

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 24, 2014**

At 6:04pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2014 in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor McGee. Following the flag salute a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

Present: Dewees, O'Neill, Perri, Piergiovanni, Travagline
Absent: Chau, Devine

Mayor Jerry McGee and Solicitor Kris Facenda were also in attendance.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- Acceptance of credit card payments in the Tax Office

Council President Travagline referred to the proposal for acceptance of online payments by the tax office. He noted that packets were distributed to Council last week and there were four proposals. He stated the two front runners are Edmonds, whose software we currently have, and Municipay. He reviewed that Edmonds charges an annual fee of \$2,400.00, which they agreed to discount to \$1,200.00. He noted that he did place calls to Edmonds for further discussion but those calls were not returned. He stated that Municipay does not charge a fee.

Councilman Piergiovanni asked if they are online payments.

Council President Travagline answered yes. He added that Edmonds is automatically there; but with Municipay the tax office would have to do a daily download. He stated that he feels it would help with delinquency, because it would give taxpayers an additional 30 days if they use a credit card. There are presently 140 delinquent accounts. He urged Council to seek out a demo from the tax office and if there are no objections we will vote to authorize Municipay at the July Council meeting.

- New shed at football building

Council President Travagline moved to the topic of a new shed at the football field. He shared that Family Association of Northfield has advised him that due to the

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addition of the bathrooms there is a lack of storage. They can get a shed 24x16x16 with a concrete pad at no cost to the taxpayer. It will be maintained by the City. He asked Council if there are any concerns.

Councilman O'Neill expressed concern regarding storage of chemicals, fuel, turpentine etc. near foodstuffs.

Councilman Dewees noted that there is no storage near any food stuff.

Council President Travagline stated he agrees with their efforts to be self-funded.

- Grant Application – Improvements at Birch Grove Park

Council President Travagline moved to next topic regarding projects at Birch Grove Park.

Councilman Dewees stated that he met with the Park Supervisor regarding possible projects that include a bath house, a garage, laundry facility, a game room, and possibly the old ranger house. He added that it might include improvements to the entrance and parking as well. He stated that all told they are looking at \$230,000-\$240,000. He believed that it is a 25% matching grant with the balance being a low interest 2% loan.

Council President Travagline stated that the grant writer brought this to Council and he believes that we have a very good chance of getting this grant. He added that the funds would also be used to get rid of some of the dead trees in the park. He noted that he sees the park as a possible revenue source and would like to do things to upgrade the facility to bring in more families.

Council Dewees noted mention of a possible swimming pool.

Councilman O'Neill stated he would like to tour the existing facilities, put together the numbers and calculate the ROI.

Council President Travagline noted that the grant deadline is July and that we may authorize the grant application at a Special Meeting on Monday June 30. He stated that the facilities need to be upgraded and that the park can be a revenue source.

Councilman Piergiovanni agreed with the idea and stated he would like to tour the facility with Councilman O'Neill.

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Councilman Perri stated he is familiar with the park and sees the potential; but does not want to see a lot of environmental impact.

- Somers Point – Shared Service Paving

Council President Travagline deferred to Councilman O'Neill for the discussion of the next topic regarding shared service paving.

Councilman O'Neill stated that both towns are going out for paving around the same time and our project is anticipated to be about \$600,000.00 and Somers Point would be about \$800,000.00. He stated that he wants to give bidders the opportunity to bid on projects individually or as one project on one bid. He noted that Somers Point Administrator thinks we could save 3%. If it doesn't work out we'll pay what we always paid for paving.

Councilman Perri suggested comparing pricing to the unit prices in the Kline contract to see how the prices come in.

Councilman O'Neill clarified that engineering costs etc. remain separate.

- Date / Time for Special Meeting

Council President Travagline announced that there will be a Special Meeting of Council on June 30, 2014. He stated that we need to make a decision on the Chief's position, as he is retiring on that date. He asked if 4:00pm works for everyone.

Councilman O'Neill stated he will attend via telephone.

Council President Travagline announced that Steve Wynne, President of the local Board of Education, would like to give an update on the search for a shared Superintendent with regard to Resolution 118-2014.

Steve Wynne thanked Council. He stated he has shared this with some members of Council. He stated that they have held regional shared service meetings and have done research, and sought quotes for a study to assess the feasibility. He stated that Assemblyman Mazzeo is working to secure funding at the State level. He added the Board of Education was surprised to see it on the agenda but they are pretty far into the process of examining the possibilities for a shared service Superintendent.

Councilman O'Neill asked to be kept informed.

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Steve Wynne stated he will keep Council informed as to the status of the Northfield Board and will pass along anything he hears from the Regional Board. He explained the challenges of a shared Superintendent. He also noted consolidation as an option and explained further to clarify. Additionally he stated the last option is regionalization. There is a lot of opportunity for efficiency.

Council President Travagline urged BOE President Wynne to have the Board explore all options. He reiterated the City is very interested in shared service opportunities.

6:40pm Councilman Chau enters the meeting and takes his seat at the work session

Councilman Perri questioned Resolution 119-2014

Municipal Clerk Canesi explained that it is to formalize the process.

Councilman Perri referred to Resolution 124-2014 and then noted he will research the statute himself.

Councilman O'Neill reiterated that the shed at the field will not be taxpayer funded.

Council President Travagline confirmed that was correct.

Council President Travagline reviewed the agenda for the regular meeting and made assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Travagline opened the meeting to any member of the public wishing to speak on any subject.

Robert Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue, commended Mayor McGee on doing an excellent job. He stated he is opposed to shared services and feels too much money is spent on parks and fields. He added that his street has not been paved in 30 years. He also commented that Council should meet twice monthly.

Sergeant Scott Pollak, Northfield Police Department, stated that he emailed Mayor McGee several months ago regarding shared service and asked Mayor McGee if he is well versed in Police Administration.

Mayor McGee stated he has none.

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Solicitor Facenda advised Sergeant Pollak that this is a public session for public comment, not a question and answer session.

Sergeant Scott Pollak, Northfield Police Department, expressed dissatisfaction with Mayor McGee and Council. He outlined the process that occurred and noted what he feels are numerous flaws and inherent conflicts. He said he feels Council does not support the Police Department and that the Police Department is dysfunctional.

Councilman Chau noted that no one ever told him the Mayor would not speak to Pollak nor did Councilman Chau ever say that he, referring to himself, was well versed in Police Administration.

Art Faden, 6 Raina Drive, stated that it is not easy to be on Council but talking about saving money and shared services are important topics. He noted his experience as a Police Captain and a 25 year employee of Northfield and cited numerous examples that illustrate his experience. He stated that Bob James is his friend but that having a shared Chief, regardless of who it is, does not work. He applauded the School Board for doing studies; information is power. He noted that no one ever asked his opinion but they should have. He is strongly opposed to shared service; the Police Department needs one leader.

Tom Wolfe, 317 Davis Avenue, stated he does not support a shared Chief. He asked if the teachers are in favor of a shared Superintendent.

Council President Travagline advised Mr. Wolf that this is not a City matter. That is a matter for the School Board.

Tom Wolfe, 317 Davis Avenue, asked if the Court and the shared service for Sewer makes money. He shared his total support for the Northfield Police Department.

Councilman O'Neill answered that Court makes roughly \$90,000.00 and Sewer breaks even.

Gail Poholsky, 114 East Revere Avenue, showed a cell phone picture of graffiti on stop signs. She said a Police officer told her that they don't know unless someone calls but she feels that the Police should patrol the bike path.

Council President Travagline noted the graffiti was reported today and has been eradicated.

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Gail Poholsky, 114 East Revere Avenue, noted abandoned properties in need of maintenance.

Council President Travagline stated they are addressing them; there are presently 50 foreclosures and 140 tax delinquencies.

Gail Poholsky, 114 East Revere Avenue, complimented Officer Van Pelt for his response time to an accident on the bike path. She stated that she called 911 and the officer was there within three minutes.

Aubrey Gerhardt, Library Director, 3 Park Road, Linwood, distributed the summer schedule for the Library. She urged officers to send kids who are bored or delinquent to the Library. They have excellent programs. They also have a bike program to help kids make their bikes more visible. She stated there are lots of exciting summer programs at the Library.

Debi Doherty, 405 Chestnut Avenue, stated that she disagrees with the sharing of a Chief and urged Council to think long and hard about what they have heard.

Rick Bianchi, 2 East Yorkshire, stated he retired from the Margate Police Department after 25 years and teaches at the Police Academy. He noted that times have changed and every time these officers go out they may not come home. He feels that a shared Chief does not work. He added that people should be able to come to the Police Department to see the Chief. He wouldn't want to hear that he's in Northfield today, or in Linwood today or on vacation. He shared that life expectancy of a Police officer is 59 years old and 90% don't even get to spend their pension. He concluded that Northfield officers work their way up and should be able to be the Chief.

David Goldstein, 116 Dolphin Avenue, stated he is a Chef by trade and explained a story of a murder he witnessed earlier in his career. He urged Council to listen to the Police. He said he didn't understand why this is happening so last minute since the Chief gave his notice months ago.

Councilman Piergiovanni stated he was a Captain in the U.S. Army, a commanding officer, and a Veteran. He stated this is not a hard job. Those were hard jobs. He noted that he knows how to give orders and to take orders. He added that the selection of Police Chief was not part of his responsibilities and was told it was being handled by someone else. He stated it is not his job to know about Police Administration but appreciated being informed that the ball was dropped.

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Art Faden, 6 Raina drive, stated Police officers work 24/7 for 365 days a year for the term of their employment.

Lisa Brown, 9 Haviv Drive, asked Councilman Piergiovanni to repeat what he said about who was in charge of the selection process.

Councilman Piergiovanni repeated that he was not in charge; it was the Mayor.

Rick Bianchi stated officers in other towns are making jokes about Northfield and it should not be a joke. Northfield has officers who should be Chief.

Brad Cooke, 2610 Shore Road, stated he had twelve years of experience in law enforcement. He asked how many officers are on patrol.

Marty Peary, Northfield Police officer, stated the City is down two people.

Brad Cooke, 2610 Shore Road indicated Northfield needs more Police on the street and someone to command it. He added that Police should be involved in selecting the Chief. He suggested that they need more communication.

David Goldstein, 116 Dolphin asked what took so long and what was done from the time the Chief announced his retirement, until now.

Council President Travagline stated he will address that issue. Seeing no one else from the public wishing to speak, Council President Travagline closed the public session.

Council President Travagline noted that he and the Mayor have been in hours upon hours of meetings. He added that this is not last minute and it has been addressed since day one. He commended the Mayor for getting the best information he possibly could. He stated that everyone knows that he and the Mayor do not have the best relationship but Mayor McGee did a great job. He said he talked to some of the officers in Northfield and everyone agreed that we need strong management. He stated that he would rather have more patrolmen instead of management.

At 7:30pm on motions properly made and seconded this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC
Municipal Clerk