

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 4, 2014**

At 6:01pm, 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 Acting Mayor O'Neill. Following the flag salute a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chau, Dewees, Perri, Piergiovanni, Travagline

Acting Mayor O'Neill, Solicitor Kris Facenda, and Municipal Engineer Dan Kwapinski were also in attendance.

WORK SESSION TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- Interviews for appointment to fill Council 1st Ward vacancy

Council President Travagline announced that Council will conduct interviews and they will be done alphabetically.

Councilman Perri requested to make a statement.

Council President Travagline acknowledged him and told him to proceed.

Councilman Perri stated that resumes were sent to Council and that Council has the information needed to make a decision. He challenged the necessity and legality of conducting interviews. He stated that there was never a public vote to conduct interviews.

Council President Travagline suggested that Council can vote now without interviews.

Councilman Perri stated that interviews were not done last year to fill the Council vacancy. He requested a special meeting and was denied. Councilman Perri added that he thought the procedure to fill the vacancy should be the same as last year.

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Councilman O'Neill stated that he thought Councilman Perri had requested more information on the candidates last time and the interviews were responsive to that request.

Councilman Piergiovanni stated he wasn't here last year but interviews would be a good opportunity for the candidates.

Councilman Dewees stated he will vote without interviews.

Councilman Chau asked if the candidates would be willing to come forward and make comments.

Councilman Perri stated that the consensus of the candidates was to be voted upon based on their resumes.

Council President Travagline moved to the next topic for discussion.

- 2014 Paving Project

Councilman Dewees discussed reprioritizing some of the streets.

Council President Travagline interjected to ask if anyone was opposed to the Family Association of Northfield Youth Golf League. None were opposed.

Councilman Dewees continued reading a revised priority list including East Revere, East Oakcrest, East Rosedale, Yorkshire, Amherst and if possible Steelman.

Councilman Perri stated that he thought Surrey Avenue was worse than Steelman.

Discussion ensued between Councilmen Perri, Dewees and Municipal Engineer Kwapinski regarding the current condition and priority of proposed streets.

Councilman Dewees suggested patching Surrey and keeping the list as stated.

Councilman Dewees and Engineer Kwapinski discussed the merits of overlaying paving and reusing existing materials as a means to stretch funds.

Council President Travagline asked for a timeline.

Engineer Kwapinski stated he will provide a revised proposal for Council next week.

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Council President Travagline stated he will put the paving topic on the work session for the next Council meeting for review.

Councilman Piergiovanni asked about the stormwater section of the paving list.

Engineer Kwapinski answered that those streets need drainage improvements in addition to standard paving work.

Engineer Kwapinski, Councilman Perri, Councilman Dewees and Councilman Piergiovanni discussed where stormwater improvements are necessary and why.

Councilman Chau noted that a resident from Second Street expressed concern about stormwater drainage.

Council President Travagline stated that is being addressed.

- Final Energy Aggregation Agreement – Commercial Utility Consultants, Inc.

Council President Travagline opened a new topic for discussion and referred to the CUC agreement. He deferred to Solicitor Facenda for comment, noting his reservations.

Solicitor Facenda stated he has been working with Commercial Utility Consultants. For the most part the agreement has been finalized and the indemnification language the City desired has been added. He announced that he recently received a letter from the NJ Division of Rate Counsel and it raised some significant concerns with regard to the initial RFP that was drafted by Commercial Utility Consultants and presented to the State. He noted that the City did not receive a copy of the original RFP, but he has asked Commercial Utility Consultants for it. He stated that the letter received may be a standard letter distributed by the State for every RFP but he wants Council to be fully informed before proceeding. He cited a few of his concerns including rates, cap on energy agent fees, and opt out procedures. Solicitor Facenda stated he has emailed CUC and is awaiting an answer. He read the list of questions proposed to CUC and suggested that Council form a committee to get the questions answered.

Council President Travagline asked for volunteers for the committee being recommended by the solicitor. Councilman Perri and Acting Mayor O'Neill both volunteered to be on the committee.

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Council President Travagline suggested that one of the new members also join the committee. He suggested that the committee be called the Energy Committee.

Solicitor Facenda recommended pulling Resolution 46-2014 from the agenda.

Acting Mayor O'Neill announced the retirement of Chief Robert James effective July 1, 2014 and read the following information regarding Chief James' tenure in Northfield:

Robert L. James was hired by Northfield in May 1989. He previously served in the patrol division with the Buena Borough Police Department for 3 ½ years. In June of 1993 he was assigned as a detective to the detective bureau. In 1998 he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and during this period held assignments in patrol division and the detective bureau. In April 2002 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and was assigned primary responsibility for the patrol division. A year later he was assigned the rank of Acting Captain, overseeing all aspects of the department, answering to the Chief of Police. In November 2006 he was promoted to Northfield Chief of Police. In July 2011, pursuant to a shared services agreement with the City of Linwood, he became Chief of Police for the Linwood Police Department too.

Training: 1986 - Atlantic City Police Academy- 42 Sessions
 2006 - Farleigh Dickinson University - Certified Public Manager
 2009 - FBI National Academy - 238th Session
 2012 - FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Training

Personal: Sharon, wife of 24 years
 Two Children, Robert, 20 and Courtney 18

Upon completion of the prepared statement Acting Mayor O'Neill added that Chief James is professional, dedicated, and easy to work with and has a great sense of humor. He thanked him for his service.

Councilman Perri thanked Chief James for always being accommodating in his twelve years as Mayor. He noted that Chief James was always very accessible and easy to work with.

- Scheduling Budget Meetings

Council President Travagline suggested that Thursdays are best day for budget meetings because CFO Stollenwerk is here. He asked if everyone is available at 5pm

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Thursday, February 13th and the 20th. He stated he will schedule one more, probably on the February 27th.

Councilman Perri asked if Resolution 35-2014 Final Work Change Order No. 1 – Drainage Improvements on Roosevelt Avenue closes out the project.

Councilman Dewees stated he will contact Doran Engineering, as it was their project.

Councilman Perri stated he was not able to make the meeting to discuss the fire truck but shared that Hamilton Township put out a bid for a demo. He asked if that was an option for Northfield.

Council President Travagline explained that during the two hour long meeting the leadership in the Fire Department, with a combined 100 plus years of experience, have convinced him and former Councilman Polistina that they need this truck. He added that he trusts their expertise and judgment and noted that the chosen truck is not a Cadillac but is the minimum that the Fire Department needs to serve the community.

Councilman Chau explained that a demo truck was typically built to specification for another location that did not go through with the purchase. This type of truck would have to be retrofitted and any savings on the demo would be lost in the retrofit cost. He noted that the truck the City is replacing is over 30 years old, purchased in 1983. The truck looks new because they are well maintained but the internal physical components are reaching their life expectancy and will become unreliable.

Council President Travagline reiterated that the truck is a necessity.

Councilman Perri asked about the Conflict Prosecutor.

Solicitor Facenda explained that the individual has claims against Northfield and was conflicted out. He has claims against other towns as well which is why it was difficult to find a conflict prosecutor. This is for this one case only.

Council President Travagline asked if there were any other questions regarding the agenda for the regular meeting and made assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION

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

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Robert Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue, stated that when Council President Brown was replaced the process was shorter. He also stated that he feels that the Fire Department and the Library are too politicized.

Paul Utts, 144 East Rosedale Avenue, stated that if questions for candidates were not presented ahead of time there was a consensus among the candidates that they would not entertain them. He stated that he has never seen the questions. He said that he could have gotten a phone call but didn't. He further suggested that that a system be developed to handle how to vet the candidates because this will happen again.

Patty Silvestri, 3110 Dolphin Avenue, referred to Resolution 41-2014 and asked if City hall was the command center and how she could get her name on a volunteer list.

Municipal Clerk Canesi stated that a second resolution that will identify volunteers is pending.

Jerry McGee, 1620 Zion Road, suggested that a policy be put in place to evaluate candidates, as Councilman Perri suggested.

Council President Travagline was willing to work without a policy.

Jerry McGee, 1620 Zion Road, reiterated the need for a policy. He also asked if cost overruns could result in all of the streets not being finished.

Council President Travagline answered this could happen.

Jerry McGee, 1620 Zion Road, asked about the Hold Harmless Agreement that Solicitor Facenda had referred to and also asked if legal expenses could be borne by Commercial Utilities Consultants, Inc.

Solicitor Facenda clarified that the City would be indemnified by Commercial Utilities Consultants, Inc. in the event of a law suit.

Gail Long Pohosky, 114 East Revere Avenue, shared that she attended this evening because she thought she was going to hear from the candidates. She thanked Councilman Chau for the Fire Department responding to her recent house fire.

Debbi Doherty, 405 Chestnut Avenue, stated that she feels that the candidates should have been invited to come to the meeting and was offended by the questions.

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Council President Travagline said that he was in communication with Councilman Perri and there was a miscommunication.

Councilman O'Neill stated that he just got the resumes yesterday and that the committee has known about this process for almost 45 days.

Debbi Doherty, 405 Chestnut Avenue, stated that she does not feel that Council should ask questions but rather the candidates should be invited to just speak.

Councilman Dewees stated there was no malice. He further stated that it was an honest attempt to get to know the candidates and start a dialogue.

Council President Travagline noted that the Democratic Council representative knew about this and if a dialogue had been opened this could have been resolved.

Councilman Dewees stated that these issues should have been raised before tonight and since they were not the public now has no opportunity to get to know the candidates.

Council President Travagline suggested that the candidates each speak tonight for three minutes. He asked if Council could agree to that.

Councilman Perri reiterated his desire for a special meeting that was denied.

Council President Travagline asked why there should be a special meeting when there is a meeting tonight.

Acting Mayor O'Neill stated that special meetings cost taxpayers money.

Council President Travagline confirmed that each candidate will be given three minutes to speak.

Lynn Perri, 7 Haddon Avenue, stated no offense to the residents, but the names of the candidates have been in the newspaper. She said that tonight is what she was trying to avoid. She stated that she thought everyone could have done it differently. She said that she is quite well known in town and has nothing more to say.

Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court, stated that he does not want the Commercial Utility Consultant ordinance. He feels that it should have been better communicated to the residents.

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

Councilman Chau suggested that criteria be outlined for candidates.

Council President Travagline stated that Municipal Clerk Canesi will time each candidate for three minutes and they can discuss anything they like.

Dave Devine, 8 East Yorkshire Avenue, Ward 1, stated he has been a resident for Northfield for 22 years and a NASA volunteer. He stated he wants to do his part for the town and asked Council if they had any questions. He likes this town and there are good people here.

Pau Utts, 144 East Rosedale Avenue, stated that he has been a resident of Northfield since 1985 and has been the manager at Rid Pest Control since 1984. He acquired 100% interest in the company in 1996. He added that in his off hours he was involved in sports when his kids were young. He is involved with his Church and participates in community events and theater. He said that his children are out of the house now and he is looking for other ways to spend his time. He reminded Council that he lost by 8 votes to Tim Carew in 2009. After being asked by Mayor Mazzeo to run again in 2013, he thought he had a good shot until Erland Chau entered the race. He stated that he enjoys the process and is looking forward to the opportunity to serve the City.

Debbi Doherty, 405 Chestnut Street, stated she is a Mayoral Candidate and has lived in Northfield for 29 years. She said that she has been a crossing guard for 25 years and feels she would do a good job as the Mayor.

Jerry McGee stated that he is also a mayoral candidate and has lived in Northfield for 20 years. He announced that he recently ran for Council and came in second place. He further stated that he likes to be a manager and likes to be in control. He is a proponent of policies and procedures. He added that he likes problems to be recognized, evolved and solved. He thinks there are a lot of problems that need to be solved but doesn't think the City should get stuck on one thing at a time. He is looking forward to the challenge.

Guy Schlachter, 14 Mazza Drive, identified himself as a Mayoral candidate and looks forward to serving the City. He stated that he has lived in Northfield since 1988. He noted that he served on Council for one year, served on the Planning/Zoning Board, was a volunteer on the rescue squad, and served as coach and sponsor on NASA. He also stated he is an experienced manager who is familiar with budgeting and how to take care of people. He spent 30 years in the army and certainly learned that the

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welfare of your people is most important and there is no place for partisanship in local politics.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC
Municipal Clerk