

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 27, 2015**

At 5:59pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on October 27, 2015 in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present: Dewees, Lischin, Murray, Perri, Travagline

Absent: O'Neill, Piergiovanni

Mayor Chau and Solicitor Kris Facenda were also in attendance.

Council President Travagline welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Assemblyman Chris Brown.

Mayor Chau noted that the invitation was extended to both Assemblyman Brown and Assemblyman Mazzeo. Mr. Mazzeo that indicated he would be coming to a future meeting.

Assemblyman Brown announced that the City of Northfield was getting grants for sidewalks on Route 9 and for paving on Broad Street and Bay Drive. One other area they are working on is getting \$16.5M in CRDA monies returned to Atlantic County; if we can get this back it will offset the shortfall that residents could be facing as a result of some forms of the proposed PILOT legislation. He thanked Council for the invitation, and offered to answer any questions.

Mayor Chau noted that he has always found Assemblyman Brown to be extremely responsive. He asked if PILOT happens, when it would happen.

Assemblyman Brown said when it first went through, it was understood that 13.5% would be returned to the County. Mr. Brown's counterpart is pushing that this money only be returned to Atlantic City, but there are other towns in Atlantic County. Now the legislation would not be voted on until after the election because of the manner in which it was moved.

- Update from Commercial Utility Consultants – Stacia Scaduto

Council President Travagline introduced Stacia Scaduto from CUC.

Ms. Scaduto introduced herself as a representative from Commercial Utilities Consultants. She went over an overview of the energy aggregation program. The

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program came out of Title 14 in 2012. Every February the State holds an auction to set rates for the coming year on every utility; this is the default rate. The local utility, since 1999 when deregulation occurred, had not been generating the electricity that residents are purchasing. Northfield joined the Cape Atlantic Energy Cooperative, which includes Northfield, Linwood, Cape May Point and Margate, who is the lead agent. It has gone out to bid several times in the past few years and this is the first time that the results have produced a price below the default rate; the low bidder now is about a 7% savings compared to the default rate. Prices will be refreshed on November 5th, when Margate meets next, because the suppliers can only hold their prices for a certain period of time. CUC is asking that the other member towns authorize the execution of the supplier agreement as long as the refreshed prices are within a certain variance.

Councilman Murray asked what if the default rate goes down.

Ms. Scaduto stated that the vendor would be given the chance to honor the new rate, and if they couldn't, there would be no program. CUC, as the City's energy agent, would be responsible for monitoring the default rate and ensuring that the new supplier met it, or the town would then be opted out of the program. For individual residents, there are no opt out penalties or fees to opt in or out at any time. If we proceeded, between now and March, CUC would be doing a lot of resident outreach to provide a level of assurance that this is a fixed rate, not a variable rate. It is an opt-out program, should residents not want to participate in the savings. Many towns have an 80% response of residents who stay in the program. This outreach will be through the month of January. The program would start in March with savings first seen on the April bill.

Councilman Murray asked how it would affect a budget-billed plan.

Ms. Scaduto said residents wouldn't necessarily see a savings because that is a flat rate based on the prior year's usage, and then it's adjusted forward. But over the term they would certainly see the savings. As part of the outreach program, there is a whole section on budget billed households. Ms. Scaduto pointed out that the savings is only on the supply portion of the bill, not on the delivery portion.

Councilman Perri asked about residents who are already with another 3rd party supplier.

According to Ms. Scaduto the only eligible residents are those who are not currently with another 3rd party supplier.

Solicitor Facenda asked which bid Ms. Scaduto recommended.

Ms. Scaduto recommended the 2 year term with IDT, as it offers the only real savings.

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Solicitor Facenda prepared for Council a Resolution that would authorize the Mayor to execute the supplier agreement as long as the refreshed rates don't change by a certain variance. He asked Council for input on what that acceptable level of change would be. He suggested refreshed rates that yield either the same pricing, or if greater, not less than 6% against the default rate.

Councilman Lischin stated he did not see a downside since there is a guaranteed savings for everyone who participates.

- Vehicle Maintenance – Pending Retirement of City Mechanic

Council President Travagline moved to the pending retirement of the City Mechanic.

Councilman Dewees announced that the mechanic is retiring with the last day of work in mid-December. Councilman Dewees is looking at departmental activity to determine what our options are. He asked Acting Chief of Police Newman for his input on his needs.

Acting Chief of Police Newman stated that since the trash trucks were no longer being serviced, the police cars have been serviced as needed on a more regular basis.

Councilman Dewees stated he will continue to gather information and report on November 24th.

Councilman Perri felt it should be kept in house; there was a lot of work to be done over there.

Councilman Travagline expressed faith that Councilman Dewees would explore all options, as he always did.

- Sign Sub-Committee – (Requested by Planning Board)

Council President Travagline stated that a sign sub-committee was requested by the Planning Board; he added that he felt this is was very important as a lot of businesses have come to him. The Ordinance needs to be changed so that it is not overly expensive for businesses to upgrade their signs. He requested to be on the committee.

Solicitor Facenda suggested that if the City was going to be reviewing the sign ordinance, one of the components would be the political sign ordinance, so this should be a component of the review.

Mayor Chau agreed with the need to support businesses, but signs can proliferate and become overwhelming over a period of time. Over time they are subject to wear and

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tear, and can become unsightly. The City needs to be careful, we don't want to discourage it, but we have to. Unfortunately, our current sign ordinance is not being followed uniformly.

Council President Travagline reiterated that it costs too much for businesses.

Municipal Clerk Canesi asked for reiteration of the names of the subcommittee members.

Council President Travagline stated that the committee will consist of himself, Councilman Dewees and Councilman Lischin.

Solicitor Facenda advised Council to be mindful of the Sunshine Law if Mr. Perri, as a member of the Planning Board is in attendance, then one member would not be able to attend.

Councilman Perri identified Chairman Levitt in the audience, and suggested that he may want to speak.

Dr. Richard Levitt introduced himself as the Chair of the Planning Board. He noted that the sign ordinance was amended recently to include LED signs. It was his understanding that the subcommittee would be a joint committee with the members of the Planning Board.

At 6:50pm, Councilman O'Neill entered the meeting.

Dr. Levitt urged that a member or members of the subcommittee attend the next Planning Board meeting, which will be next Thursday.

Council President Travagline said that would be coordinated through Clerk Canesi.

Dr. Levitt noted that the Planning Board had come up with a few suggestions already.

Council President Travagline asked that they be provided to the committee members.

Solicitor Facenda mentioned the proposed change to the commercial vehicle ordinance; as currently proposed a 70 ton vehicle can be stored in someone's driveway; he suggested that the subcommittee review that as well.

Solicitor Facenda noted that there is a complete streets resolution on the agenda; believed that 179-2015, the original version, was included just for reference purposes.

Councilman Lischin stated that the museum is outgrowing its collection and has

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proposed an expansion, which would obviously be costly. They are doing the work of many out there at the museum, and they are preserving the history of the town.

Mayor Chau suggested perhaps a trailer, similar to what schools sometimes use, and as was used after Hurricane Sandy. He encouraged all residents to visit the museum, it's really amazing.

Councilman Dewees noted his abstention from a reimbursement in his name on the payment of bills (5-01-26-310-210 in the amount of \$54.92) and explained that he would be abstaining from the vote on that line item. He asked for it to be noted for the record.

AGENDA REVIEW

Council President Travagline reviewed the regular agenda

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Travagline opened the public session.

Bob Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue - thanked Mayor Chau for his words on the museum. The volunteers don't get the credit they deserve. Years ago, members of Council were also volunteers. He would like to see signs at Veterans Park. He had heard there will be a swimming pool at Birch Grove Park, was that true.

Councilman Dewees stated no, there were discussions at one point of how to increase the amenities at the park, but no, there will be no pool.

Mr. Webb asked Council what was started last year. He asked why there are so many temporary positions, such as temporary chief. Children know how to use a computer but not a lawn mower. Northfield and Linwood should just merge with Egg Harbor Township and call it a day. We are sending them all of our jobs.

Mayor Chau said he was also frustrated with the inability to promote in the Police Department due to litigation. Mayor Chau felt he was trying to ensure that volunteers are appropriately recognized and honored. He felt that shared services have saved the taxpayers money. He noted increases in costs that have occurred over the years.

Paul Newman, 135 Bonnie Lee Drive – speaking as a resident not as the Chief, asked who was the chairperson of FAN.

Councilman O'Neill stated that he was.

Mr. Newman stated that there is systematic bullying going on out there and it needed

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to stop. There were 2 8th grade students who have played football since taxi who are sitting on the bench while other kids are playing both sides of the ball. He understands this as a coaching decision, but Mr. Newman was advocating for these kids who are being verbally attacked by other kids. Mr. Newman acknowledged that his son is one of them. Mr. Newman reported the incident to the FAN coach and it was reported to the school, and was told it would improve. He will take them at their word and would be at the next FAN meeting.

Jeff Obergfell, 190 Davis Avenue - thanked Council for the paving and drainage that was happening at Davis Avenue. He expressed concern that where Davis meets Zion is abnormally narrow. This intersection needed to be looked at; better signage should be placed and parking needs to be enforced.

Mayor Chau stated that the Assistant Fire Chief did visit the area and he felt comfortable that an emergency vehicle could safely maneuver.

Engineer Kwapinski felt the resident had a point, it is narrow, the City may want to eliminate parking on one side.

Mayor Chau requested that Acting Chief of Police Newman do a traffic study. He asked the resident to give his name and address to the Clerk so Mayor Chau can get back to him.

Richard Levitt, 224 Bay Drive – stated that he had a contentious Planning Board meeting where residents complained about issues that were beyond the control of the Planning Board, such as parking, oversized vehicles on Chestnut Avenue, etc., he asked if these were being addressed.

Mayor Chau said yes, Council was working on it and had to do a bit more research. He would have recommendation to Council for the next meeting.

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

At 7:27pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk