

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 24, 2020**

At 6:19pm, this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2020 and November 20, 2020, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), and N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 - 1.7, the previously advertised November 24, 2020, meeting of Northfield City Council, to be held in Council Chambers, 1600 Shore Road, Northfield, New Jersey, 08225, will be held in-person and as a remote public meeting (live-streamed) using Zoom conferencing service. Due to social distancing requirements related to Covid-19, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public. Visit the November 24, 2020 date on the events calendar page of www.cityofnorthfield.org determine current availability for this meeting. Face coverings and social distancing will be required for in-person attendance. To reserve an available seat, contact the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 609-641-2832, ext 125, no later than 2:00pm on November 24th, 2020. Once all available seats have been reserved, virtual attendance will be required using a web-browser to Join the Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84810006562> or by telephone using one tap mobile +16465588656,,84810006562# or direct dial +1 646 558 8656 using meeting ID: 848 1000 6562. For those wishing to comment during the dedicated public comment portion of the meeting, but who may be unable to attend (in person or via Zoom), public comments may also be submitted in advance via email to mcanesi@cityofnorthfield.org, or by written letter to the Office of the Municipal Clerk, 1600 Shore Road, Northfield NJ 08225, or by hand delivery to the drop box at the rear of the municipal building, addressed to the attention of the Municipal Clerk. Comments shall contain the name and address of the author, will be read aloud and addressed during the remote public meeting, and must be received by 2:00pm on November 24, 2020.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau followed by a moment of silence.

Municipal Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“Due to social distancing requirements related to Covid-19, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public this evening. For this reason, this meeting is also being presented simultaneously as a remote public meeting, live-streamed, using Zoom conferencing service, and in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Orders and the Open Public Meetings Act.

Zoom meeting participants can dial in by telephone and listen to the proceedings, or they can access the meeting using a web-browser, and be able to view and listen.

Instructions on how members of the public could reserve one of the limited seats, as well as how they can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and FB pages, and were published in the Press of Atlantic City. The full text of the public meeting notice has been posted at the entrances to the municipal

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building and includes Zoom instructions, information on where to find the meeting agenda and relevant documents, as well as instructions on how members of the public could submit comments in advance of tonight's meeting.

For those participating via Zoom, all participants will be 'muted' upon entry to the meeting. Web-browser participants will not be able to share their screens or see the camera-view of anyone other than the host, which is the City of Northfield.

Zoom participants wishing to exercise their right to participate during the public comment portion of the meeting should wait until the specific announcement is made to open the public comment period. At this time, one by one, any telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. For web-browser participants, comments or questions may be submitted via the chat function and will not be acknowledged outside of the designated public-comment portion of the meeting; chat-users must also provide his/her name and address for the record in order to be heard.

Any written comments submitted in advance will be read aloud and addressed during the public comment portion of the meeting."

ROLL CALL

Present (in person): Councilman Dewees; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Perri; Mayor Chau

Present (via telephone): Councilwoman Madden

Absent: Councilwoman Korngut; Councilman O'Neill

Solicitor Stein and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance. Chief Newman was present via zoom.

Council President Perri called for a motion to approve the minutes.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion of Councilman Smith with a second of Councilman Utts, all members present were in favor of approving the minutes of November 10, 2020 without formal reading.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman O'Neill - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning; Court/Violations; FAN

Councilman O'Neill was absent.

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Councilman Utts – Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Planning Board; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilman Utts reported all should look forward this Friday to the Bike Path and City Hall lights being lit; he suggested the Mayor include them in his awards as well. Regarding the First Street Playground, the JIF Inspector visited the site and did not see a hazard, it was recommended that Public Works continue doing what they have been doing. As a resident and Councilperson, during this week of gratitude, he was really grateful for Mary Canesi, our Municipal Clerk, and Rami Nassar as our Engineer and other professionals, we were very fortunate to have them working for us.

Councilwoman Korngut – Technology/MRHS Channel; Library; Municipal Alliance; Shared Services

Councilwoman Korngut was absent.

Councilman Dewees - Buildings/Grounds; Birch Grove Park

Councilman Dewees reported that the outlets on the Bike Path are only hot when the timer was on, they were on the top of the pole and were covered.

Councilman Utts added that there was a Parks and Recreation meeting the other day, and the Committee had a lot of great ideas. We can expect some great things.

Councilman Smith – Finance/Collections; Little League/Babe Ruth; Cultural Committee; Northfield Community School

Councilman Smith had nothing to report for his committees. He would like to congratulate the Northfield Council candidates, and School Board. Dave Notaro and Tom Polistina were victorious; he congratulated their opponents as well for a clean campaign. He shared that the Mainland girls’ tennis team won the SJ Championship and were undefeated; they won their playoff competitions. He also congratulated the Mainland girls’ cross-country team, of which he is the coach. It was the only sport in which there was a true SJ Championship being offered, and they too went undefeated. He offered a shout-out to his girls.

Councilwoman Madden – Fire Department / EMS; Insurance and Safety, Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden read the Fire Department report for October: 21 calls for service, 18 were emergencies and 3 non-emergencies, they did not have any mutual aid. Mainland Regional High School held their board meeting on the 16th via zoom, the students of the month included: 9th grade: Denver Obermeyer; 10th grade: Olivia Hull; 11th grade: Mason Higbee and Paige Klein; 12th grade: Paula Alex and Pancha

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Baul. Virtual participation was increasing to at least 30%, the school did have two cases of Covid that occurred outside of school.

Council President Perri noted that Council would be looking at the scheduling issue after the Executive Session and we would make a decision at the meeting on the 15th.

Council President Perri– Public Works: Roads, Engineering, Sewer Operations; Senior Citizens

Council President Perri also congratulated Mr. Notaro and Mr. Polistina on their win, and the other 3 candidates who took the time and effort to put their name forward. He thanked everyone for working to make the election what it should be. Council President Perri thanked Clerk Canesi, Deputy Clerk Campbell and the Mayor's Office for the Veterans Day event; it was a very nice event. He would like to see us hold this event annually since the American Legion members were dwindling. He offered to help in any way that he can. The seniors were still not meeting, he would do a shout out to everyone before the holiday to wish them well.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Chau wanted to recognize Northfield Mothers' League, most recently they gave 18 Northfield families meals, he thanked this outstanding group for what they do. He thanked Veterans for their service, and thanked all for their work on the ceremony and on the park. The park had grown from a vacant field, with former Mayor Mazzeo getting the funding with County Executive Dennis Levinson. He was very proud of this outstanding work.

Mayor Chau read the following letter that had been addressed to him, from Crossing Guard Supervisor Heather Mellon:

“On behalf of all the Northfield Crossing Guards, I would like to thank you for your continued caring and support during this unusual schedule due to the coronavirus. We were all surprised by our new supplies and having we received them. Even though the hours are lengthy, we care about the safety of our children so this makes the time worthwhile. May you and the staff of City Hall stay safe for the upcoming holiday season.”

Even though the letter was addressed to Mayor Chau, Mayor Chau thanked City Council and thanked the guards for their continued support.

Mayor Chau reported that on December 15th he would be issuing a proclamation and will be coordinating a drive-by for Elaine St. John, who would be celebrating her 100th birthday. He encouraged all to participate and to contact the Mayor's Office for details. He reminded all that there are applications and information about the Mayor's Holiday Decoration Contest, including businesses this year as well. Please contact the City Clerk's Office for details. Last week he welcomed JRoss Fitness on Tilton

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Road as a new business in Northfield. He received several calls from Northfield Community School parents regarding an email from the school, related to a positive Covid case. Mayor Chau said he spoke with Superintendent Bretones, who explained the procedure that was followed and assured Mayor Chau that all precautions were taken to ensure the school was safe. Mayor Chau reminded all that parents have opportunity to go virtual. The Planning Board Meeting in December included a minor subdivision and variance, the applicant was 1st Choice Property Management. Regarding a meeting for shared court, the committee conducted a visit to the facility with positive results. Virtual appearances were being discussed for witnesses and officers. Interested municipalities were being asked to submit hard-costs to County Counsel Ferguson as to what it costs to run their courts, going back a few years. Mayor Chau acknowledged the desire to maintain home rule, but had confidence that if this comes to fruition that services would be improved and there would be cost savings. He would keep Council up to date.

Council President Perri said he was listening to talk radio; one comment was regarding an elderly or disabled individual from Atlantic City who would have to travel to Mays Landing. It probably doesn't happen often but Council President Perri hadn't thought of that. He asked about cash.

Mayor Chau replied that the initial discussions were that municipalities retain their own revenue; he offered to get more information about seniors or elderly. He noted that Atlantic City was not interested in participating.

Councilman Dewees noted that the County had a transportation system that may be able to be utilized.

CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT

Engineer Nassar reviewed the Engineer's Report as previously distributed to the Council. A minor adjustment to the shop drawing for the ADA ramp was needed; that was in progress. The 2020 Local Road Program bid opening was scheduled for December 10th, he hoped to recommend award for the December 15th meeting. The Fuae Avenue concrete work had been completed, with paving done by December 10th. There was an addition of a small section for handicap accessibility at Davis and the Bike Path, this was requested by a resident and in conjunction with Mr. Dewees, was added to the project. Engineer Nassar received a letter from NJDOT that the City has been awarded \$310,000.00 for Merritt and a portion of Ridgewood; we were ready to go with this project.

Mayor Chau asked how much grant money we received for Fuae Avenue?

Engineer Nassar replied \$290,000.00.

Mayor Chau noted that the new grant, for 2021 for Merritt and Ridgewood was for \$310,000.00; he wanted to point out to residents that it was due to the outstanding

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work of our Engineer, and with the blessing of City Council, we were fortunate to receive these grants. This year the department received applications from 549 municipalities, funds were supported by the state gas tax; paving streets was not cheap. He thanked Engineer Nassar and his firm for his outstanding work.

Councilman Dewees thanked Engineer Nassar for his quick response regarding the Fuae Avenue handicapped ramp.

Council President Perri asked about the asset management plan.

Engineer Nassar replied he was trying to coordinate the video piping, they wanted to do it in the winter time.

PUBLIC SESSION/FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Perri opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject.

Clerk Canesi typed in the Zoom chat that the public comment portion of the meeting was open.

Seeing no one wishing to make a comment Council President Perri closed the public session.

RESOLUTIONS

All matters listed under the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature, and having been reviewed by Council, will be enacted by one motion. Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of any Council Member and if so removed, will be treated as a separate matter. Any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of Funds.

The Executive Session of Council will be held at the end of the meeting, and Council will come back in public session to make a comment for the record after the executive session has concluded. Any vote made on subjects discussed will be made in public.

Council President Perri asked if anyone wanted to vote on any resolutions separately; he questioned Resolution 183-2020.

Clerk Canesi replied that 183-2020 could be included as part of the consent agenda.

On a motion of Councilman Utts, second of Councilwoman Madden, all present were in favor of voting by consent agenda on Resolutions 179-2020 through 183-2020.

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- 179-2020** To Authorize an Agreement between the City of Northfield and the Trustees of the Free Public Library of Northfield, t/a the Otto Bruyns Public Library
- 180-2020** Authorizing Refunds of Overpayment of Taxes
- 181-2020** Resolution Authorizing Cancellation and Refund of Taxes Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.30 & N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.32 on Property Known as Block 49 Lot 3 (511 Fairbanks Avenue)
- 182-2020** Resolution Authorizing Cancellation and Refund of Taxes Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.30 & N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.32 On Property Known as Block 12 Lot 13 (2123 Oak Avenue)
- 183-2020** A Resolution Providing for an Executive Session Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 b(7) Regarding Matters Falling within the Attorney-Client Privilege

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilwoman Madden, to adopt the consent agenda for Resolutions 179-2020 through 183-2020.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – absent, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - absent, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS \$ 1,183,642.10

Councilman Smith motioned, Councilman Dewees seconded, for payment of bills.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – absent, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O’Neill - absent, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

Council President Perri read the meeting notices and announced the Executive Session for Resolution 183-2020.

- 183-2020** A Resolution Providing for an Executive Session Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 b(7) Regarding Matters Falling within the Attorney-Client Privilege

Clerk Canesi read the resolution by title, and said we are required to set forth as much information as possible about the subject matter to be discussed as well as provide for the public the amount of time that can be expected to elapse before the non-public minutes can be disclosed. Clerk Canesi deferred to Solicitor Stein for comment.

Solicitor Stein announced that the Executive Session involved attorney client privilege regarding labor, municipal employee, union and contractual, and as stated in the Resolution, Family First Coronavirus Response Act and how it related to our contract with our employees, at this point and time we cannot determine time frame for disclosure.

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Clerk Canesi announced for the record that she would stop the Zoom audio, and in accordance with statutory requirements, she would advise the zoom participants know we were going to Executive Session

At 6:54pm Council President Perri announced that Council was going to enter into Executive Session and would return to the public session to make comments for the record.

At 7:22pm Council President Perri resumed the public session.

Solicitor Stein announced that minutes were taken and may be subject to release when they have been prepared and reviewed.

Council President Perri, regarding the Fire schedule, stated that Councilwoman Madden would like to entertain the extension of the 24hour schedules.

Clerk Canesi would forward the existing MOA that required that we give them a decision on whether to extend by December 15th. She was asked to put together some information on the impact of the 24hour schedules on overtime. She reminded all not to talk about it amongst themselves until we convene in public on the 15th. The committee can discuss, but not a quorum.

Councilman Dewees asked had there been overtime?

Councilwoman Madden replied not involving the 24hour shift, she met with Chief Cummings and Captain Nixon, it's working well, they were requesting a one-year extension.

Clerk Canesi added that there were other areas of the contract that may be affected by this if they intend to contemplate that long of an extension. Labor Counsel had suggested in the beginning that it may have to be negotiated if extended.

Labor Counsel Curio spoke; she would like the opportunity to present to the Council, and to review the entire contract, in Executive Session, so that Council was fully informed as to what they are voting on.

Councilwoman Madden felt the reason for a year extension was to avoid overtime and make scheduling easier.

Council President Perri replied we understand.

At 7:27pm, on motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Utts, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk