

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 15, 2020**

At 6:43pm, 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 December 11, 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 December 15, 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 December 15, 2020 date on the events calendar page of [www.cityofnorthfield.org](http://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 December 15, 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/83580815871> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13017158592,,83580815871# or direct dial +1 301 715 8592 using Meeting ID: 835 8081 5871. 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](mailto: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 December 15, 2020.*

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 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 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

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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.”

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau followed by a moment of silence. Mayor Chau brought note to Kenneth Scott Jeremiah, age 78, passed away as a result of Covid-19. Mr. Jeremiah gained international fame as a musician and played with several famous artists and appeared on American Bandstand. Mayor Chau also recognized Elaine St. John, today would have been her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. She was an active volunteer and serviced on the Library Board. Finally, he recognized Mainland Regional High School teacher, Josephine Carney. Mrs. Carney was advocate for our Veterans locally and overseas. Mayor Chau requested the flag at our Veterans Park to be flown at half-staff for the next 7 days in her honor. He offered condolences to all of the families.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Madden; Councilman O’Neill; Councilman Utts; Council President Perri; Mayor Chau

**Present (via telephone):** Councilman Smith\*

**Absent:** Councilwoman Korngut;

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

*\*As a result of technical difficulties, Councilman Smith joined the meeting via Zoom and telephone at 7:19pm, after roll call and after committee reports.*

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

**READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion of Councilwoman Madden with a second of Councilman O’Neill, all members present were in favor of approving the minutes of November 24, 2020 without formal reading.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Councilman O'Neill did not have a report this evening. Tonight was his last night on Council, it's been nine years, he's enjoyed every meeting and working with current and past Council members. He thought they have all done a good job. He thanked all who live in town for supporting him over the years. We have a great staff in Northfield, with all of the employees. In close to a decade, he's had maybe five people in ten years complain, and when you start doing fact finding you find there is nothing to it. We have great volunteers, and our Police Department was the best in New Jersey, we have amazing Fire and Road and all other departments, including administration. To Council President Perri, it's been an interesting year and you've done a great job. To Mayor Chau, Councilman O'Neill thought there was more Christmas spirit in Northfield than in any other town in New Jersey. He thanked all who were involved in getting the Christmas lights on the bike path. He thanked John Brenner for pushing to get lights on the bike path. He thanked everyone again.

Council President Perri thanked O'Neill for his service to the community.

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

Councilman Utts stated that at the last meeting he'd referenced a Planning Board application at a home behind Bank of America; they did receive approval from the Zoning board for two houses on one lot as a subdivision, and for another house. The pandemic has prompted a possible review of the Master Plan, with residential space becoming more important.

Councilman Dewees asked if access was off of Park Avenue.

Councilman Utts confirmed.

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

Councilwoman Korngut was absent.

**Councilman Dewees** - Buildings/Grounds; Birch Grove Park

Councilman Dewees reiterated that he would look at the radio tower wires and exhaust fans tomorrow.

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

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*\*Councilman Smith was absent at the time of committee reports.*

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

Councilwoman Madden announced that the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting for December was canceled, she had nothing to report for insurance and safety. For the Fire Department, Councilwoman Madden announced that Captain Nixon and his wife welcomed a new baby, and mother and baby were doing well.

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

Council President Perri thanked Councilwoman Korngut for her service to our community, and Councilman O’Neill once again. This year had been a very trying year and he wished the upcoming administration and new Council President all the best as we work to get through this pandemic. He thanked all frontline employees, Council members, administration for working together. He thanked Clerk Canesi and her office, and all employees for doing a great job in these extraordinary times. He offered condolences to the people who have passed, he hoped for the best for a vaccine and treatment in the future. Serving as Council President had been an honor, he wished all the best in this upcoming year.

**MAYOR’S REPORT**

Mayor Chau referred to Councilman O’Neill’s comment about the spirit and community effort in Northfield, Mayor Chau saw other communities trying to implement things that we started. He recognized Councilman Dewees for the bike path decorations, they look outstanding. He also wanted to recognize the Northfield Volunteer Fire Company for their outstanding job, and the career men, in driving around town with Santa, to every street in town. He thanked them all. He heard nothing but positive comments.

Mayor Chau participated in two grand openings in recent weeks, both involving physical fitness. We have had several exposures to Covid in the Police Department and we were working around it in terms of scheduling, fortunately, it had not been an outbreak but it had strained our shifts. He received comments about firearms applications, as many towns have, we have been inundated with firearms applications. The process had changed and there have been concerns about why it's taking so long, Mayor Chau believed the delays were the result of the number of applications at the state level. He urged all to be patient. He had a meeting today with the Atlantic County Court Committee; there were 14 municipalities that expressed interest but only seven of them have provided the information that had been requested by the County. There should be a tour of the facility in the near future.

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Mayor Chau acknowledged there were many questions still being discussed. Enabling legislation was also pending.

Mayor Chau referred to the Mayor's Holiday Light Contest, 21 homes and three businesses entered. The winners were the Santori Residence on Grove Road and the business winner was the YALE School. Mayor Chau would be delivering giant wreaths he purchased to the winners. Mayor Chau thanked Capri and Carluccio's for donating pizzas. He offered congratulations to all. He also recognized Councilman Jim O'Neill; he had known Jim for a long time. He had shown extreme dedication and had always expressed his concern, and goodwill for our residents. He had enjoyed working with Councilman O'Neill, and thanked him. He also recognized Councilwoman Korngut, who had chosen not to run again. He enjoyed working with Councilwoman Korngut, and she had shown to be a dedicated individual whose heart was with the City. He also recognized Solicitor Stein, who chose not to reapply due to business needs. He would miss Solicitor Stein, he had been an inspiration here, he thanked him for his good work. He thanked Council President Perri for his service as Council President; many think it's an easy job but it's not. There were a lot of obligations that come with the job that others don't realize, and it's hard to please everyone.

Council President Perri thanked Mayor Chau for his kind words, he was looking forward to moving past this difficult time.

Mayor Chau reported that he received a letter from Northfield Community School Superintendent Bretones. After the Thanksgiving break the school reported a high number of quarantined and Covid-positive students and staff. The number of families choosing virtual instruction had also increased. As a result, the Board of Education has approved a transition to an all-virtual program Monday, December 21, 2020 through Friday, January 15, 2021. In person instruction will resume Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

Mayor Chau added that Council would have to make a decision about whether to continue to pay the Crossing Guards.

Council President Perri replied that would give us several weeks to look at what we will have to do. It would be an issue for the budget workshop.

**CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Engineer Nassar reviewed the Engineer's Report as previously distributed to the Council. The shop drawings for the handicap ramp were complete, the work should start the first week of January, the tower would be down before the work starts and a chain link fence would be erected. The rear door of the building would be closed for two to two and a half months. Visitors and employees would have to use the front entrance. We would have proper signage.

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Mayor Chau asked how it would affect parking?

Engineer Nassar replied that he has had discussions with the Police Department; he explained we would lose about ten spots temporarily.

Mayor Chau asked about the Fire Department.

Engineer Nassar explained that they will still have access to the bays and will have parking spots available to them.

Engineer Nassar reported in regard to the 2020 Local Road Program, one bid was rejected but they were not the low bidder. The low bid was South State and we would have to stay on top of them; they did some work for the gas company that wasn't up to par, he has explained to them that they have to do a good job.

Mayor Chau suggested that contractors be told to limit or be cautious of what they say to residents.

Engineer Nassar will reiterate that at the preconstruction meeting. Any concerns would be addressed right away. Residents talking to the contractor becomes a problem, they expect the contractor to be able to address their concerns.

*At 7:19pm Clerk Canesi announced that Councilman Smith had joined the meeting.*

Councilwoman Madden asked if we were obligated to take the lowest bid?

Clerk Canesi replied, yes, it was a public bid.

Engineer Nassar reported we ran into an issue on Bay Drive, we know these are abandoned pipes. He discussed with the paving contractor and the job would be done in ten days. If it gets too cold, they won't pave, otherwise, we can clean it up and let it sit till the spring.

Engineer Nassar would start the design for Merritt and Ridgewood, the grant we received would cover a portion of our local road program, he would talk to Public Works and Councilman Dewees to see what could be added.

Clerk Canesi suggested Revere Avenue.

Engineer Nassar agreed it should be on our road program.

Mayor Chau asked Engineer Nassar if he received any information about the other grant Mayor Chau got for a bus shelter on Shore Road.

Engineer Nassar replied, no.

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Engineer Nassar mentioned that Chief Newman advised him a drainage pipe collapsed near Shore Road, he asked if anyone had heard anything?

Council President Perri had not. He was surprised the County had not said anything.

Engineer Nassar felt we needed to push the County to provide location of the infrastructure so we know what is ours and what is theirs.

Council President Perri asked Engineer Nassar to follow up with Chief Newman.

Engineer Nassar would also contact Public Works.

Councilman Dewees, regarding the parking lot project, reminded Engineer Nassar that we wanted to put outlets in the back corner. It was not a part of the contract and would go through Buildings and Grounds.

Engineer Nassar thought Superintendent Vitale was handling that.

Councilman Dewees was not sure but would confirm tomorrow.

**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 apologized for the echo; it was the only way Councilman Smith could be heard.

Council President Perri asked Councilman Smith if he had any comments.

Councilman Smith replied, not at this time.

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.

On a motion of Councilman Utts, second of Councilman O'Neill, all present were in favor of voting by consent agenda on Resolutions 184-2020 through 190-2020.

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- 184-2020** Authorizing Schaeffer, Nassar, Scheidegg Consulting Engineers to Proceed with Engineering Services for the Project known as Reconstruction of Merritt Drive and a Portion of Ridgewood Drive
- 185-2020** Award of Contract for 2020 Local Road Paving Project
- 186-2020** Authorizing Schaeffer, Nassar, Scheidegg Consulting Engineers to Proceed with Engineering Services for the Project Known as the 2020 Local Road Paving Project
- 187-2020** 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 72 Lot 7.02 (224 West Oakcrest Avenue)
- 188-2020** A Resolution Supporting the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over 2020 Year End Holiday Crackdown
- 189-2020** Inserting an Item of Revenue in the 2020 Municipal Budget
- 190-2020** A Resolution Approving Participation with the State of New Jersey Federal Grant Program Administered by the Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Law and Public Safety

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilman O'Neill, to adopt the consent agenda for Resolutions 184-2020 through 190-2020.

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

**PAYMENT OF BILLS** \$ 360,038.78

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilwoman Madden seconded, for payment of bills.

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

Council President Perri announced the Reorganization Meeting for January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

**RESOLUTIONS AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council President Perri announced that Council had two resolutions on this evening's agenda to authorize closed session discussion. After each closed session discussion, council would return to public session and a comment will be made for the record. Any vote on any matters will be made in public.

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilman O'Neill, to adopt Resolution 191-2020.

- 191-2020** A Resolution Providing for an Executive Session Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open



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Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 b(7) Regarding Matters  
Falling within the Attorney-Client Privilege

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

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 when no longer confidential the minutes of the meeting would be released. These meetings fall under the executive session in that they involve contractual and attorney client privilege. Until deemed no longer confidential the minutes will not be released.

*At 7:34pm Council President Perri announced that Council was going to enter into Executive Session.*

Clerk Canesi asked Engineer Nassar and OEM Coordinator Joo to leave the room and advised them that they could return after the executive session.

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 7:57pm Council President Perri resumed the public session and deferred to Solicitor Stein.*

Solicitor Stein announced that minutes were taken and would be available sometime probably not in distant future.

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilman O’Neill, to adopt Resolution 192-2020.

**192-2020** A Resolution Authorizing the Adoption and Implementation of a Policy Addressing the Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors.

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

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilman O’Neill, to adopt Resolution 193-2020.

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**193-2020** 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. 10:4-12b(4), Regarding Contract Negotiations between the City of Northfield and the Northfield Professional Firefighter’s Association, Local No. 2364

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

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 once the negotiations were over the City would be in a position to review the minutes of that executive session and adopt them.

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 and Council would return to a make a statement.

*At 8:01pm Council President Perri announced that Council was going to enter into Executive Session.*

*At 8:17pm Council President Perri resumed the public session and deferred to Solicitor Stein.*

Solicitor Stein announced the minutes of the closed session should be able to be made available at such time as the governing body and the Fire Department finish negotiations at that time the committee would accept them and introduce them; that should not be that far into the distant future, probably in the next 30-60 days.

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilman O’Neill, to adopt Resolution 194-2020.

**194-2020** A Resolution Approving a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Northfield and the Northfield Professional Firefighter’s Association, Local No. 2364

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

Council President Perri wished everyone a Happy Holiday, good health and peace.

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At 8:20pm, on motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Utts, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk