

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 16, 2021**

At 6:04pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 9, 2021, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

*Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), and N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 - 1.7, this meeting will be held in-person and as a remote public meeting (live-streamed) using Zoom conferencing service. Due to social distancing requirements related to Covid-19, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public. Visit the event calendar page for March 16, 2021 at [www.cityofnorthfield.org](http://www.cityofnorthfield.org) to determine current seating availability. Face coverings and social distancing will be required for in-person attendance. To reserve an available seat, contact the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 609-641-2832, ext 125, no later than 4:00pm on March 16, 2021. Once all available seats have been reserved, virtual attendance will be required using a web-browser to Join the Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86922058413> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13017158592,,86922058413# or direct dial +1 301 715 8592 using Meeting ID: 869 2205 8413. For those wishing to comment during the dedicated public comment portion of the meeting, but who may be unable to attend (in person or via Zoom), public comments may also be submitted in advance via email to [mcanesi@cityofnorthfield.org](mailto:mcanesi@cityofnorthfield.org) or by written letter to the Office of the Municipal Clerk, 1600 Shore Road, Northfield NJ 08225, or by hand delivery to the drop box in the parking lot at the south corner of the municipal building, addressed to the attention of the Municipal Clerk. Comments shall contain the name and address of the author, will be read aloud and addressed during the remote public meeting, and must be received by 2:00pm on March 16, 2021.*

Municipal Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“Due to social distancing requirements related to Covid-19, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public this evening. For this reason, this meeting is also being presented simultaneously as a remote public meeting, live-streamed, using Zoom conferencing service, and in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Orders and the Open Public Meetings Act. Zoom meeting participants can dial in by telephone and listen to the proceedings, or they can access the meeting using a web-browser, and be able to view and listen. Instructions on how members of the public could reserve one of the limited seats, as well as how they can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and were published in the Press of Atlantic City. The full text of the public meeting notice has been posted at the entrance to the municipal building and includes Zoom instructions, information on where to find the meeting agenda and relevant documents, as well as instructions on how members of the public could submit comments in advance of tonight’s meeting. For those participating via Zoom, all participants will be ‘muted’ upon entry to the meeting. Web-browser participants will not be able to share their screens or see the camera-view of anyone other than the host, which is the City of Northfield. Zoom participants wishing to exercise their right to participate during the public comment portion of the meeting should wait until the specific announcement is made

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to open the public comment period. At this time, one by one, any telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. For web-browser participants, comments or questions may be submitted via the chat function and will not be acknowledged outside of the designated public-comment portion of the meeting; chat-users must also provide his/her name and address for the record in order to be heard. Any written comments submitted in advance will be read aloud and addressed during the public comment portion of the meeting.”

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Madden; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Perri; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina; Mayor Chau

Solicitor Facenda and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance. Chief Newman was present via Zoom.

Council President Polistina moved to Committee Reports.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Councilman Perri**– Public Works: Roads, Engineering, Sewer Operations; Senior Citizens

Councilman Perri reported the seniors have been trying to see if anyone has been having difficulty in getting shots scheduled, Atlantic County Intergenerational Services can help as well and residents could contact the County Board of Health. He was still looking at sewer flows.

**Councilman Utts** - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning, Technology / MRHS Channel; Planning Board

Councilman Utts reported the Planning Board was quiet right now, our housing and zoning officer was retiring this year, we would discuss more about that later.

**Councilman Notaro** - Fire Department/EMS; Northfield Sports (FAN); Cultural Committee / Veteran Liaison; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilman Notaro reported we received 3 bids for EMS, he would talk about that more during the old business discussion. He read the following EMS report for

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February: TriCare had a total of 129 dispatches, 111 calls with patients, 87 transports, 10 mutual aid calls to Egg Harbor Township, and administered 0 Narcan.

Regarding Veterans Park, Councilman Notaro met with the Advisory Board last week and discussed the Purple Heart Way in depth. He was pleased to see it on the agenda and noted the attendance of Marco Polo Smigliani in the audience. He announced that the Cultural Committee would like to do the 4th of July Parade this year. We would need to shut down roads etc. Joan Brennan should be here this evening and could discuss further.

**Councilman Dewees** - Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields; Birch Grove Park, Bike Path, 1<sup>st</sup> Street Playground, Veterans Park

Councilman Dewees reported the outlet had been installed out back for OEM. The sod projects should be done for the Babe Ruth field by the end of April. The concrete pad will be installed out back for a new Police Department shed; it will provide approximately 288 feet of storage. In talking with Chief Newman, it should be fine for their storage needs. FAN would like to put basketball courts at the parking lot, he was working with Engineer Nassar to see what could fit without affecting traffic. There was an electrical problem at the museum that was being addressed, and we were evaluating the Police Department exterior door. The Advisory Board met last Wednesday, they were a very energized group, they discussed some fundraising ideas including the possibility of bricks as a fundraiser. They also discussed the picnic area at the park and making it more handicap accessible. Councilman Dewees added there had been talk about pickle ball, he was looking at potential locations. He reported the playground equipment needed to be replaced; Superintendent Vitale was getting pricing. Regarding Birch Grove Park Center, he would like to revisit the possible use of the facility by the Seniors, he noted the need to improve acoustics.

Councilman Smith asked Councilman Dewees where are the proposed basketball courts? The football field parking lot?

Councilman Dewees replied, yes.

**Councilman Smith** - Court / Violations; Little League and Babe Ruth, Northfield Community School; Shared Services

Councilman Smith reported regarding the courts; we have not heard back from Hamilton Township regarding our proposed changes to the shared court resolution. Councilman Smith advised that Mayor Chau had shared figures for the county court, in either case it would look to be a savings for the City. Little League and Babe Ruth held clinics this weekend and started practices, this was a positive development for our children. Northfield Community School had a Board of Education meeting last evening and their decision was to return to a full day, 5 day a week schedule, the normal traditional schedule, with slightly staggered times, April 12th, after spring

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break, this would be a positive development in terms of the expense of our Crossing Guards. This looked to be more stable and more in accordance with what our Crossing Guards have done in the past. He was waiting for details from Superintendent Bretones.

Councilman Dewees asked Councilman Smith to find out if any work on the baseball fields needed to be done preopening.

Councilman Smith would reach out to President Yard.

Council President Polistina attended last night's Northfield Little League meeting and they did have a contractor looking at it, using their own funds.

Councilman Dewees noted resodding of part of the major league field would be postponed until next year.

**Councilwoman Madden** – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden had nothing to report for insurance and safety, the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting was scheduled for the 18th. She read the following report: Fire Department calls for February included; 4 total fire incidents, 6 false alarm calls, 3 good intent call, 2 rescue incidents, 3 hazardous condition calls, 1 service call incidents, 0 EMS 1st responder incidents and 0 mutual aid calls; for a total of 19 dispatched incidents.

Councilwoman Madden attended the Library Board meeting last week, and there was a discussion on shared services with pros and cons discussed. It was still in the early stages. The Library Director had a Trails, Tales and Tails Summer Reading Program, a series of free events to be held at the bandstand throughout the summer, more details would come as summer approached. Councilwoman Madden had brochures provided by the Library Director, they would be available at the City Clerk's office. March was Women's History Month. Councilwoman Madden read the library statistics for February as follows: attendance, 245; material circulation, 878; e-Books circulation, 57; audio book circulation, 77; fines and fees, \$40.00; significantly lower than last year at the same time, due to Covid. She hoped things turn around soon.

**Council President Polistina** – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina announced we would be introducing the budget this evening. A lot of hard work was done by the Council, CFO Stollenwerk, Kathi Smith and Ray Adams, and all of the department heads. The City was coming in at a zero budget, we didn't know yet what the schools and County would do, but he hoped it will be similar. He thanked residents as collections were up; by more than a percent.

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Councilman Notaro asked about Northfield's funding under the most recent stimulus relief.

Council President Polistina replied the estimated number was \$780,000.00, but it was not official and no guidance had been received from the State. It was likely it would have limitations.

Council President Polistina moved to the work session, old business.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS**

- Zion Road Pump Station Easement – *Pending Further Discussion During Duly Authorized Closed Session*
- Northfield Avenue at Rt 9 Drainage – *Update from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar did not have an update.

- Emergency Medical Services – *Update from Councilmen Smith and Notaro*

Councilman Smith announced the committee had a Zoom meeting yesterday; three bids were received. Linwood and Northfield mutually agreed to accept the proposal from Inspira at a zero cost to the cities. The two other bids were at significant costs to the towns. Linwood would be accepting the proposal at their next meeting.

Councilman Dewees asked will the services be the same?

Councilman Smith replied that they met all of the conditions, they were not a new company, they were established, they have been in existence.

Councilman Perri asked what was the cost to the patient, was it negotiated down from the \$950.00?

Councilman Smith did not believe we had control over that; it was not included in the RFP.

Councilman Perri asked if we would have terms and conditions at next meeting?

Councilman Smith replied yes, but Linwood would adopt first, as they were lead agent.

- Lease Agreement, Parking Spaces at Jackson and Fuae Avenues – *Update from Committee*

Council President Polistina did not have an update.

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Councilman Dewees noted that he did visit the site; the 150' did include the handicapped area, which did include the drainage area. He was concerned about the original agreement.

Council President Polistina agreed and shared the same concerns including the effect on the business.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS**

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

There were no new grant opportunities presented.

Council President Polistina shared that FAN expressed interest in doing a coin drop; it's becoming that time of year. He wanted to present that to the Council, to see what Council's thoughts were, before we have groups put plans together. Was the Council interested in entertaining coin drops this year? He asked if there was any interest in a straw poll?

Councilman Notaro replied, yes.

Councilman Dewees added that we have a process, it gets approved or it doesn't.

Council President Polistina replied he just wanted to see if there were any major concerns; there were none.

- Shared County Court – *Requested by Mayor Chau*

Mayor Chau believed the Council stands out as having benefitted our taxpayers via the use of shared services. He believed the shared county court was something that we needed, in most cases for us, operation of the court had lost money. Of the 21 municipalities, only 5 have expressed no interest. Going forward, Mayor Chau would have County representatives come to give a presentation to Council. This had the support of Senator Brown and Senate President Sweeney. Mayor Chau has heard concerns about travel time, and officers going back and forth to court. It was advised by one of the judges that virtual was here to stay. We would not necessarily have our officers go to the court unless it was really necessary. Savings for various towns range from 18-78% savings; Northfield would save 33%. He encouraged City Council to continue their interest. He had also requested a preliminary statement of pros and cons. Mayor Chau was advised the county court could be operational by early 2022.

Councilman Dewees asked did the County have a deadline to give us a final number?

Mayor Chau replied no, new municipalities have recently come online.

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Councilman Notaro asked about the percentage of savings.

Mayor Chau replied they were based on 3 previous years' activity.

Councilman Utts asked what happened to the revenue collected.

Mayor Chau replied Northfield keeps its own revenue.

Solicitor Facenda added if you look at our numbers, we were operating at an \$11,000.00 deficit over the 3 years, based on this do we keep the excess if revenue increases?

Mayor Chau replied, yes.

Solicitor Facenda noted what the municipality would get back is not on the spreadsheet; it might be interesting to have them add that.

Councilman Perri asked were the computer systems we currently have compatible?

Mayor Chau replied, yes.

Council President Polistina asked if they are charging a cost per case?

Mayor Chau responded, yes. He would continue to keep Council informed; he offered to include Council President Polistina and Councilman Smith on future meetings.

Councilman Smith added that this does require legislation passed at the state level; was there any update on that?

Mayor Chau replied that was a good question, he would bring it up at the next meeting.

Councilman Dewees thanked Mayor Chau for his hard work on this.

Council President Polistina moved to the regular agenda.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Council President Polistina made the agenda assignments.

Council President Polistina asked Council if anyone want anything voted outside of the consent agenda?

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Councilman Dewees announced that he did make an inquiry about any additional approvals that may be required for the Purple Heart Way, there were no concerns at the county level. The County did suggest a letter be sent to County Executive Levinson to bring him up to speed, and we did do that.

**PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER**

Council President Polistina opened this portion of the meeting for any member of the public to speak on any topic; he noted a five-minute limit per speaker.

Christine Taggart, 701 Burton Avenue, asked Council if we are going to do anything about the marijuana legislation? Was Northfield going to let any business sell? There would be heavy traffic. The stores that sell tobacco get first chance for a license and we have a lot of stores that sell tobacco.

Councilman Notaro replied there were two ways to look at this, a revenue perspective and that perspective. He believed Council was going to form a committee.

Council President Polistina replied that Council would be addressing it; he believed it did pass in Northfield 2 to 1. We would have to look at current zoning, consult with our Police Department, etc. What had been seen so far, with regard to the Police Department was concerning.

Councilman Dewees also wanted to wait for State guidance.

Ms Taggart added that halfway houses were popping up all over Northfield. She asked when they come for a C.O. was it for a family, for a business? She was in favor of them, but, no one follows the rules. Fairbanks and Burton Avenues have one, Jackson Avenue had two. Northfield can regulate how many come into town.

Council President Polistina replied no, as long as they meet the criteria, we cannot prevent them.

Ms Taggart noted there were rules such as no alcohol, she asked who was enforcing it?

Council President Polistina advised this was state regulated and the State oversees them.

Ms Taggart added, like Section 8, you can limit how many you can have.

Council President Polistina replied that he did not believe that to be true; if Ms Taggart knew something that was inappropriate he would find out who to report that to, to make it appropriate.



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Marco Polo Smigliani, Veteran Advocate, expressed his deep gratitude to Northfield for being there for veterans. He was here to discuss Purple Heart Way. He explained how a Purple Heart was awarded. The Purple Heart signs were a step in the right direction, all should be proud. He thanked Councilman Notaro for reaching out to him.

Councilman Dewees thanked Mr. Smigliani for his service.

Council President Polistina thanked Mr. Smigliani as well.

Bob McDonald, 808 Maple Avenue, was here to discuss the storm drain in front of Maple Avenue, and said over the years the flooding had gotten worse and worse on Maple Avenue. It has ruined his pressure-treated railroad ties, sprinklers, etc. He wants 150' of concrete curbing because his sprinklers were destroyed, He added that his pavers were not reinstalled correctly.

Engineer Nassar advised we were proposing to replace railroad ties with brand new ones; we don't replace railroad ties with concrete curbing, we only install curbing to address drainage. We installed new drainage pipes to address the problem with positive discharge. He noted that the are won't be paved for at least 60 days to allow for it to settle. The damaged sprinklers would be fixed by the contractor; that was their responsibility.

Mr. McDonald reiterated that the City should install curbing. The residents had endured flooding for years.

Engineer Nassar advised the cost to do so was approximately \$6,000, and repeated that we only install curbing where it is needed to solve a problem.

Council President Polistina replied; as the Engineer stated, they will put it back the way it was, with the improvements to the drainage and the street.

Councilman Dewees suggested it was possible that the resident can work with the contractor.

Mr. McDonald suggested the City pay half.

Councilman Notaro asked what was the normal process?

Councilman Dewees replied that curbing was responsibility of the homeowner.

Engineer Nassar offered to calculate the budget-cost of new railroad ties, with the resident getting a credit.

Mr. McDonald noted curbing along the bike path.

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Engineer Nassar advised that was a grant.

Mayor Chau added he had gotten complaints from residents who did not get curbing.

Councilman Dewees added that the curbing along the bike path was due to elevation change.

Aubrey Hiers, 3 Park Road, Linwood, stated that she was the librarian at Otto Bruyns Public Library. She wanted to share that they will be resuming normal operating hours as of April 1. Tables would be available for 1-hour sessions through a registration process. Mask requirements and social distancing would be observed. She announced several upcoming programs under the Citizen Science Workshops, for all ages throughout the summer. More information to follow. She would also like to speak on behalf of maintaining the library as part of the municipal library system. She wished so many of the Cultural Committee members who have passed this year could be here, as they were there when the library was built. She was concerned that being part of the county system would disconnect the library from local activities, and the library is deeply rooted in the social infrastructure of the town. Other towns with municipal libraries include their historical society as part of their system. She explained the significance of local programs conducted through the library. They would benefit all residents, all departments, within our City. She knew we haven't gotten numbers from the county, but as they come in and as more questions arise, Ms Hiers was always available.

Joan Brennan, 116 Dolphin Avenue, had a lot to cover, for the Cultural Committee. She asked about funds that were donated in her mom's name, and said she had sent an email to Deputy Clerk Campbell asking where the funds are. She referred to 1st Baby, Citizen of the Year, and Mr. or Miss 4th of July; she asked if there was a budget at all for the parade this year. Councilman Notaro and Mayor Chau did not seem to think a budget would be a problem, if we were going to do a parade. She also mentioned concerts at the bandstand; she was told it was \$5,000.00 and asked if that was still available. She added that the museum had damage, and Councilman Notaro offered to go around the outside of the building to identify maintenance needs. Much was usually done by the volunteers but there were very few left. She hoped to get some answers, trying to take this over, and key members of the Cultural Committee have passed.

Mayor Chau spoke. As Ms Brennan pointed out, we've lost some very actively involved people who contributed to the Cultural Committee, the bandstand, and the parade. He had asked for volunteers to assist with the 4th of July Parade. He pleaded with the public to volunteer to help make these events happen.

Ms. Brennan added that if they were allowed to do the parade, they will reach out through social media for volunteers, they needed at least 10 volunteers, as well as the police.

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Councilman Dewees advised Ms Brennan that he would join Councilman Notaro in walking the museum, in his capacity as Chair of Buildings and Grounds.

Councilman Notaro thanked Ms Brennan. We need more people like her to step up, he hoped more would come out and help. He offered his own assistance in any capacity.

Council President Polistina would review what was budgeted and review with Councilman Notaro and Ms Brennan.

Clerk Canesi noted the donations were tracked and went into the trust account; Deputy Clerk Campbell would provide them to Ms Brennan.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Council President Polistina closed the public session.

At 7:31pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Smith, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk