

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

At 6:00pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 6, 2024, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Councilman Smith*

**Councilman Smith arrived at 6:58pm but was not present when attendance was taken.*

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Mauro, and Chief VonColln were also present.

Council President Leeds welcomed everyone and deferred to Mayor Chau for the administration of Oaths of Office for members of the Police Department.

Mayor Chau welcomed all and noted the outstanding service and dedication of those being sworn tonight. He acknowledged retired Captain of Police Steve Steinecke, retired Captain of Police Randy Clark, and retired Lieutenant of Police Eric Dettinger who were in attendance in the audience.

6PM POLICE DEPARTMENT OATHS OF OFFICE

- Captain of Police Scott Pollak

Mayor Chau called forward Captain Pollak.

Captain Pollak announced his daughter Eva would be holding the bible; he was joined by his wife Lora, daughters Eva and Mya, his sister Suzanne Pollak, in-laws Nilsa and Antonio Sequeira, sister in-law Telma Pereira and Uncle Robert Schiess.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Captain Pollak.

Captain Pollak read the following:

“Thank you for being here everyone. When I got promoted to Lieutenant, I talked about how Eva held the bible for me when I got promoted to Sergeant when she was only two years old. So I decided to have Mya hold the Bible for me at my Lieutenant’s promotion. So my plan was to have Lora hold the Bible for me tonight

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

at my Captain's promotion. So last night Lora said to me, let Eva hold the Bible for you again, I'll hold it for you when you make Chief. I get promoted to Captain, and it's still not good enough. She also told me to make my speech short. I didn't listen. She knew I wasn't going to listen though. She's known since 1994 that I have a hard time keeping my mouth shut.

Mayor Chau, and Northfield City Council, thank you for promoting me to the position of Police Captain. I'm grateful and I wanted to take this moment to thank you for the support that you have given to our police department. I've been a cop in Northfield for 24 years, and I can say without question that I've never seen a governing body in Northfield so strongly support their police department. I mean, I might be a little biased because you promoted me twice in less than a year, but I think we can all agree that that was a no brainer, right? But in all seriousness, the support that you have given our police department is greatly appreciated. The relationship you have with Chief VonColln and our police department as a whole is refreshing. Thank you!

And with that being said, Chief VonColln, thank you as well. Thank you for your trust and faith in me to recommend me for this position. Thank you for your friendship. And thank you for all of your hard work as Chief to improve the police department that we both love. It has been a pleasure to work with you throughout our careers, but it has been especially rewarding since you became Chief. And I'm truly grateful.

This is a special night. Not only because of my promotion. I mean that's the most important thing in my opinion. But we have a couple of other guys getting promoted too. Pete Czaplinski. Congratulations on getting promoted to Sergeant. I'm happy for you. I did Pete's background investigation when I was in the Detective Bureau, and I let him get through. And I'm glad I did, because now his Mom cooks Polish food and brings it to me at work. I may have had an ulterior motive as I grew up eating Polish food. Keep it coming Mrs. Czaplinski.

Mike Buccafurni. Congratulations on getting promoted to Lieutenant. I'm happy for you as well. I always looked at the Detective Bureau here as something special, and near and dear to my heart. It has always been my opinion that people that get in the Detective Bureau here should be people who put in a lot of proactive work when they start on Patrol. You were that guy on Patrol. And then you came into the Detective Bureau with Steve and I and we killed it. And I have no doubt that we're going to kill it in this police administration together as well.

I'm happy for both of you. I worked with both of you a lot throughout my career and you both must've learned a lot from me to be promoted tonight. No, but really, I'm so happy to see you both have this moment with your loved ones. It is truly special. To be promoted to Captain is an honor. But with that, it comes with mixed emotions. It means that Captain Steve Steinecke will no longer be at work with us anymore. Steve, I said when I got promoted to Lieutenant how much I appreciate everything

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024

you did for me in my career. You started to teach me how to be a good cop when I was just 22 years old. And now you have retired from your Captain's position and I'm stepping into that position. Thank you for everything you did for me, for the City of Northfield, and for the profession of law enforcement.

I haven't told anyone this until right now. But Eva wasn't able to be at my promotion to Lieutenant last year because she was away at college. And Steve could have actually retired before he did, but he agreed to wait until Eva got back from college before the Captain promotion. Steve, thanks for that buddy.

Eva, I'm so happy you're here for this one. I missed you at the last one, and I miss you so much while you're away at college. You did a great job holding the bible for me, I know that's a difficult job.

But back to Steve, my wishes for you in retirement are a bunch of fluke on the end of your line, a bunch of crabs in your crab traps, and much happiness. You truly deserve that. Enjoy your retirement buddy.

When I got promoted to Lieutenant last year, I didn't have a mother or father here. My mother passed away on Christmas Eve 2019, and my father passed away days before I got promoted to Lieutenant. Tonight, I have a mother and father here. My mother-in-law Nilsa and my father-in-law Antonio. Last year they had the nerve to not be here because they were at their house in Portugal for the festas. That means the party season in Portuguese. I mean in their defense, like Lora, they've been watching me since 1994 and have observed how great I am. So they just figured they would be at the next one soon, and here we are.

Ya know there is an old saying that says you can pick your friends, but you can't pick your family. In my opinion, that depends on how you define family. But what I can tell you is that I'm blessed with my family. I've had people say to me that you've had a lot of tragedy in your family. And they're right. I have. But, I have had way more blessings than I have had tragedy.

Antonio and Nilsa, I was fortunate enough to meet Lora in high school and be blessed to have you accept me into your family. Thank you! Now, when I first started dating Lora in high school she would tell me that Antonio was saying that he was going to buy some dogs to keep the boys away. It wouldn't have stopped me Anton, I'm not scared of dogs. And they would've loved me just like you do.

It makes me think how truly blessed I am. I have a beautiful supportive wife in Lora, I have two great daughters in Eva and Mya. Lora, as I said when I got promoted to Lieutenant, thank you for being by my side throughout the ups and downs of my career and life. Eva and Mya, thank you for being the great kids that you are and making my time raising you as a father really easy. Keep working hard, chase your dreams, and always remember to push through the bad times, because you will have them, but things have a way of working out in the end. I also have my siblings in

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

Craig, Jana, and Suzanne. Thank you guys for your support as well, and not being one of those family members that a cop is ashamed to say he is related to. I have a great support system that I'm extremely lucky to have, and I want you guys to know I appreciate it so much.

But going back to how you define family, I have the Northfield Police Department as well. You are part of my family. That is the way I look at the definition of my family. I love the Northfield Police Department and I always will. It will always be family to me. And I hope all of you will always think that way about me.

I believe this was shorter than the last one Lora. And Mom and Dad, I hope what they say is true and you can see this. Thank you for pushing me in the direction of becoming a police officer Dad. I know this would make you happy, and that makes me happy. Thank you everyone!"

- Lieutenant of Police Michael Buccafurni

Mayor Chau called forward Lieutenant Buccafurni.

Lieutenant Buccafurni announced his wife Danielle, daughter Ava, son Myles, and son Michael who held the bible.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Lieutenant Buccafurni.

Lieutenant Buccafurni read the following:

"First, I would like to thank Mayor Chau, Council President Leeds, Mary, and the rest of city council. I know this title comes with great responsibility, I thank you for the challenge and I am ready for it.

To Chief VonColln and the Administration, I look forward to working for and beside you, and I am excited for the future of the Northfield Police Department.

Truth is I am not standing up here without the hard work of the officers of the NPD, many of whom are here tonight. Since being promoted to Sergeant I have been blessed with a rockstar crew, without you guys and the work of the other members of the NPD, I am not standing here this evening.

Looking around the room I see so many faces of people who have impacted my career, been mentors to me at the NPD as well as during my time assigned to the ACPO and the FBI. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention retired Captain Steve Steinecke, thank you for taking me under your wing as a new officer, guiding me and always being there for me. I appreciate you more than you know. As my career turns to the back end, I cherish all those relationships and times more than ever. Thank you all. Lastly MY WHY. My why is my family.... This is where it may get tough. I've been blessed with the most incredible family... Aunts, Uncles, Cousins.... my two brothers

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

Anthony and Ryan, their wives Becky and Lorelle, thank you all, for always being there for me and my wife and my kids. Mom and Dad thank you guys for everything, I don't have enough time here to thank you guys, and not sure I could get through it. I know I wasn't always the easiest. But mom, thank you for breaking a wooden spoon over my butt when I needed it, dad thank you for setting the example for your boys of what a father should be. Thank you both for being a shoulder, an ear, a bank... EVERYTHING, thank you guys, I love you.

To Ava, Michael and Myles, I love you guys, being the children of parents who are police officers is unfortunately harder than ever, for many reasons. I am so proud of you guys, thank you, I love you, you guys are my heroes. My ex-wife Donna, Ava and Michael's mom, one of my best friends, thank you also for always being there both personally and professionally, always there for me, Danielle and the kids. My wife Danielle, my angel, I love you and thank you... and that leads me to who the real heroes are? The real heroes are the families of police officers, not us. Our families have to deal with the many stressors that we bring home, the wives, husbands, kids, and parents of officers, many of you sitting in this room. Thank you. As police officers we want to help everyone, we want to make sure our community is safe, we want to be the first one to be at that hot call and get everything under control. We are Guardians, it's our calling. We do a great job of taking care of everyone else, but as a whole we need to do a better job of taking care of ourselves and our families. As I take this role in the Administration, my goal is, collectively through our NPD family, both blue and blood, it's something we can prioritize and all get better at. Thank you all. I look forward to serving this great community in my new role."

- Sergeant of Police Peter Czaplinski

Mayor Chau called forward Sergeant Czaplinski.

Sergeant Czaplinski was accompanied by his parents Christina and Peter, and, his daughter Alexa who held the bible.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Sergeant Czaplinski.

Sergeant Czaplinski thanked the community, City Council, friends, family, and colleagues. His parents did not know until tonight that he was getting promoted, it was a surprise. When he thinks of family it reminds him of two words, sacrifice and unselfish. His parents came from Poland 50 years ago, leaving their families behind. He owes everything to them. Thank you.

Mayor Chau stated he was so happy to see these gentlemen rise through the ranks. We in Northfield are a very close-knit family, he referred to a sign that read: "We Support Northfield Police and Fire," he thanked all for supporting these men. He thanked Chief VonColln as well.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

At 6:22pm on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of a brief recess.

At 6:33pm Council President Leeds resumed the meeting.

Council President Leeds moved to committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Dewees – Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields; Birch Grove Park, Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Public Works: Roads, Engineering

Councilman Dewees announced we were still waiting for the roofing contractor to give us a schedule. We would be replacing the Birch Grove Park entrance sign, he requested to add “Home of Northfield Little League and Cardinals Football” to the sign. He asked if there were any objections. There were none.

Councilwoman Bucci – Insurance and Safety; Planning Board; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilwoman Bucci presented a Certificate of Achievement to Eagle Scout Kylar Campsmith at a recent event. She had an Economic Development Commission meeting last week; they are working with the Planning Board to create a vision plan for Tilton Road in hopes to be able to use these pocket licenses.

Councilman Polistina – Finance and Collections; Inspections, Housing/Zoning; Library; Municipal Alliance Senior Citizens

Councilman Polistina announced *Life Skills through Bike Skills* was held this past Saturday with 13 children attending. He thanked Michele Geiger from Cross County Connections for fitting and providing each child with a new helmet. *Hooked on Fishing* will be held on June 1st, forms are available on the website or by contacting Shannon Campbell. The Police Department and Alliance will be hosting the movie “Migration” at the bandstand. The Alliance will be donating \$1,500 to MRHS AfterProm held on June 8th. National Night Out will be held on Thursday, August 8th, forms are available on the website. The Library has \$283,000 in their account between capital and operating, they have been doing many improvement projects, including energy improvements with a 50% grant. We all received the Audit, there were no findings or recommendations, it was a perfect audit.

Councilman Smith - Central Municipal Court; Little League and Babe Ruth; Northfield Community School; Shared Services

Councilman Smith was absent during committee reports.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

Councilwoman Carfagno - Technology / MRHS Channel; Cultural Committee / Veteran Liaison; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Carfagno attended the meeting for the Cultural Committee, the July 4th Parade is 10am, registration forms are on the website. There will be a lineup change to make the operation smoother, with entrance for participants via Dolphin Avenue to Broad Street. The Cultural Committee was also accepting applications for Mr. or Miss 4th of July and Citizen of the Year, also 1st Baby. The next MRHS Board of Education meeting is scheduled for June 10th. Councilwoman Carfagno requested support from Council for a veteran's license plate in NJ, as part of a project initiated by a student group called the Veterans Support the Troops Club. These plates will help Veterans receive the acknowledgment they deserve from our communities. The Support the Troops Club and Councilwoman Carfagno were seeking Council's support of a resolution to approve the effort. Chris Mozitis and his group have offered to give a presentation at the June 11th meeting. She congratulated the recently promoted members of the Police Department.

Clerk Canesi confirmed 6pm for the presentation.

Councilman Notaro - Inspections, Housing/Zoning; Sewer Operations; Northfield Sports (FAN)

Councilman Notaro did not have a report.

Council President Leeds – Fire Department/EMS

Council President Leeds referred to EMS service on the agenda; we will have a meeting with the new vendor soon. He will have Fire and EMS reports for the next meeting. He referred to the recent apprehension of a suspect in a stolen motor vehicle case.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Electric Vehicles – *Councilmen Polistina and Notaro.*
No update.

Special Events Ordinance – *Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees.*
Councilwoman Bucci stated a meeting was being scheduled.

Insurance Requirements Review – *Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Bucci.*
Solicitor Facenda will have an ordinance for the next meeting.

Road Opening Ordinance – *Councilmen Dewees and Notaro.*
Councilman Notaro was reviewing the draft that was emailed.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

6:30PM PRESENTATION

HONORABLE VINCENT SERA, MAYOR, CITY OF BRIGANTINE

Council President Leeds announced Honorable Vincent Sera, Mayor of Brigantine.

Mayor Sera distributed a packet of materials including: a letter he'd sent to all Atlantic County municipalities, a resolution that Brigantine passed, and an economic impact report. He was seeking a resolution in opposition to offshore wind projects. He stressed the importance of educating oneself regarding offshore wind projects. The proponents of these projects have given misinformation. He gave an overview of areas of concern, including lack of impact on global warming, misinformation that does not consider the collective impact of multiple projects. He noted that the AC windmills are only 1/3 of the height of those being proposed for offshore installation. Ocean wind energy was inconsistent and had to be backed up with alternative energy. We have seen hundreds of whales and dolphins washing up dead; no one has ever seen anything like this, ever, so many whales and dolphins. The State agencies will tell you there is no evidence of a connection; he asserted that the wind groups should have to prove there isn't. The survey work being done in advance of the wind projects is resulting in disorientation of marine mammals that results in them colliding with boats. In 2018 the Murphy Administration issued a report that these projects were bad, but he is now supporting them. The machinery associated with the turbines creates sound, which carries in the ocean. The impact is unknown, not only to marine life but to people living along the shore. He referred to the Atlantic Cold Pool which will be adversely affected by the wind turbines and change the surface temperature of the water. Rutgers and Harvard have issued concerns about the increase in ocean temperature. The wind turbines would result in loss of tax revenue due to decreases in property value. He noted a comparison to the PILOT granted to Atlantic City casinos that increased the taxes all residents of Atlantic County pay. These wind turbines would be visible for 40 miles. Visitors to the shore communities want the view of the oceans; this will destroy our tourism and casino industries. There is no promise of jobs to American citizens.

At 6:58pm Councilman Smith entered the meeting.

Mayor Sera continued, stating the BPU has robbed us of local control. The Orsted project is not 'done', it is on hold. The State and Governor are giving these companies the opportunity to charge more money for the energy they produce and making it less affordable for the people. He urged that all get the knowledge they need to make informed decisions. The life span of these systems is not known. They may remain in the ocean forever, even if they are no longer operable. He asked for support of Council, and thanked Council for their time.

Councilwoman Bucci thanked Mayor Sera. She had been to a number of events for Defend Brigantine Beach. Northfield is the Gateway to the Shore, our businesses in Northfield depend on downbeach tourism, year-round. It was hard enough in this

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

economy. The potential economic impact is horrendous. She urged that Council put the resolution drafted by Mayor Sera on the next agenda.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

There was no ongoing business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Leeds announced that Engineer Mauro sent out a grant opportunity earlier.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Leeds made the assignments.

Councilman Polistina asked if Resolution 120-2024 was posted?

Council President Leeds replied, yes it was advertised to the Union.

PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

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

Rich Baehrle, Northfield - has been a resident for 30 years, he has been following the windmill situation for years. Mayor Sera was passionate and was on target with his knowledge of the subject. He agreed that the mortality rate for whales and dolphins is unheard of. He urged support from Northfield for the opposition of offshore wind projects.

Council President Leeds announced Council would be putting the resolution on the next agenda.

Mayor Chau to Mayor Sera, asked had Orsted considered putting the turbines farther out in the ocean?

Mayor Sera explained there was a section of the ocean to which they are limited, based on the land leases. Up North the land leases are further out, which will have less impact.

Mayor Chau referred to increased marine mammal mortality, to what do the wind companies attribute this.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

Mayor Sera replied, collisions with boats; he stressed that the vibrations impact the ability of the mammals to navigate.

Councilman Dewees asked how the lawsuit was going to be funded?

Mayor Sera stated he was not asking Northfield to join the lawsuit; he was trying to lay the foundation for the County to join in. Brigantine put up around \$20,000; he was not asking for money from Northfield but if Northfield wanted to join, he could set up a meeting. He would continue the Brigantine lawsuit with or without the County's support.

Councilman Polistina asked were wind turbines up north, already?

Mayor Sera replied, no, not yet. There were infrastructure upgrades required to support the excess energy produced by the wind farms.

Jonah Smith, Ventnor - was a retired chemical engineer. Mr. Smith addressed Mayor Chau regarding whale deaths. There was no proof and no conclusions; there have been no necropsies. He urged that everyone listen very carefully to what is being said, words are parsed very carefully. The whale deaths were not happening before this activity started.

Mayor Chau asked how can they be causing death if they haven't been built yet?

Mr. Smith stated the surveying activities were creating disturbances that were causing deaths. The Governor has several official government reports on his desk - some that indicate marine life deaths will occur, some that say otherwise. The Governor has said these will create jobs, be the leader in clean energy, and make New Jersey more resilient to climate change.

Solicitor Facenda asked for the resolution in Microsoft Word.

Mayor Sera replied he would have the Brigantine Clerk send it.

Sylvia Lockwood, Cape May Courthouse - read an impact statement regarding marine mammals which included increased risk of injury, damage to hearing, acoustic masking, and increased risk of vessel strikes as a direct result of their activities.

Norma Lombardi, Egg Harbor Township - lives along Lakes Bay where they plan to dig up and bury cables to supply electricity to Northfield. She noted the planned installation of substations, the first of which will be on Hingston Avenue near Walmart. There would be 65-foot-tall substations in the middle of residential areas, they would have noise, lights, and electromagnetic fields. The 20 acres where the first substation will go is being cleared right now.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2024**

Solicitor Facenda asked do they need land use approval, before the Planning or Zoning Board?

Mrs. Lombardi replied they will have to go before the Board. She urged that the Council stop them.

Mayor Sera understands that this will be on the next agenda, they will reserve comment for the next meeting.

James Dilkes, Villas - regarding climate change, it was said last year that we had the hottest summer on record, these readings were taken from airport tarmacs and city sidewalks. Climate change theory is fabricated. Wind turbines will harm the ozone layer. The Governor took away home rule to further the wind agenda. He urged Mayors to tell the Governor that we want home rule back.

Paul Lettieri, Brigantine Councilman – said there is excess solar energy in New Jersey. He commented on major electricity producers, BL England, Oyster Creek, etc, that are gone. The energy produced by the windmills would be sold to New York state and the residents of South Jersey would foot the bill.

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

At 7:40pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk