adding a fire fighter undoes some of what was negotiated.

Captain Nixon stated, you'd be hiring a dual person, fire and EMS. We never went below two-man minimum; the town has only grown. The apartment complex is large, a second person is needed, Monday through Friday, 8am-4pm

Councilman Smith noted this was the third budget meeting, and this was the first time he was hearing about another fire fighter. He would not vote for a tax increase.

Clerk Canesi asked was hiring a part-time fire fighter and scheduling them for first-responder duties an option?

Captain Nixon felt it would be hard to schedule because they all have other jobs.

Discussion ensued amongst all regarding the merits of additional full-time fire fighters.

Councilman Utts asked CFO Stollenwerk where to find the \$72,000.00 needed for a full-time fire fighter?

CFO Stollenwerk explained that this would be a planning decision for the Council; the cost would pro-rated this year but next year would be a full year at a higher cost. Council can use additional surplus, but that eventually that runs out. There was a lot of uncertainty in the world, economically. She asked would it be an option to negotiate with the EMS provider for another ambulance.

Councilman Leeds replied we were not lead agency.

Clerk Canesi advised that our agreement was a cooperative pricing agreement; each town could have their own Agreement.

Council President Polistina took a straw poll vote to add a full-time fire fighter.

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Councilman Leeds – yes; Councilman Utts - yes, for the position but no on expense; Councilman Dewees – yes; Councilman Notaro; yes.

Council President Polistina, Councilman Smith and Councilwoman Bucci were not in favor but only because of the tax increase.

CFO Stollenwerk replied we are using federal funds; we can have some flow through the budget.

Council President Polistina felt we could forgo the boiler this year.

Councilman Utts asked about the link to FAN (Family Association of Northfield) that the insurance money would create.

Councilwoman Bucci stated she did some research, our making a donation to FAN no more links us to FAN than if Mrs. Bucci paid it for them.

Councilman Smith advocated for FAN to be independent, just like Northfield Little League.

Council President Polistina commented that one of the things that has never been discussed is who is ensuring that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing it. They were signing the agreement but were they doing what they need to do to keep kids safe.

Councilman Notaro suggested giving FAN \$11,000.00; the normal number.

Council President Polistina reminded all that the intention is that FAN would be self-sufficient in the future. They should not rely on this being funded in the future.

Councilman Notaro was in favor of continuing to provide financial support.

Clerk Canesi suggested a cover letter with the check to explain that next year FAN should plan on funding their own insurance.

Council President Polistina, for budget purposed merging the Seniors' groups was off the table.

CFO Stollenwerk moved on to projects. The boiler was out. She had added more to the fuel budget. She would work numbers to keep us at zero.

Councilman Smith reported he received a price from someone for bleachers, they were closer to \$7,000.00 for one set, but we need two.

Councilman Dewees advocated for the purchase of a jet trailer for sewer.

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CFO Stollenwerk advised that Engineer Nassar said the vacor could be used for sanitary and storm, as long as you clean it between uses.

Councilman Notaro replied, we will check on that.

CFO Stollenwerk reviewed the balance of major purchases, \$1.2 million for the fire truck.

CFO Stollenwerk moved to the OEM (Office of Emergency Management) vehicle; we purchased one and Council had previously discussed that they wanted to wait on the second. She asked what did Council want to do?

Council President Polistina asked Councilman Leeds if one is available now?

Councilman Leeds replied the dealer is holding one for us now. The vehicle was \$39,000 and Leeds was using other state contract vendors for the equipment.

Councilman Notaro agreed with the purchase, and said if we don't need it, it can be given to the Fire Department in 2023 to replace their proposed purchase.

Council President Polistina took a straw poll vote, all were in favor of purchasing a second OEM vehicle.

Councilman Leeds would surrender the Dodge Charger for anyone else who wants to use it.

**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 5:27pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk