

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION OCTOBER 21, 2025

At 6:02pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2025, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Chau led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Councilman Smith*

**Councilman Smith was absent when attendance was taken; he arrived at 6:19pm.*

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Engineer DeBlasio, Jake Wright from DeBlasio and Associates, and Sergeant VanPelt, on behalf of Chief of Police VonColln, were also present.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Polistina – Finance and Collections; Library; Municipal Alliance; Senior Citizens; Affordable Housing

Councilman Polistina attended the library meeting; they were discussing capital projects at a cost of roughly \$140,000.00 they have approximately \$220,000.00 in their bank accounts. Their next meeting was November 1st at 6:15pm. Regarding Affordable Housing, he attended a couple of meetings the last one was Friday of last week with the “Program”, as well as a meeting with the Homes For All group and our professionals. We were on track for a new developer to take that project over; the judge was pleased. There was an upcoming meeting with the Senior Committee with the Sheriff’s Office and the Atlantic County Prosecutor’s Office and the Surrogate. The date was to be determined but will focus on topics of interest to seniors.

Councilman Polistina moved to the Best Practices Checklist. He reviewed our overall score of 42 out of 43½ points. The core competencies address statutory and regulatory compliance obligations, and they are critical to sound municipal operations. This is a process mandated by the State and a score of 32 or greater gives us 100% of our available State Aid. Other areas covered are best practices involving fiscal and operational practices that are a benefit to municipalities. Some things do not apply, and there were a total of 70 questions with only 43 ½ points available. The requirements included financial documents available on the website, employee licensing, and compliance by vendors with awarded contracts.

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

Councilman Dewees reported that in addition to routine maintenance activity, Public Works was running the vacator truck and maintaining the trails at Birch Grove. The restrooms would be winterized and the irrigation as well in the next couple of weeks.

Councilwoman Kern – Northfield Sports (FAN)

Councilwoman Kern reported that the Northfield Cardinal football games were canceled last week due to a storm. This past weekend the peewee, taxi and JV won their games; varsity lost. All levels would be going to the playoffs so there would be a few more games at the field. She also attended the hayride at Birch Grove Park and said 6 of her 7 grandchildren attended and had a wonderful time. The Volunteer and paid Firemen were there, she congratulated them on a very fun event.

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

Councilwoman Bucci referred to the resolution on tonight's agenda to terminate membership in State Health Benefits Plan, we would be moving to the Southern Coastal Health Insurance Fund, CFO Stollenwerk, and BA/Clerk Canesi did a lot of work on this, the potential increase was 22% instead of 37%. The Atlantic City Country Club was having a Christmas Bazaar on December 6th for the community, all local businesses are invited and encouraged to participate; it was good for them and for Northfield as a whole.

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

Councilman Smith was absent during Committee Reports.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno reported that the chicken committee would be meeting the week of November 7th to address the ordinance amendment. The next Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting was scheduled for December 17th. The next Cultural Committee meeting was slated for this Saturday, she did not have the time. The flea market will be held on November 4th and tables are still available. She planned on having an the 250th anniversary celebration meeting next week coming up. Regarding the Hometown Hero program, she needed one more banner to have the minimum quantity to place an order. Mainland Regional High School would be hosting a Veterans Day breakfast honoring all veterans in the

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cafeteria from 9am until 10:30am. She attended the hayrides as well and noted that the weather didn't stop anyone. Her grandkids loved it. She gave props to Martin Pepek for coming up with the concept and to the volunteers and auxiliary and everyone who helped, it was amazing. Finally, this week is the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, she asked all to be mindful of supporting groups that are not like us.

Councilman Notaro – Sanitary Sewer Operations; Inspections, Housing/Zoning.

Regarding the Building Department, Councilman Notaro reported that the department Supervisor had brought to his attention that we have no rule on the books to ensure that those applying for a Zoning permit are current on their taxes, He wanted to run it by Council to see if there was any objection to require taxes be current as part of the approval.

Council President Bucci took a straw poll, all members present were in favor.

Clerk Canesi would have it on the agenda for the next meeting.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Regulations regarding Keeping of Chickens – *Councilwoman Carfagno, Councilman Notaro*

Council President Bucci said she wanted to circle back on regulations for keeping of chickens, She knew we voted, and the majority where in favor of allowing them, and we were considering regulations such as location and how many you can have. She noted that the part time Code Enforcement Officer works one day a week and asked if the Council wanted to amend the current ordinance to allow them. She felt regulations would not be enforceable.

Councilwoman Carfagno felt we needed to regulate because it could get out of hand. She felt if more hours were needed for Code Enforcement, then we'll have to look at that.

Council President Bucci felt that would be burdensome; she would like to take a straw poll, to see if Council wanted to change the current Ordinance to eliminate the conflict.

Mayor Chau referred to setbacks, inoculations, how many chickens are allowed. Mayor Chau said the Zoning Official did not seem to believe there were any problems, regardless of the part time status.

Council President Bucci asked Council do we want to change the ordinance to eliminate the conflict or add the extra zoning requirements?

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Clerk Canesi explained this started due to a conflict in our Code between the chapters that regulate Land Use and Pets. We have allowed them because there is language that says you can't have chickens if you raise them commercially for food. She believed Council President Bucci was proposing a straw poll to amend the ordinance strictly to address the conflict but not add additional regulations.

At 6:19pm Councilman Smith entered the meeting.

Solicitor Facenda confirmed the straw poll was to allow them or allow them with controls.

All members present were in favor of allowing them, with controls.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- Future Amendment to Bulk Waste Collection Rules – Councilman Notaro

Regarding bulk waste, Councilman Notaro regarding bulk waste said he met with Clerk Canesi last week, there was some clean up in language to be done related to the ACUA; these were the minimal things. The larger issue is commercial recycling, we aren't supposed to be picking it up, but we are, for some businesses, but not all. It was a financial loss, to recycle, and we are trying to minimize costs where we can. Council needed to decide if we were going to discontinue picking up commercial recycling, or amend the ordinance to allow it, with rules.

Councilwoman Kern asked for clarification, some businesses?

Councilman Notaro confirmed that was correct, not all. This happened somewhere along the line and we never adjusted the ordinance.

Councilman Polistina noted that they pay for their own trash pickup and if they have more trash they pay more.

Clerk Canesi added that if we change the ordinance and allow commercial pickup, we'll get more than we have now because all businesses would likely request the service.

Mayor Chau felt it was no longer a profitable endeavor to collect and recycle; when Mayor Chau first started the program many years ago there was an advantage.

Councilman Notaro suggested a straw poll and then give them ample notice.

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Council President Bucci was not in favor of eliminating it but would be in favor of reducing it. She had worked the past couple of years rebuilding our relationships with our businesses.

Councilman Notaro added that over time it became costly, and with that change, comes change.

Mayor Chau stated the ACUA has established a program trying to educate residents on what not to put in the recycle bin.

Clerk Canesi suggested to the Council that if they are contemplating changing the Ordinance to provide that we do collect commercial recycling, they may want to check with the ACUA to determine the effect on our contract, it is renewing next year. If we open it up to all businesses and the amount of commercial recycling increases, we will want to know what that would do to our contract renewal before making that decision.

Councilman Polistina reminded Council, they get behind with yard waste as it is, adding stops for commercial recycling could affect that.

Clerk Canesi offered to call Gary Conover at the ACUA, on Councilman Notaro's behalf, regarding adding commercial recycling, and its effect on our renewal.

- Increase in Tax Map Revision Fees for Subdivided Properties

Council President Bucci stated that tax map revision fees were discussed at the last meeting. The Planning Board is reviewing their fees, so, once we have their recommendation, we will make all changes at one time.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

There were no grant opportunities mentioned.

- 2025 Best Practices Inventory – Requested by Council Finance Chair Polistina

Councilman Polistina gave this update during his Committee Report.

- 2025 Professional Services – Any Changes to Criteria?

Council President Bucci referred to the email sent by Clerk Canesi, she asked did anyone have any changes? There were none.

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- Tax Map Revisions – Not Related to Subdivision

Solicitor Facenda spoke regarding tax map fees not associated with subdivisions; as we thought about it, although not very common, we do have instances where there are fees, legal and other, that may not affect our ordinance, but that may incur costs. Solicitor Facenda suggested through the Planning Board Liaison to have the Planning Board, as condition of approval, require escrows for those expenses.

- Proposed Ordinance to Require Taxes be Current for Issuance of Development Permit

Councilman Notaro discussed this during his Committee Report.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Bucci reviewed the agenda and made the assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

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

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

At 6:34pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk