

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 17, 2009**

This meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised according to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

The flag salute was led by Mayor Vincent Mazzeo. Following the flag salute, there was a moment of silence. On November 5<sup>th</sup> in Ft Hood, Texas 12 soldiers and 1 civilian were gunned down; we don't understand these actions but our thoughts and prayers go out to their families.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mr. Carew, Mr. O'Grady, Mr. Smith, Mr. Turon, Mr. Vain and Mrs. Kern  
Absent: Mr. Martinez

Attorney Fran Ballak was in attendance in place of City Solicitor Keith Bonchi; City Engineer Matt Doran was also in attendance.

**AGENDA REVIEW**

President Kern reviewed the agenda.

Councilman Vain asked for an explanation of Resolution 193-2009. City Clerk Canesi explained the statutory process by which the City is authorized to sell abandoned vehicles at public auction; this is the 1<sup>st</sup> auction of 2009. In 2008 there were three auctions held, with no bidders on any occasion. The vehicles were then titled over to the towing companies to allow them to recoup storage fees. Historically, this is how Northfield has handled such sales. Councilman Carew asked for further explanation of how the City gets the cars. Chief James explained. Carew mentioned another local town that made money off of the sale of the cars, and made a motion to table Resolution 193-2009 while an investigation is conducted to determine if there is a way for the City to make money in the auctioning of abandoned vehicles. Vain seconded Carew's motion to table. All were in favor of tabling Resolution 193-2009.

Councilman Turon called attention to Resolution 197-2009, noting that the City is required to provide a very small matching grant to get \$140,000 in firefighting equipment.

President Kern called attention to Resolution 195-2009, to authorize shared municipal court. She said the committee has been working with Linwood for a little more than a year, and they passed their resolution last week. She asked if anyone had

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questions. Mayor Mazzeo referred to Linwood Councilman Marino's presentation of the numbers; he said the next budget cycle will be tough and it's worthwhile to try to save money where ever we can. He added that the Court Administrator's salary and benefits are now being split 50/50 as opposed to the prior 60/40 split that was mentioned. Mazzeo recognized Donna Clark and said she does a great job. Councilman Carew encouraged an open dialogue between Clark and City Council as we proceed. Kern encouraged Clark to come to Council with any problems or concerns.

President Kern announced the postponement of the presentation by Fernando Armstrong, Regional Director for the 2010 Census, and said Councilman Vain's Safety presentation would be delivered during his committee report.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Turon attended the Library Halloween parade and event, saying it was very well attended and a nice afternoon. The annual tree lighting will be Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, here at City Hall. Turon referred to a petition submitted to Council by residents of Atrium Court about the fence at public works. He made note that they asserted there is a safety hazard to pedestrians and vehicular traffic, and asked that Chief James and the City Engineer look at the issue. Councilman Carew said the fence replacement is already in the works; we are waiting for pricing but we may be able to award in December. Mayor Mazzeo asked where the fence money was coming from; CFO Dolcy replied that it is from a prior year's capital.

Councilman Vain commended all who ran in the recent election. He attended a Neighborhood Watch meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> at City Hall; the group has meetings on a monthly basis and imparts valuable information. For meeting dates and times, contact the City Clerk, Vain, or visit the City website. Vain commended 6<sup>th</sup> grade NCS teacher Mary Ann Devine for her fine work on the Veteran's Day assembly at the school. The displays made by students are here at City Hall, and at various other businesses and public places throughout the City.

**PRESENTATION 2009 SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

As Insurance and Safety Chair, Councilman Vain presented information on the City's 2009 Safety Improvement Program. He said the City of Northfield participates in the Safety Incentive Program, as is required of all JIF member municipalities. The Safety Incentive Program's primary goal is to prevent accidents by eliminating conditions and behaviors that can contribute to unforeseen losses to the city. This is accomplished through a combination of management commitment and

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accountability, safety communication, hazard identification and correction, safety training, and accident reporting and investigation.

Vain said that focusing on these elements has allowed us to improve working conditions, reduce the frequency of accidents, and has fostered a safety culture amongst Northfield's municipal employees. In addition, the program promotes teamwork and challenges members to work towards safety goals set for us by the JIF, the achievement of which makes us eligible for up to \$2,500 per year in Safety Award money.

Having an effective safety program involves every level of management and employee. Northfield's SIP is coordinated by a Safety Committee, which is comprised of the heads of each City department, Safety Coordinator Cindy Ruffo, JIF Fund Commissioner Jim Dickinson, City Claims Coordinator Mary Canesi, and City Insurance Consultant Rich Gerber. The Safety committee meets on a quarterly basis to discuss known safety issues, ways to improve safety in the city, ongoing safety training, and to review and discuss the root cause of any recent accidents that have occurred. By achieving safety goals, not only are we making Northfield a safer place to work and reducing City liability, we are also eligible for monetary awards. In 2007 and 2008 we achieved 'gold' status and earned the maximum amount possible. So far this year, this 'safety money' was used to purchase safety goggles and vests for the Fire Department, and safety vests and gloves for Public Works. These types of personal protective equipment are necessary items, and without this incentive money the City would have had to buy these items out of City funds.

He said we have all of the components of an effective safety program in place, but there is always something more that can be done, such as additional personal protective equipment, taking full advantage light duty programs for employees injured on the job, comprehensive accident reviews, tool box topics (which are quick, pre-shift safety briefings), regular safety inspections in the form of job site observations, and safety bulletins. Vain continued, saying that 95% of all accidents are preventable, thus any dangerous act will cause an accident if repeated often enough and any dangerous condition will cause an accident if it remains uncorrected long enough.

Each year, in addition to working towards the JIF's published safety goals, each safety committee is required to choose 2 safety objectives specific to their town. In the past we have done such things as addressed safety issues in the court room, developed and implemented a Drug and Alcohol policy for the City, created and implemented the use of a Snow Plow Usage policy and procedures manual, and installed cameras in and outside of City hall, just to name a few. This year's

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objectives are to demo the old snack bar at Birch Grove Park and install hand dryers in the Police Department rest rooms.

Each year we also have the opportunity to host regional safety training classes. This year we hosted 8 different classes. Being host municipality makes it easier and more convenient for greater numbers of City employees to attend and participate. Since we're not able to host every class, we do send our employees to classes hosted by other member towns as well.

Our success can be easily measured and demonstrated by our loss history; in 3 of the last 4 years, Northfield's loss ratio has been lower than the JIF average. We firmly believe that creating and maintaining a safety-oriented culture creates a win-win situation for all involved. We have employees who are less likely to be injured on the job, with reduced expense and liability for the taxpayers to bear.

Vain concluded his presentation by thanking Safety Coordinator Cindy Ruffo for doing a great job.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONTINUED**

Councilman Carew offered congratulations to all who ran in the recent election. He requested that he be able to deliver his report on drainage immediately before the public session, as it will be lengthy. He mentioned the \$300,000 grant the City received to construct the new snack bar at Birch Grove Park, and said he has a copy of the proposed plans. He'll leave them in the City Clerk's Office for public inspection. The building will have a footprint of 40' x 40'; he explained the location and that it will include a covered pavilion. The facility will be heated and air conditioned making it suitable for year round use, and will be available for use by all residents. The project should be ready to go out to bid in December, with the anticipation of breaking ground in early spring with a 90 day construction period. Mayor Mazzeo asked about bathrooms and sewerage for the new building. Matt Doran replied that a new pump station is needed. Mazzeo asked if it would be bid separately; Doran said it could be, but doesn't have to.

Councilman Smith also attended the Veteran's Day program at NCS; he said it was the 1st time he'd attended and that it was an outstanding presentation. He commended Mrs. Devine for putting together such a special event. Smith mentioned the sharing of the municipal courts, and said it was a pleasure working with Mayor Mazzeo, Council President Kern, and with the members of Linwood's Council. Smith feels this is a positive step that should realize real savings. He read statistics from the October EMS report and said the average response time for the last two

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weeks in October was 4 minutes 17 seconds with 93% of responses coming in under 5 minutes.

Mayor Mazzeo said he asked Chief James to visit the Medcom dispatch center as a result of questions about this part of the process, and asked him to provide a summary of his findings. Chief James said he toured the facility and reviewed the call-taking procedures; the date and time stamps are monitored by 3 separate systems and he explained how it works. James said all calls come in under 1 minute or over 5 minutes are automatically checked. There is no ability to electronically amend the time stamps; changes when necessary are made via additional paper documentation.

Councilman Smith said he asked Atlanticare EMS Chief Johnny Delgado to attend this evening to discuss the ALS unit, and give more specifics.

Chief Delgado explained that the ratio of ALS to BLS calls was such that they applied to the State for a waiver to provide paramedic service. This unit has been in service since October 18<sup>th</sup> and has been very busy.

Councilman Carew said two weeks ago, his wife fell and suffered a severe concussion. In about two minutes, the ALS rig was on the scene. Carew was very happy with the way it was handled; on a personal note, he said the system works.

Councilman Smith asked Delgado about added costs to the City or to patients as a result of the ALS service. Delgado replied that patients are only charged based on the level of care received, regardless of which rig responds.

President Kern referred to the past few meetings and flooding concerns regarding an elderly resident of Madison Avenue; she called the resident and set up an appointment for Atlanticare to meet with the resident to talk with her and reassure her regarding such concerns.

Councilman O'Grady noted upcoming Municipal Office closings due to the NJ State League of Municipalities Convention and changes to the trash collection schedule due to holidays; residents are referred to the event calendar on the City website for more information. He attended the Library meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> and their Halloween party on October 30<sup>th</sup>; the party was very well done. He said their next meeting is December 10<sup>th</sup> and read a list of upcoming Library events. The Library is starting a cell phone recycling program; inoperable phones are salvaged and phones in working order are refurbished and used to benefit non-profit shelters for the victims of domestic violence. The Green Team will be setting up their first meeting shortly and the Energy Audit RFP is ready to be submitted for bid.

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**MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Mazzeo thanked all City Department heads who participated in the October 29<sup>th</sup> City Hall visit by NCS 8<sup>th</sup> graders, adding that it is a good learning opportunity for all. He attended the Veteran's Day assembly at NCS, and thanked Mrs. Devine for a job well done. Mazzeo said it is important to acknowledge those who serve in peace and war time. The motorcycle dedication has been canceled due to weather and will be rescheduled for spring. The 1/3 of the mill that we have to appropriate to the Library this year is \$368,115.00; that's down \$47,000 from last year. The total added assessment for 2009 was \$2,998,800.00. The police department has updated its policies and procedures, which was last done in 1998. The City solicitor has reviewed the document and made a few recommendation; he recommends adoption by resolution. Mazzeo asked that copies be provided to Council before the next meeting. He attended the Atlantic County Mayor's Association meeting last month and learned that Egg Harbor City had left the JIF and is going to the State fund. Mazzeo asked our Risk Management Consultant to look the matter. Northfield is under contract until 2011 but the JIF is going to reevaluate all premiums because of what happened with Egg Harbor. This is the first time an Atlantic County municipality has left the JIF since it was first started in 1988. Mazzeo mentioned the LED lights on display at the main entrance to City Hall. Assistant Fire Chief Crooks got a good deal on new lights from Ace Hardware; they are donating half of the lights we need. He concluded his report by reading the statistics from the police department report for the month of October.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Kern introduced Fran Ballak, from Mr. Bonchi's firm; Ballak is in attendance on behalf of Mr. Bonchi. On November 30<sup>th</sup> the Municipal Alliance is sponsoring a free breakfast for seniors at 9:30am at the Atlantic City Country Club; there will be a guest speaker addressing prescription drug issues. That same evening, also at the Country Club, the Alliance is sponsoring a free dinner and presentation entitled "Coach I Need Your Help", which will focus on preventing alcohol and drug use amongst youngsters. Kern said she also attended the NCS Veteran's Day program, and echoed the accolades spoken of Mrs. Devine. Kern said she was not able to attend the 8th grade tour of City Hall, but she heard positive things from the students and others involved. The children were very appreciative and Kern thanked employees for giving their time. The Cultural Committee's annual yard sale will be Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup> from 10am-2pm. All monies benefit the museum at Birch Grove Park. Kern asked for an update on the Tilton and Route 9 Northfield sign; Canesi responded that the sign company is waiting for the DOT's inspection. Mazzeo said he will make a few calls. Kern said she invited long time court

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employee Peggy Mallen to be honored by Council but Mallen respectfully declined the invitation. Kern wished her well. At the last Council meeting, a resident had inquired about the disposition of funds given to the Northfield Rescue Squad, Inc., and Kern said it is Council's duty to look into it. She said she recognizes the emotional attachment to the squad but if it was any other vendor, we would look into it the possible refund of monies. She asked the Solicitor's opinion.

Fran Ballak responded that since this is something that can involve potential future litigation, he recommends the matter be discussed in closed session.

Kern asked Council's opinion. Carew made a motion to discuss the matter in executive session; Turon seconded. Mazzeo asked for clarification about litigation. Ballak replied that the future potential for a lawsuit exists. Carew said the question is whether any of the monies that were given to the Northfield Rescue Squad, Inc., by the City, due back to the City. He said numerous residents have asked him and we need to pursue it so we can close the book. At the end of the public session, the City Clerk will gather the necessary documentation for Council to vote on the proposed Resolution authorizing an executive session.

**ENGINEER'S REPORT**

The City Engineer's report was provided to Mayor and Council and is on file in the City Clerk's office. City Engineer Matt Doran provided updates to the report as follows: there are three change orders on the agenda for approval this evening, and in December he hopes to have the final change order for Cedarbridge and Zion. Doran said he got a questionnaire from the State about the traffic light request for Mill Road and Route 9. He will report on drainage when that is discussed.

**POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief James had nothing to report.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Councilman Turon, second by Councilman O'Grady to dispense with the reading of the minutes of October 20, 2009. They have been posted, distributed to Council and are on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office. All present in favor, motion carries for approval of minutes.

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**RESOLUTIONS/CONSENT AGENDA**

On a motion of Councilman Vain second of Councilman Carew all present in favor of a Consent Agenda for Resolutions 184-2009, 185-2009, and 187-2009 through 197-2009, excluding Resolution 193-2009, as it has been tabled.

- 184-2009** To Authorize Refund of Overpayment of 2009 Taxes - Various
- 185-2009** To Authorize Refund of Overpayment of 2010 Taxes Block 139 Lot 2
- 187-2009** Authorizing the Refund of a Dumpster Permit Fee
- 188-2009** Final Change Order No. 1 ADA Parking at Bike Path
- 189-2009** Final Change Order No. 1 Sidewalk on Cedarbridge Road
- 190-2009** Final Change Order No. 1 Stormwater Pump Station at Philmar Circle
- 191-2009** To Hire a Laborer in the Public Works Department
- 192-2009** Authorizing Doran to Proceed – Various
- 194-2009** Authorizing the Payment of Closing Costs for the Purchase of 1913 Oak Avenue
- 195-2009** Authorizing an Agreement for Shared Municipal Court for Northfield and Linwood
- 196-2009** Authorizing a Bingo License for the Church of St Bernadette
- 197-2009** Authorizing Fire Department to Apply for a Federal Matching Grant for Equipment

Roll call: Mr. Carew – yes; Mr. Martinez – absent; Mr. O’Grady – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Turon – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mrs. Kern – yes. Motion carries.

**ORDINANCES**

On a motion of Councilman Smith, second of Councilman Turon, all in favor of reading Ordinance 16-2009 by title only.



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**16-2009** Amending Ordinance 15-2008, An Ordinance Providing For The Purchase of Certain Property  
*Final Adoption/Open to the Public/No Public Comments Received  
Published in the Press 11/21/2009*

Roll call: Mr. Carew – yes; Mr. Martinez – absent; Mr. O’Grady – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Turon – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mrs. Kern – yes. Motion carries for final adoption of Ordinance 16-2009.

**17-2009** An Ordinance Providing For The Repair, Closing Or Demolition Of Buildings Unfit For Human Habitation Or Occupancy Or Use  
*Introduction/No Public Input/Published in the Press 11/21/2009*

On a motion of Councilman O’Grady, second of Councilman Carew, all in favor of reading Ordinance 17-2009 by title only.

Roll call: Mr. Carew – yes; Mr. Martinez – absent; Mr. O’Grady – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Turon – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mrs. Kern – yes. Motion carries for introduction of Ordinance 17-2009.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Councilman Turon motioned, Councilman Smith seconded, for payment of bills in the amount of \$ 3,869,408.56; Turon, Vain, and Kern announced their abstention from certain line items on the bill list. Copies are on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

Roll call: Mr. Carew – yes; Mr. Martinez – absent; Mr. O’Grady – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Turon – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mrs. Kern – yes. Motion carries for payment of bills.

**DRAINAGE REPORT**

President Kern announced that the members of the Drainage Committee were Councilmen Carew and Vain, Mayor Mazzeo, Public Works Manager Jim Clark, and City Engineer Matt Doran.

Carew said the committee has met a few times to discuss recommendations. He described the recommended plan for Hollywood and Pasadena, at a cost of \$575,000. For Marita Ann and Leeds, the recommended plan will cost \$400,000. On Madison Avenue, the recommended plan requires that we meet with the County Bridge

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Commission and will involve a requesting a shared service project with the County. He explained the permit process, which could take up to a year. We are still going to do the gutter project now, as well as any possible engineering work for the longer term solutions. For Second and Davis, we have letter from the County that says we can tie into the County drainage system. The other option for this area is to acquire a piece of property and put in a retention basin at the low point in the system. We should know in the next six months which way we'll proceed. On Revere, and on Davis and the bike path, the solution would be to add pipe down the bike path to increase capacity; this would be at a cost of approximately \$100,000.00. On West Revere, the drainage report recommended the addition of a pipe, at a cost of another \$160,000.00; we don't see a way to include that in this year's plan. However, increasing the volume on the bike path will benefit this area as well.

Carew said these projects come to a total of \$1.3 million dollars based on recommended plans for drainage and completing the reconstruction of Mt Vernon Avenue. He also reviewed the proposed capital expenditures for police, fire and public works.

Mayor Mazzeo said no proposals have been made yet for the police department, but there is a need for at least one new vehicle. There have been no new police cars in at least 3 years. There has also been discussion of vehicle-stop cameras, but nothing has been decided yet for capital. This is kind of a wish list, and we need to focus on drainage. Mazzeo also made note of the 5% down payment requirement for capital.

President Kern suggested a capital meeting before the usual January capital meeting. Carew and Vain said they felt it was a good idea. It was suggested to have a capital meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and the newly elected Councilman would be included, as has always been the practice in the past with such meetings.

Kern asked the City Engineer if the City could apply for additional funds through the Safe Routes to School grant; Doran said we could. She suggested we do so and consider installing sidewalks on Zion Road. There are currently no sidewalks and it is a route kids use to go to school. Carew noted that the other side of Cedarbridge is the same; no sidewalks.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

Council President Kern opened this meeting to the public and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

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Peri Pantazes, 1 Madison Avenue, thanked council for finally addressing drainage problems.

Robert Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue, said he was at the Veteran's Day assembly at the NCS for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row; he was pleased with the program and said it is good for children to learn history this way.

Robert Braddock, 142 East Revere Avenue, expressed concerns regarding fallen leaves. He mentioned that Linwood has two leaf vacuums. Northfield has none. Could this be a shared service with any of the neighboring communities that have leaf vacuums? Kern said she will look into a shared service.

Frank Perri, 7 Haddon Avenue, asked Councilman Smith where the time it takes for a 911 call to come into Egg Harbor Township dispatch is figured in. Chief James said when dispatch gets the call it is time stamped; he does not know if the transfer time is figured in. Smith said he will look into it. Perri asked about the difference in ALS and BLS billing; BLS is in the contract, ALS was not. Smith said he does not have an exact number but will obtain it. Perri mentioned the executive session of council to discuss the Northfield Rescue Squad; the Squad poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the City, but no one questioned those monies. They adhered to the letter of the law to the fullest. He said he will follow this issue fully.

Seeing no one else from the public wishing to speak, President Kern closed the public session and announced a five minute recess.

At 8:55pm, President Kern reconvened the meeting.

**RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF COUNCIL**

The City Clerk read the Paff injunction under which the City of Northfield has been bound with regard to closed sessions of Council.

Councilman Vain motioned, Turon seconded to adopt Resolution 198-2009.

**198-2009**      A Resolution Providing For An Executive Session Not Open To The Public In Accordance With The Provisions Of The New Jersey Open Public Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 Regarding Potential Litigation Against The Northfield Rescue Squad, Inc.

The City Clerk read Resolution 198-2009 by title. She stated that no portion of this meeting can be made public until any potential litigation is over, the case is

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completely resolved, and at that point in time, part of it, depending on what it is, may become public.

President Kern requested discussion. She stated that certain questions came up regarding the disposition of funds provided by the City or its residents to the Northfield Rescue Squad Inc.; to do our due diligence as Council we have to discuss it. The way the Resolution is worded is how it has to be worded; nothing should be read into it

The Roll call: Mr. Carew – yes; Mr. Martinez – absent; Mr. O’Grady – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Turon – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mrs. Kern – yes. Motion carries for adoption of Resolution 198-2009.

At 8:58pm, Council entered closed session; they remained in Council chambers. At 9:23pm, on motions properly made and seconded, the closed session was adjourned and Ballak announced a summary for the record as follows: during the Executive Session we were talking about issues pertaining to potential litigation and potential actions that involve certain assets that may be investigated in regard to the Northfield Rescue Squad, Inc.

At 9:24pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk