

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES  
JULY 29, 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: Chau, Devine, Dewees, O'Neill, Perri, Travagline  
Absent: Piergiovanni

Mayor Jerry McGee, Solicitor Kris Facenda, and Municipal Engineer Dan Kwapinski were also in attendance.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- National Night Out

Council President Travagline addressed the topic of National Night Out. He stated there is a resolution on the agenda and asked if anyone from Council had any questions.

Councilman Dewees stated he was in favor of having it.

Councilman O'Neill stated he was in favor of having it.

Councilman Chau stated he was in favor of having it and added that the Fire Department is ready to go.

Councilman Devine stated he was in favor of having it.

Councilman Perri stated that in prior years someone was coordinating the event, such as Officer Longo or Captain Faden. He commented that he does not know who is at the helm this year. He asked for assurance that there is sufficient manpower and wanted to know who is responsible for the event. He stated that he would rather see the event on the bike path.

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Mayor McGee stated it wasn't organized properly and there wasn't enough manpower. He added that no consent was provided. He stated that he was told there were not enough volunteers.

Council President Travagline stated he was in favor of the event.

Councilman O'Neill stated he was disappointed that there was no discussion prior to the cancellation and was unaware that any one person could cancel it.

Charles Kerley, Atlantic County Municipal Alliance Coordinator, stated that he oversees all funding that Northfield receives regarding this event and acknowledged that Mayor McGee said that he and Council President Travagline decided together to cancel National Night Out.

Council President Travagline refuted any knowledge or conversation with Mayor McGee to discuss National Night Out.

Mayor McGee indicated that he never talked to Council President Travagline.

Charles Kerley, Atlantic County Municipal Alliance Coordinator, stated that Northfield's Municipal Alliance Coordinator is appointed by the Council annually. He stated the Mayor advised him he did not know who the Municipal Alliance Coordinator was nor did he know who the Council Liaison was. He further explained the grant formula related to funding and noted that Northfield could be in danger of losing the grant if the event is not held. He asked if Council had any questions. He also stated that he asked Mayor McGee if he could meet with the new Police Chief to see if the issue could be resolved, and noted that the Mayor asked that Kerley not contact the Chief directly.

Mayor McGee confirmed having made that statement to Kerley.

Council President Travagline thanked Mr. Kerley.

Councilman O'Neill stated we have to find a way to make this happen.

Councilman Perri stated a resolution should have been passed in January and urged appointment of a coordinator.

Council President Travagline stated they don't need to appoint a coordinator as part of the resolution.

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- Shared Vehicle Maintenance Proposal
  - Outsourcing of Oil Changes / Police Vehicles, Possibly Small Vehicle Fleet

Councilman Dewees stated that we want to contract out oil changes.

Council President Travagline stated that the Police Department should pick who they want to use.

Councilman Perri suggested they use a state contract vendor.

Council President Travagline asked if we have to go out to bid.

Municipal Clerk Canesi answered that it depends on the value of the contract; how many oil changes per year?

Police Chief Hickey stated it could be four per car, per year.

Municipal Clerk Canesi stated the quote threshold is \$2,650.00

- New Leased Vehicle for Police Department

Council President Travagline, as Finance Chair, asked about funding for a vehicle lease; and asked why we have not proceeded.

Mayor McGee stated that it was budgeted for, but it was to be discussed later as to whether or not we wanted to use it.

Council President Travagline asked, so you are okay with it?

Mayor McGee confirmed that he is.

- Hiring of Patrol Officer in Police Department

Council President Travagline moved to next topic about the hiring of a new patrol officer and stated that funding is available as per the CFO Stollenwerk.

Mayor McGee stated he talked to Chief Hickey about hiring or bringing an officer back into service.

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Councilman O'Neill stated that based on overtime it is in the taxpayer's best interest to hire a new officer.

Councilman Perri discussed staffing levels.

Council President Travagline listed current complement and cost of one patrolman including benefits.

- Police Department –Promotional Ordinance

Council President Travagline moved to next topic – Promotional Ordinance. He stated that at the last meeting Mayor McGee said he would address acting positions to permanent. He asked the Mayor if the City is testing or are we changing the Ordinance.

Solicitor Facenda reminded Council not to speak about any terms and conditions of any individual's employment.

Councilman Perri asked what the problem is with the Ordinance. He noted that tests were done in 2006 and then tests were done internally that did not conform. He stated he would want a recommendation from Chief Hickey, the PBA and Mayor McGee.

Mayor McGee stated he has contacted the employees' Counsel and got advice from Chief James on what to do. He shared that everyone has a different opinion. He noted that he wants to meet with the PBA and Chief Hickey and to do it the way they want it done and that there is no trouble.

Council President Travagline asked if this will be done within sixty days.

Mayor McGee answered yes.

- Steelman and Oxford Circle - Traffic Plan Study – Dan Kwapinski

Engineer Kwapinski reviewed the traffic study plan for Oxford Circle and explained the need. He discussed the aerial map in conjunction with the conceptual plan for temporary and future improvements.

Councilman Chau noted that when he met with City Engineer Kwapinski, public meetings were suggested. He asked Engineer Kwapinski if he thought it was necessary.

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Engineer Kwapinski stated he thinks the residents are aware of the situation.

Councilman Chau stated that FFA Local 2634 has expressed a desire to meet to begin contract negotiations, so he stated he would do that.

Council President Travagline asked Councilman Dewees to respond to concerns about maintenance issues with the Police Department.

Councilman Dewees shared that with regard to the bird droppings there is a vent on the South side of the building that needs to be sealed and this will be addressed as soon as possible. He also referred to the mold concern. He shared there was a complaint in 2011 and the City contacted the County to investigate. He explained there was a 12 page report generated and corrections were made. He stated there have not been any complaints since then. Additionally he discussed the issue of no hot water. He explained that in 2013 hot water was put into the kitchen area and there have not been any complaints since. He noted the issue of a bug and insect problem and shared that Western Pest Control does periodically do pest control and there have been no concerns since July 25<sup>th</sup>. He referred to the cleaning service being inadequate and noted that a request was made in the past few weeks to modify the cleaning schedule. He urged that any concerns be brought to his attention or to Buildings and Grounds attention.

Councilman O'Neill provided an update regarding IT. He stated that Chief James contacted him in May and that 20 PC's will be replaced along with the server. Kathi Smith will place the order. He noted that the current work stations are 7+ years old and need to be replaced. The new server will arrive in 30-60 days. He stated that Officer Dettinger gave him a tour of the server room and he was under the impression that everything was fine with the server but will confirm.

Council President Travagline reviewed the agenda for the regular meeting. He stated that Resolution 144-2014 for an Executive Session is no longer needed. He also commented that representatives for Resolution 142-2014 are here. He noted that it was pulled together with very short notice and he commended Councilman Dewees. He asked Council members if anyone had any questions for the representatives.

Matt Doyle, representative from Bauer Hockey, stated he hopes to shoot the commercial tomorrow.

Councilman Perri asked if either of the new hires is from Northfield.

Councilman O'Neill stated he wasn't sure.

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Donna Clark, Court Administrator clarified that the violations clerk is from Marmora.

Councilman Dewees stated he wasn't sure about the Public Works Department hire but he will find out first thing tomorrow.

Councilman Perri stated he is partial to Northfield residents.

Council President Travagline made the assignments for the regular meeting.

**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, stated that Northfield has destroyed the morals and the spirit of both the Northfield and Linwood Police Departments. He stated there are too many acting positions and no ranking officers. He also commented that the City has not done anything for Veterans Park. He shared that Mrs. Webb and Steve Vain painted at the park and asked; where are the volunteers? He stated that the City does too much for the sports organizations. He noted that he had to call 911 the other day for a woman who was injured on his front porch and reported that the ambulance came but no Police.

Art Faden, 6 Raina Drive, stated he is a retired Police Captain but does not represent the Police Department. The topic of National Night Out has him upset. He shared this is Northfield's sixteenth year. He stated that a comment was made that this was a hodge-podge event. He stated that it was not a hodge-podge event and there were a lot of vendors. He continued that this is also not a one night event; it is a year-long return on an investment made in a one night event. He also stated it does not need a coordinator; the event runs itself. He also noted that there is an Alliance Coordinator and a Chief of Police. The Chief was Chief for 15 minutes and you took it away from him.

Kristina Longo, Northfield Police Officer, stated she wanted to correct misinformation. She stated there is no one event coordinator for an event this large. She commented that she has been a coordinator for the last 11 years but Shannon Campbell is also one of them. She stated she had started planning this event in February of this year. She explained that she sent a letter, out of courtesy, explaining every detail because the Mayor had never been the Mayor before, nor had she done a letter before. She wanted to move the event to the school because the school is the

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center of the community. She added this is a Police event and they have never asked permission before. She stated the Mayor never asked questions and no one ever said they were not available. She clarified that the vendors were booked, staff was scheduled and no one ever said it wasn't.

Sylvia Ritwhile, 212 Mount Vernon Avenue, shared that she moved here for the sense of community. She shared that her street has many children on it and she wanted to get to know the Police, Fire and EMS. She shared her disappointment that the event was canceled. She commented that the Mayor should not say he doesn't know; it is his job to know. She stated that she has only heard one member of Council say that they go to National Night Out. She urged Council to get out in the community and trust your Police officers. She added that they should appreciate the officers 24/7/365. She stated that, not just the Police, it's all of the people at City Hall; it's everyone who runs our community. You need to bring back National Night Out.

Norman Meyers, BA Mainland Local 77, speaking on behalf of President Theriault, who could not attend, stated shared services are not new but there has been a 25% reduction in patrol since 2006. He noted that Northfield has become a reactive Police Department rather than a proactive Police Department. He stressed that shared services don't work in law enforcement and noted that there are several Chiefs from surrounding municipalities that would agree. Now there are discussions to share Lieutenants and Captains and you cannot take 120 hours of work and get it done in 60. He urged Council to get out and utilize resources and do research with professionals who know law enforcement. He stated they are creating liability and morale issues because there is no promotion opportunity. He asked what's next, consolidation? He explained that people will lose their jobs; this is a small amount of money but a big loss for the town. He continued that Northfield Police Department is no longer an esteemed agency due to morale. He also commented that he cannot believe there is no hot water in the building and no hot water in the bathroom and this is not a new problem. He also shared that Northfield does not have a functional jail cell. He stated no other town in Atlantic County does not have one and expressed his concern regarding the liability associated with an uncontained violent prisoner.

Joe Massari, 15 Dani Drive, stated the outhouse was built by Family Association of Northfield with \$7,800.00 in donations. He also noted the cost of taking Police exams are not being talked about and lastly he stated that whoever is in charge of the Police Department should be focusing on that, including all previous Mayors; it should not be Council.

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Dan Kashey, 9 Forrest Drive, stated residents should get more communication. He shared that he is a Project Manager for the County and he would volunteer his time.

Michael Miller, Chief of Police, Ventnor City, stated that after Superstorm Sandy they were able to organize and coordinate a safe and successful trick or trick and believes that Northfield should be able to coordinate a successful National Night Out.

Lisa Brown, 9 Haviv Drive, asked how she can find out when the maintenance problems came to the attention of City Council.

Council President Travagline suggested she call Councilman Dewees.

Lisa Brown, 9 Haviv Drive, stated it is outrageous that Mayor McGee canceled National Night Out. She also expressed that Council cannot direct the Police Department and no members of Council had anything to do with National Night Out. She believed that the Mayor acted alone. She added that it should have waited until after the staff meeting on Tuesday. She also expressed that that they cannot do this to the community and it is critical that the Mayor communicate with his department.

John Brenner, 2316 Merritt Drive, stated he has been a Northfield resident for 50 years and it's dangerous that the City only has two officers on duty. He stated his concern about the lack of cooperation between the Council and the Police Department. He noted that Police have a difficult job and this is dangerous for the community.

Robert Leeds, 27 Steelman Avenue, stated he is not representing the Fire Department but representing himself. He noted that he has been involved in every National Night Out. He continued that he knows how much work it is to coordinate National Night Out but noted the joy children experience because of participation in National Night Out and interacting with the Police and Fire Departments. He stated it was absurd that it was cancelled.

Gail Poholsky, 114 East Revere Avenue, shared her disappointment that National Night Out was canceled. She urged Mayor McGee to let Chief Hickey do his job and pleaded not to cancel National Night Out.

Tim Carew, 1512 Shore Road, stated that Council never got involved in the planning of Northfield National Night Out. He commented that Council members are part-time people who guide the ship a little bit, but the employees are the full time people who get the job done. He further stated that if they don't do their jobs then they are



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held accountable. He asked if there are conversations about sharing Captains and Lieutenants.

Council President Travagline replied there are some rumblings but I don't think that will happen.

Tim Carew, 1512 Shore Road urged Council to have a chain of command in the Police Department and if you don't have it, dissolve shared services because it won't work. He added we have great employees; let them do their jobs.

Council President Travagline repeated that this year too, Council was not involved. They knew nothing until they got an email that it was canceled.

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

At 7:39pm on motions properly made and seconded this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC  
Municipal Clerk