

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES  
AUGUST 26, 2014**

At 6:02pm, 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, Piergiovanni, Travagline

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

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- Hire replacement for Deputy Municipal Clerk

Council President Travagline noted the resignation of the Deputy Clerk without notice, and stated that the Clerk's office needs to have an additional person, it was tried in the past to have only one person in the Clerk's office and it was not successful. He indicated a possibility of hiring a secretary vs. a Deputy was explored, but said he feels the City needs a Deputy due to the confidential nature of the office. He has also come up with suggestions to assist other departments. He asked Council for suggestions or comments.

Councilman Dewees stated that he fully supports having two people in the Clerk's office.

Councilman Perri stated that he wants a full time Administrator instead.

Mayor McGee agreed with Councilman Perri, adding that hiring an Administrator would reduce the City's legal bills.

Discussion ensued amongst Mayor McGee, Council President Travagline and Councilman Perri with regard to an Administrator. Travagline does not feel it will work in our form of government because the Administrator would have no authority. Perri and McGee remained adamant that it is needed to reduce legal bills. Perri said all other entities in our tax base have one, and offered the schools and county as

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examples.

Council President called for a straw poll to hire a Deputy Clerk. All except Councilman Perri were in favor.

- Easement Letters – Sidewalks at Zion and Mill

Council President Travagline stated that easements will be required of residents in order to install sidewalks. He noted safety concerns and said that we will be pursuing a grant to fund the project.

Councilman Dewees asked if fee simple would be better. Solicitor Facenda replied that he did not feel residents would give up ownership.

Mayor McGee asked if the County is on board. Council President Travagline confirmed that they were. Mayor McGee replied that he would like that in writing.

Engineer Kwapinski commented that grant sources want assurances that you have these types of easements prior to granting the funds.

Councilman Dewees asked how easements are funded. Would it be through the grant? Council President Travagline replied that the grant just funds the construction.

Solicitor Facenda stated that he has not researched options that could be pursued if residents would not give them up voluntarily.

Councilman Piergiovanni suggested sending an advance letter explaining the project before the request letter is sent.

Councilman Dewees noted issues with trees and other obstructions, and said he feels a committee is a good idea.

Councilman Chau stated that he has gone through this exercise before, and all comments that have been made are valid. He said previous Councils have tried to do this.

Councilman Perri said there will be individuals who do not want a sidewalk in front of their home, and referred to the past use of a special assessment when water was put in.

Council President Travagline said he feels letters should go out; a Committee will be

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formed, and it should include Councilman Chau because he is the Traffic Safety Chair.

Councilman Perri suggested including a representative from County Planning on the Committee.

Solicitor Facenda asked if the letter should include a draft easement, so the residents can take a look at it.

Councilman Dewees suggested showing the letter to the County, to ensure that their ultimate rights of way are not encroached upon.

Councilman Perri feels that some properties along these roads may already have easements granted, which were part of the Planning Board process.

Councilman Dewees said in the sections that Northfield is looking at, there are none.

Council President Travagline called for a straw poll on whether or not to send out the letters; all were in favor, none opposed.

- Cost Sharing Agreement – NJAMW and SJ GAS re: paving projects

Council President Travagline said substantial savings can be achieved through cost sharing agreements with utilities for paving jobs.

Councilman Dewees stated that he is concerned about trench restoration.

Solicitor Facenda asked Councilman Dewees if his concern is that if a utility company does the temporary restoration of the trench, that the only thing he has been able to find is that the bid documents have to contain a disclosure about the present state of the road, and the bidder acknowledges acceptance of responsibility for the final product.

Dewees added that he is also concerned about laterals.

Engineer Kwapinski offered to respond, and said that the bid prices include the condition of the roads as a consideration. He noted work done by the water company that was temporarily paved, and said if the City waits too long, are we going to have the water company pave it now, and then rip it all out when we pave in the spring? He explained that we either ask the utility to go ahead of us when we know we are paving a road, or we may follow the utilities, when they are doing work. The cost

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share would be for the trench only. Kwapinski said the utility companies want to work with us.

Council President Travagline commented that the utility companies are not in the paving business.

Councilman Dewees said he is concerned about post-paving problems and who is responsible. Facenda responded that the City would also have the bidder's performance and maintenance guarantees in place.

Facenda said he will prepare a draft agreement and resolution. Council President Travagline asked Engineer to work with Councilmen Dewees and Perri.

- Proposed Change to Police Promotional Ordinance – Re Testing Procedures

Council President Travagline proposed a change to the Police Promotional ordinance; he would be in favor of waiving testing all together if the PBA and the workforce were in favor of it. Another option would be to use test that was already in place, if the test was for a superior rank. He noted that the PBA and workforce would have to agree, and staid this could potentially save the employee money, if they've already tested, and may save the city money as well. The City may want to test for Sergeants now, or appoint them, but there is a need to get things moving in the Police Department. Council President Travagline stated that these were just suggestions he was throwing out to Council and the Mayor, to get things moving.

Mayor McGee asked if these changes would be a one-time thing. Council President Travagline replied that anything is on the table as long as it's fair and equal to all departments. Mayor McGee asked for clarification that the candidates who did not test, and who did test, would test for the actual rank being tested, not the superior rank test that the other candidate took. Travagline confirmed that this was what he was suggesting, and said the attempted to get clarification on the differences between the tests but was not able to do so.

Councilman Perri stated that the ordinance is binding. The ordinance that we have now is very good, and he suggested not changing the ordinance, but obtaining a stay among all parties.

Councilman O'Neill noted that 60 days ago the Mayor said the acting positions would be taken care of within 30-60 days. Mayor McGee replied that a lot has happened and he is working on it, and working with the Council President.

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Councilman O'Neill asked Mayor McGee if anyone from the union or the Police Department had approached him to say they were against it. McGee replied that no one had done so.

Council President Travagline asked Mayor McGee if anyone from Council had told him they were against it, and if permission from Council was needed to schedule testing. McGee replied no to both questions.

Councilman Perri stated that the Chief makes the recommendation to the Mayor and if there is funding, it gets scheduled. Perri asked McGee if funding was available. McGee replied that funding was available for the Captain's test only.

Councilman Chau said he thought we were checking with the union to determine if old lists were still valid.

Council President Travagline asked Mayor McGee if there is still a Captain's list. McGee replied that there was not.

Councilman Chau stated that if the City tested, and someone in an acting position scored lower than someone who was not in an acting position, the higher scoring candidate may be selected.

Councilman Piergiovanni said that for the officers in the acting positions, the City should do whatever it can to promote them.

Discussion ensued between Mayor McGee and Council President Travagline as to who had knowledge of available funding, or not. Travagline urged the Mayor to make a decision.

Mayor McGee stated that the Chief told him that there was no money for promotions, and said he would move forward when he feels comfortable.

Council President Travagline asked Council if they want to try to change he ordinance or have the Mayor work it out. Councilman Chau replied that he felt the Mayor should handle it.

Councilman Chau proposed that the City stop the traffic study on Oxford Circle, and asked the Engineer to explain. Engineer Kwapinski stated that the summer was almost over, and they haven't been able to coordinate with the County yet.

Council President Travagline said he felt it was a priority although some members of

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Council may not; he added that he lives nowhere near the area. He said he is fine with delaying it, but does not want to shelve it.

Council President Travagline asked if anyone had questions about the regular agenda, and made assignments for the meeting.

Councilman Piergiovanni announced that has been diagnosed with stage 4 blood cancer, a form of lymphoma. He said it is treatable, and he's going to crush it like he's crushed every other obstacle in his life. He said he's not going anywhere, and he is running in November. He won't be a victim of cancer but will instead be a voice. He will show that cancer is not a death sentence, and hopes to inspire folks to get checked out, to take care of themselves. He thanked the public for their support.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

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

Bob Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue, stated that he's had help at Veterans Park. Dave Notaro, Tom Polistina and Steve Vain, all former Councilmen, assisted in laying the bricks. Webb said he wants the park done. Webb commented that he thinks the Police Department needs leadership. There are no superior officers in Northfield; they are all in acting positions.

Nicolle Tepedino Piergiovanni, 193 Shore Road, thanked Council, and thanked her husband. She said listening gives perspective. She hopes they can come together and make decisions, so her husband can be home before midnight because they have little kids. She said she is nurse practitioner, and urged people to take responsibility for their health: a little lump can change your life.

Lisa Brown, 9 Haviv Drive, referred to hiring a Deputy Clerk. She commented that Somers Point, Margate and Pleasantville all have a Business Administrator and a Deputy Clerk. She asked if when Northfield had a Business Administrator was there a Clerk and a Deputy. She addressed the Mayor, and said he cannot make a decision. She suggested he funnel his salary to make the Police Department positions pensionable, and urged him to make a decision now.

Aubrey Gerhard, Library Director, stated that residents with unemployment concerns can go the Library on Tuesdays or on other days by appointment, for help with resumes, filing for unemployment, or technical assistance. The Library is there to help residents in difficult times.

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Council President Travagline thanked Gerhard, and commented that she is a great asset to the City.

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

At 7:33pm on motions properly made and seconded this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC  
Municipal Clerk