

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 19, 2015**

At 5:01pm, this meeting was called to order by Shannon Campbell, Deputy Clerk. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on February 7, 2015, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL Present: Dewees, Lischin, Murray, O'Neill, Perri, Travagline

Absent: Piergiovanni

Also in attendance were Mayor Chau, CFO Dawn Stollenwerk and Municipal Clerk Mary Canesi.

Council President Travagline welcomed everyone to the meeting and deferred to CFO Stollenwerk.

CFO Dawn Stollenwerk explained the changes in the revised budget. Changes included grant funds from FEMA and CDBG. She removed the police car leases and put them in capital and adjusted the fire fighter to part-time. We are at \$.0498 with this budget, under the levy cap, also made adjustments to health insurance and workers compensation.

Council President Travagline any council if they had any questions on the budget.

Councilman Perri and CFO Stollenwerk discussed the community development grant; the money from that grant will fund improvements at Birch Grove Park.

Councilman Perri asked if the Police Chief position was funded in this budget. Discussion ensued between Councilman Perri and CFO regarding new officers, police chief, and trash. CFO stated that one employee in public work was lost to attrition and the second position was left in the budget, two public work positions would fund one police officer.

Discussion between Councilman Perri and Mayor Chau regarding a letter that Councilman Perri heard was sent to Mayor Chau about shared services. Mayor Chau never received a letter, he never spoke to any other Council person, and he has only spoken to Mayor DePamphilis.

Council President Travagline stated that the Mayor and Council would have shared that information and discussed with CFO, Council will do what's in the best interest of the City.

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Councilman Perri asked if there was ongoing dialogue with Linwood to share the Police Chief, we need to make adjustments to lower the budget.

Mayor Chau stated during his last communication with Mayor DePamphilis he let him know that there are pending negotiations with the PBA and at this time it is the intention of Mayor Chau to appoint our own Acting Chief.

Council President Travagline reiterated that Council has met with the PBA and is not in negotiations with them concerning a Chief of Police, it is a non-union position.

Discussion ensued between Council and CFO Stollenwerk regarding the cost of funding our own Chief. The cost of funding our own Chief will depend on what is negotiated, the pension will come next year, the cost is around \$200K with pension and benefits at the current rate (salary and benefits), and the budget as is includes 2 officers and a Chief.

At 5:12 Councilman Piergiovanni entered the meeting.

Councilman O'Neill inquired about the Safe and Secure grant, is there a savings from using special officers instead of full-time, can we save on benefits?

CFO Stollenwerk explained that the amount of the grant is not guaranteed. The City could get a maximum of \$60,000.00 a year. The City would need to be careful if hiring Special Officers because they are limited to a certain number of hours per week.

5:17:34 Councilman O'Neill left the room.

Discussion ensued regarding salary and wages for the Police Department.

Councilman Perri inquired about the new hire at Birch Grove is included, asked to remove \$50K from capital and suggested postponing the capital projects.

CFO Stollenwerk noted that we need the down payment for the radios; she reminded Council that 5% deposit is needed for capital improvements.

Councilman Travagline asked the estimated cost for paving, CFO will get the information. Councilman Travagline believes the revenue from the sewer increase may help.

Council discussed road improvements.

CFO Stollenwerk reminded Council that we are under a deadline; public safety personnel will not be able to communicate with everyone else, Council knew the

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radio project was coming, a decision needs to be made as soon as possible, the operating budget needs to be introduced, and it is estimated that we need \$250K for upgrade

Municipal Clerk Canesi stated the radio upgrade has nothing to do with County dispatch; new radios will be compatible with the County.

Discussion ensued between Council regarding the radio upgrade. Councilman Perri would like a representative from the County to attend a meeting and explain why we need to upgrade the radios. The radios have to be upgraded; this has nothing to do with Egg Harbor Township's dispatch. Councilman Perri suggested bringing dispatch back to Northfield.

5:29 Councilman O'Neill re-entered the room.

Detective of Police Michael Buccafurni stated that by the end of 2015 the radios we have will not work.

Municipal Clerk Canesi handed out a document from Emergency Management Coordinator Tim Joo explaining the need for the upgrade.

Councilman Perri still would like someone from the County to come to the next meeting and ask if there is possibly any funding available to help with the upgrade.

Councilman O'Neill will get a speaker to come next week and that can explain the upgrade.

Council President Travagline and CFO Stollenwerk discussed road improvements and drainage projects.

Councilman O'Neill asked if there has there been discussion to hire in the Zoning office.

Council President Travagline responded there is nothing concrete.

Assistant Chief Crooks stated the Federal government mandated the change so all radios can work together, new programming is required, and our radios have reached the end of their service life.

CFO Stollenwerk explained the surplus, rating agencies like a healthy surplus, better to sell bonds, she noted using money from the liquor license sale is no longer available, the budget is tighter, and we are not generating excess revenue. She explained we are using 61% of our surplus with this projected budget, the City is

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short Court revenue and local revenue, she also explained deferred charges for legal bills.

CFO Stollenwerk discussed the levy cap; she went over administration overhead and expense requests. She suggested changing the amount for the grant writer and using the money elsewhere in the budget.

Council President Travagline asked to leave funding there for now. He also stated during these tough economic times, the Police need help, we cut too far in the past, he suggested adding at least 1 officer for support, do away with the extra birch grove park employee, suggested getting the Army Reserve volunteers for help at the park, and suggested removing \$10,000.00 from the capital budget.

Councilman O'Neill will forward suggestions from his department heads with budget savings.

Councilman Perri asked if there are problems collecting debts.

Court Administrator Donna Clark explained that warrants are issued, licenses are suspended, the Court staff does their best to get money, she suggested the City can use a debt collecting agency if Council approves it, other agencies can pursue other options to locate bad debts, other municipalities use collection agencies. She said there are approximately \$500,000.00-\$600,000.00 in past-due fines owed to the City.

CFO Stollenwerk said they can go out to RFP, the collector gets 22% above the debt, the City will need approval from AOC, she will work with Mrs. Clark and get the information needed.

CFO Stollenwerk noted the Library money this year will be \$55,000.00, next year will be \$25,000.00.

Discussion ensued regarding the addition of the new development and whether it is anticipated that we could get an additional liquor license. The City would need a population of 9,000 residents, it is anticipated that we will go over 9,000 with the development.

Council discussed selling City owned properties for cell towers.

Council discussed engineering costs.

Council discussed waste water fees, fuel costs and dispatch. Our contract with Egg Harbor Township ends in 2016, Council has been told there is no room for negotiating, they are researching other options.

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6:11pm Councilman O'Neill left the room

6:12pm Councilman O'Neill re-entered the room

Councilman O'Neill said he will reach out to Somers Point regarding prices for shared dispatch. Discussion ensued regarding the CAD and 911 terminals.

Councilman Dewees suggested reducing the funding to the youth sports organizations since we are eliminating employees and out sourcing trash.

Councilman O'Neill said he will reach out to FAN to see if they could do without the money.

CFO Stollenwerk stated the City did not do an audit on the organizations and in lieu of that they were told that the City needed to see their cash on hand before they would receive funding in 2015.

Council discussed the organizations and items the City pays for at no expense to them including insurance and utilities.

Councilman Perri suggested leaving the Senior funding as is, Council discussed the Cultural Committee funding and overtime that is involved in their events. Mayor Chau will reach out to other towns to see what their parade schedules are. It was suggested that Veterans Park could host the Memorial Day parade.

Council President Travagline suggested removing \$5,000.00 from engineering, \$1,000.00 from each sport, not adding a position at Birch Grove, and only adding one police officer.

Councilman Dewees asked for a print out of what the City paid for maintenance of fields so he can show the organizations how much taxpayer money is spent on the athletic fields.

CFO Stollenwerk stated we are at .046 cents with the changes recommended by Council President Travagline,

The old fire truck has not been sold yet, Council will need a resolution to sell surplus property in order to sell fire truck.

6:36pm Mayor Chau left the room.

6:36pm Mayor Chau re-entered the room.

Discussion ensued regarding the County tax rate and the solid waste contract.

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Council President Travagline opened the public session.

Lisa Brown, 9 Haviv Drive, stated it's a mistake to start taking away parades without reaching out to the community and chipping away at the funding. Funding is needed to help the community grow.

Jerry McGee 1620 Zion Road stated the Shared Chief's position does not exist, Linwood wants to pursue this practice, the City is moving backward if we don't pursue it. Bringing both departments together would save money; shared service has worked, asked why it isn't being addressed.

Council President Travagline said it has been discussed in Executive Session.

Mr. McGee said we had 4 years of shared service; there was not one written complaint where it didn't work well. This is a management decision, it must have worked if no one made a written complaint, someone should step up and be a leader to bring up morale. He believes it is the endorsement of the PBA is making the decision.

Councilman O'Neill asked former Mayor McGee if he had any projection of the actual savings or revenue with having a shared Chief.

Mr. McGee stated revenue went up for overtime, he wanted to know where money came from, the budget was exceeded and he was not informed until it was too late. He wants the City to pursue shared services it makes sense financially.

Council President Travagline reassured Mr. McGee that the numbers have been reviewed several times, the Shared Chief didn't work, Council will need to see what will work, shared services may work when revenue isn't involved.

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

CFO Stollenwerk reminded everyone that budget needs to be ready by the March 10th meeting.

Council President Travagline read the meeting notices.

At 6:56pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Campbell
Deputy Clerk