

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 28, 2020**

At 7:03pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2020 and April 25, 2020, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

*Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), this meeting will be live-streamed using Zoom conferencing service and the public is barred from attending in-person. To join Zoom Meeting visit <https://zoom.us/j/98717548624>, Meeting ID: 987 1754 8624; One tap mobile +13126266799, 98717548624# US (Chicago), +16465588656, 98717548624# US (New York), Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), +1 646 558 8656 US (New York), +1 253 215 8782 US, +1 301 715 8592 US, +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose); Meeting ID: 987 1754 8624*

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau followed by a moment of silence.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilman Dewees; Councilman O’Neill; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Perri; Mayor Chau

Solicitor Stein, Engineer Nassar and Deputy Clerk Campbell were also in attendance.

**Present (via telephone):** Councilwoman Korngut; Councilwoman Madden

Chief Newman was also present via telephone.

Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“As everyone knows, based on an Executive Order of the governor, public gatherings are limited to not more than 10 people. Tonight, the following are in attendance via telephone only, using the speaker function of the telephone in the Council Chambers meeting room:

- Councilwoman Korngut
- Councilwoman Madden
- Chief of Police Paul Newman

Also for this reason, members of the public are not able to attend tonight’s meeting in person, but we are pleased to announce that virtual attendance has been made possible via a video-conferencing service called Zoom; 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 can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and Facebook pages, and was published in the Press of Atlantic City.

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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.

When the time comes for public comment, a specific announcement will be made; one by one telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. Web-browser attendees may ask questions or make comments via the ‘chat’ function. Comments will not be acknowledged until the public comment portion of the meeting begins; at which time they will be read aloud into the record.”

Council President Perri thanked Clerk Canesi and called for a motion of the minutes.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Councilwoman Korngut asked that the name of the woman providing masks to the police department be changed from Eileen to Arlene.

Clerk Canesi noted the change.

On a motion of Councilwoman Korngut, second of Councilwoman Madden, all present were in favor of approving the minutes of the meeting of April 14, 2020 without formal reading. They were posted, distributed to Council, and on file in the Municipal Clerk’s Office.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Councilman O’Neill** - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning; Court/Violations; FAN

Councilman O’Neill had no report this evening.

**Councilman Dewees** - Buildings/Grounds; Birch Grove Park

Councilman Dewees reported that he met with Superintendent Vitale from Public Works, they were looking at the public works facility trying to put a new bathroom in there; they looked at the plans and were trying to make some revisions to pare that down. He would report back.

**Councilman Smith** – Finance/Collections; Little League/Babe Ruth; Cultural Committee; Northfield Community School

Councilman Smith had two items to report. He reached out to Roy Clark from the Cultural Committee, to see how he was doing. He was doing well, and advised that should we be permitted to have the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade they would need help, as membership had dwindled. Summer concerts have not been booked so there may not be concerts this summer. The Northfield Community School Board of Education met

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via Zoom. Councilman Smith had some issues connecting so he missed the budget presentation, but he did ask for and received a copy. They proposed a 7.63 cent increase to the tax rate for Northfield Community School. The received an additional \$257,000.00 in State aid; the budget was increasing by \$447,000.00.

Council President Perri asked if there was any information provided as to where the increase was?

Councilman Smith advised that he missed that portion of the presentation.

Councilman O'Neill stated the he usually does not comment on school issues, but felt that was completely unacceptable.

Council President Perri asked Councilman Smith to reach out for information.

Councilman O'Neill asked Councilman Smith what was a penny on the tax rate.

Council President Perri responded, \$96.00.

Councilman O'Neill replied, so we are asking the residents to add \$750.00 to the rate during a pandemic.

Council President Perri replied that their rate was different, but that also does not account for the County, or Mainland.

**Councilman Utts** – Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Planning Board; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilman Utts reported that the Bike Path and Veterans Park seem to be fully utilized during these pandemic times. The Planning Board did not have anything on their agenda, the next meeting would be at 3pm on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Councilwoman Korngut** – Technology/MRHS Channel; Library; Municipal Alliance; Shared Services

Councilwoman Korngut reported that the Library had a board meeting telephonically, there were discussions about procedures for the anticipated reopening when the time comes. She gave credit to the Librarian who continues to go in and get mail; she and the staff also continue to make videos for the public. Plans include purchasing masks and social distancing.

**Councilwoman Madden** – Fire Department / EMS; Insurance and Safety, Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden reported she had nothing new other than agenda items for the Fire Department. Mainland Regional High School had their board meeting via Zoom and she participated. They mentioned Fall stipends for coaches, but they do

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not yet know what the fall sports season will be. The spring musical was postponed and prom had been tabled; students commented that they had bought their gowns and wanted a formal. Options were being explored. Spring sports are being tabled. Mr. Marrone spoke of pass-fail options as far as grading, and said they are working on the budget. Mr. Broomall mentioned holding of taxes, municipalities were urged to oppose this. The next meeting was up in the air.

Councilman O'Neill did not understand the issue of holding of taxes.

Councilwoman Madden stated it was something that came up, Mr. Broomall said there was a possibility of municipalities being able to withhold school taxes.

Council President Perri replied he had not heard that with everything he had seen from the DCA; that would come from the State.

Councilwoman Madden added that graduation was up in the air as well, schools were closed until May 15th; other states have canceled their school seasons.

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

Council President Perri had nothing to report for seniors, sewer operations were going smooth.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Chau announced that due to the pandemic situation, he was cancelling the Memorial Day ceremony; other options were being explored. It was brought to Mayor Chau's attention today by a member of the Police Department with regard to sanitizing of City Hall. Mayor Chau had consulted with our Finance Officer who indicated that the facilities were cleaned three times weekly. The Police Department did not feel this was meeting their needs. The second was sanitizing of police cars. They have been sanitized once; Mayor Chau was looking at options. Third was that the Police Department would like to implement alternative scheduling, to have a limited number of officers on patrol, with one officer at home, on call to respond to any emergencies. That could leave us with two individuals patrolling the City at any time. He asked Chief Newman to comment.

Chief Newman explained that a proposal was brought forward to essentially have two officers out of a four-man squad in reserve, they would be at home being paid, not here in Northfield working. This would reduce the amount of days they work from 14 to 7 days. If the need arose, they would be called in to work. Some departments have done this; Chief Newman was not sure this was within his authority to authorize. The Collective Bargaining Agreement was between the City government and the union, he did not want to give something away that is not his to give. Chief Newman had concerns: at least one officer lives 50 minutes away, and there are others that live 30-40 minutes. Response time would be an hour. He was not

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sure that he was comfortable with the arrangement, but again, he was not sure it was his decision.

Council President Perri asked to clarify they would be on standby, with pay?

Chief Newman replied, that was the proposal.

Mayor Chau added that the concept was to address contact among staff members.

Council President Perri responded that they were essential services, they should be in town, or at least in the building.

Councilwoman Madden felt the response times are way too long; if they are here in the building maybe she would consider it.

Councilwoman Korngut agreed with Councilwoman Madden, it sounded like Chief Newman agreed as well, it was not acceptable to be an hour away. She felt they should have to come in and practice appropriate distancing to the best of their ability.

Mayor Chau stated that under statute the Chief was responsible for the day to day; Chief Newman wanted Council to be aware. He was not suggesting this is what the Chief would do, the Chief asked him to bring this before City Council for comments.

Council President Perri felt a committee should be formed, nothing was in writing, if the Governor said they were non-essential it may be different. He had always felt the Police Department had done an outstanding job, he knew these were extraordinary times, but when stuff goes wrong, we need our people here to handle it. He was really hesitant to reduce capability of manpower in our community.

Mayor Chau appreciated Council President Perri's comments; the responsibility of day to day rests in the Chief's hands. The Chief was not looking forward to having an alternative schedule at this time, but the Chief felt he should bring to Council since there had been some discussion from the union representative to the Mayor and the Chief.

Council President Perri replied that by statute it is the Chief's responsibility, but in order to change the response times falls in to a bigger realm, Council President Perri would like to see the terms and conditions of that; he felt the governing body and Chief need to meet to clarify open issues.

Mayor Chau advised that other towns have done this.

Council President Perri asked were they Civil Service communities?

Mayor Chau replied, no.

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Mayor Chau spoke regarding Birch Grove Park, and said he had given everyone an article about state parks. Throughout this period, he had spoken to residents, many who want the park open. In talking to the Chief of Police, Mayor Chau was concerned if we opened the park, we don't have the manpower to monitor Birch Grove Park. He had observed many not observing social distancing. Mayor Chau's opinion at this time was to keep the park closed.

Councilman O'Neill replied that the whole idea was if people want to get out, we have everyone on the bike path, he felt opening the trails would help space people out. Several residents have shared the same concerns.

Mayor Chau said he gets a daily report from the County and from the Office of Emergency Management. In Northfield we've had 20 cases as of yesterday and 4 deaths. He spoke to the Mayor of Somers Point; it is very difficult to monitor and secure the areas, their baseball fields are open.

Councilwoman Madden said she agreed with Mayor Chau, she read the article that recommends parks stay closed. She sees numbers in Atlantic county going up for cases and deaths. She goes out very seldom, only if she has to. She felt people were too lax. We have to be diligent, it's a very dangerous disease. She felt if we could close the bike path, we should close that too.

Councilman Utts spoke, and said to Councilman O'Neill's point, you can see more and more people at the bike path and Veterans Park, he felt the decision could be revisited. If you are going to have a patrolman sit home, perhaps he can sit in a car at the park.

Mayor Chau understood the situation was evolving and changing. He added that he also wanted to simply state that he was alarmed and concerned with regard to our Labor Attorney's firm and one of the lawyers we utilize. He realized it was a new firm, he was concerned about recent expenses and services. He had received phone calls from the public and from Galloway Township who also utilizes this firm.

**CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Engineer Nassar reviewed the Engineer's Report as previously distributed to Council. The concrete work had started on Shepherd Drive. The project would be complete within four weeks from today. He applied for the Community Block Development Grant for recreational purposes; \$34,000.00 to construct a pavilion at Birch Grove Park and for exercise equipment. If we decide not to go with this project, we can go with another project down the road. He met with Councilman Dewees and they are discussing a master plan to improve the park, within 5 years we could have a more functional park. New Jersey American Water started paving roads they had disturbed, they were supposed to pave ½ width along Fuae Avenue, they did full width paving on Zion. This would give us more money for curbing and widening the road along Dolphin. The water company would will be out of town by next week. Our contractor went out to fix a connection at Tilton and Roosevelt, but the job was

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shut down because of lack of traffic control. The issue was addressed and the repair had since been made.

Mayor Chau, regarding paving at Dolphin and the bike path, asked what plans were being made?

Engineer Nassar explained the road was being widened.

**PUBLIC SESSION/FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER**

Council President Perri opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject.

Eric Leeds, 802 Debora Street – via Zoom chat: “The Police Department is a 24/7 agency, those officers need the sanitation more often. The Patrol Cars need to be cleaned more often as well.”

Mayor Chau stated that an employee had approached Mayor Chau last week, he believed the individual would be in tomorrow. Mayor Chau was concerned about the sanitation of the cars. The police do have wipes to clean common-contact areas.

Council President Perri confirmed that Mayor Chau was addressing.

Seeing no one else wishing to make a comment Council President Perri closed the public session.

**RESOLUTIONS**

All matters listed under the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature, and having been reviewed by Council, will be enacted by one motion. Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of any Council Member and if so removed, will be treated as a separate matter. Any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of Funds.

The Executive Session of Council will be held at the end of the meeting, and we will come back in public session to make a comment for the record after the executive session has concluded. Any vote made on subjects discussed will be made in public.

On a motion of Councilman Dewees, second of Councilman O’Neill, all present were in favor of voting by consent agenda on Resolutions 91-2020 through 95-2020.

- 91-2020** Amending Resolution No. 26-2020, Recognizing Members of the Northfield Volunteer Fire Company
- 92-2020** Request to the County of Atlantic to Use County Roads for Parades and Other Functions

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- 93-2020** Approval for the Municipal Engineer to Submit the Project Known as ‘Pavilion and Exercise Equipment at Birch Grove Park’ as the City’s Application for the 2020 Community Development Block Grant Program
- 94-2020** Authorization to Hire Part Time Firefighter/EMT
- 95-2020** A Resolution Providing for an Executive Session Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b (7), Regarding Matters Falling Within the Attorney-Client Privilege

Councilman Dewees motioned, second of Councilman O’Neill, to adopt the consent agenda for Resolutions 91-2020 through 95-2020.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

**ORDINANCES**

Councilwoman Madden motioned, Councilman Utts seconded to introduce Ordinance 6-2020, to be read by title only.

- 6-2020** Chapter 300: An Ordinance Prohibiting Illicit Connections to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems  
*Introduction / No Public Input / Published in the Press of Atlantic City 05/02/2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading / Public Hearing / Final Adoption 05/12/2020*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, stated that this is the first reading, and announced the publication and public hearing dates. The full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requests same.

Council President Perri announced for the public that these ordinances were mandated by the state for environmental concerns.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

Councilwoman Korngut motioned, Councilman Smith seconded to introduce Ordinance 7-2020, to be read by title only.

- 7-2020** Chapter 289: An Ordinance Prohibiting Improper Disposal of Waste  
*Introduction / No Public Input / Published in the Press of Atlantic City 05/02/2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading / Public Hearing / Final Adoption 05/12/2020*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, stated that this is the first reading, and announced the publication and public hearing dates. The full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and

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4:00pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requests same.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

Councilman O’Neill motioned, Councilwoman Madden seconded to introduce Ordinance 8-2020, to be read by title only.

**8-2020** Amending Chapter 315-6 of the City of Northfield Municipal Code Entitled ‘Leaves and Grass’ and Renaming Same ‘Yard Waste Collection Program’  
*Introduction / No Public Input / Published in the Press of Atlantic City 05/02/2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading / Public Hearing / Final Adoption 05/12/2020*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, stated that this is the first reading, and announced the publication and public hearing dates. The full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requests same.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

Councilman Utts motioned, Councilman Dewees seconded to introduce Ordinance 9-2020, to be read by title only.

**9-2020** Ordinance-Stormwater Control  
*Introduction / No Public Input / Published in the Press of Atlantic City 05/02/2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading / Public Hearing / Final Adoption 05/12/2020*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, stated that this is the first reading, and announced the publication and public hearing dates. The full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requests same.

Some of tonight’s ordinances may be published in summary, rather than in full; she reiterated that copies were available free of charge.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS \$ 1,602,747.17**

Councilman Smith motioned, Councilman Dewees seconded, for payment of bills.

Councilwoman Korngut asked Clerk Canesi if she was comfortable with the legal bills.

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Clerk Canesi replied yes.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

Engineer Nassar advised that there were two reports that have to be posted on the website, stormwater plan and stormwater pollution prevention plan. He asked if they needed to be approved by Council? Or can they just be posted?

Solicitor Stein asked if they were part of the ordinance?

Engineer Nassar replied, no.

Solicitor Stein then asked Engineer Nassar if they were part of his report?

Engineer Nassar replied that they were mentioned in his report.

Solicitor Stein would prepare necessary resolutions for the next meeting.

Council President Perri read the meeting notices and announced the executive session noting that Council will return with a comment for the record.

**95-2020**      A Resolution Providing for an Executive Session Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b (7), Regarding Matters Falling Within the Attorney-Client Privilege

Clerk Canesi read the resolution by title, and said we are required to set forth as much information as possible about the subject matter to be discussed as well as provide for the public the amount of time that can be expected to elapse before the non-public minutes can be disclosed. Clerk Canesi deferred to Solicitor Stein for comment.

Solicitor Stein announced the Executive Session involved labor counsel, billing, and that the lead attorney was no longer there, and continuation of their contract. He anticipated minutes could be released within 30 days. Action may be taken in regard to discussion at the conclusion of the closed session.

*At 8:08pm Clerk Canesi announced that Council will retire to the Clerk’s Office and return to make a comment for the record.*

*At 8:28pm Council President Perri resumed the public session.*

Solicitor Stein announced that as a result of closed session. There would be action by Council, minutes would be released at the appropriate time; they should be within 30

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days. Council would vote to authorize the Solicitor to exercise our rights under paragraph four of the contract to terminate the relationship.

On motion of Councilman Utts, seconded by Councilman Smith all present were in favor of terminating the contract with the current labor counsel.

At 8:31pm, on motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman O'Neill, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk