

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

At 7:28pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2014, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor McGee. Following the flag salute a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chau, Devine, Dewees, O'Neill, Perri, Piergiovanni, Travagline

Mayor Jerry McGee, Solicitor Kris Facenda, Municipal Engineer Dan Kwapinski, and Chief Robert James were also in attendance.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilman Piergiovanni, seconded by Councilman Devine to dispense with the reading of the minutes of March 6, 2014 and March 11, 2014. They have been posted, distributed to Council, and are on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

Roll call: Mr. Chau – yes; Mr. Devine – yes; Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. O'Neill –yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni – yes; Mr. Travagline – yes Motion carries.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Perri reported that he reached out to Meghan from the State Health Benefits Plan and he is waiting to hear back. He noted that there is a Senior Committee meeting coming up. He added that he has several concerns about the insurance situation. He stated he has left several messages for Suzanne Fry with no response. He stated he is looking to set up a senior event for April. He additionally added that he is waiting for correspondence back from the JIF about recent increases.

Councilman O'Neill had no report this evening.

Councilman Piergiovanni reported that the Veterans' Park meeting is March 26, 2014 and they will go over developments. He shared that the weather has been an issue. He noted that the City Engineer will be marking the area with the drainage swales in mind and he hopes to get an update regarding the shed and the electrical systems. He noted that Economic Development in Northfield was brought up during the Council Work Session and he agreed that the City should address the issue.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

Councilman Dewees stated he was unable to attend the recent special and regular school meetings but noted they are looking at a 2 cent increase.

Councilman Devine reported that the Mainland Regional High School Board meeting was canceled due to snow.

Councilman Chau shared that during the caucus meeting a resident stated it took ten minutes for an ambulance to arrive. He stressed to Council that every minute is important and having the Fire Department as first responder is very important to public safety. He noted the award of contract for the new Fire truck and hoped everyone agrees with the purchase. He read the EMS report. He added there is the Gurwicz application on the next Planning Board agenda asking for a use variance for 216 luxury apartments in 18 buildings, with a community center, gym, pool, tennis courts etc. He shared the location is on Cresson Avenue behind what used to be the Mr. Big's Shopping Center. He expressed concern that a resident, earlier in the evening, insinuated that Councilman Chau used his influence on Council to get special treatment for having his road maintained in a better way than other residents. He stated this is hurtful information and although the resident is entitled to his own opinion, Councilman Chau wanted to clear the air that he has never gotten any special treatment.

Councilman O'Neill asked if apartments would be purchased or rented and are there any age restrictions.

Councilman Chau stated they would be purchased and they would be non-age restricted units.

Councilman Dewees stated that there are drainage issues on that street.

Councilman Chau stated he will make sure the Planning Board is aware of that.

Councilman Perri noted that the Master Plan was just recently updated.

Council President Travagline stated he will meet with the Public Works and Sewer Chair to get a list of concerns together for the Planning Board.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor McGee stated he has had correspondence with Assemblyman Chris Brown regarding any residents in Northfield who may need assistance due to damage suffered in Super Storm Sandy. He shared that if anyone needs help they can contact him. He stated the Police Department will be testing for Chief of Police. He also stated that he would like to reiterate with Council the separation of responsibilities between the Legislative and Executive powers amongst the Mayor and Council.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

Councilman O'Neill noted that labor counsel bills are getting high.

Mayor McGee noted there have been issues.

Councilman O'Neill asked if the majority of the bills are related to a Shared Chief.

Mayor McGee answered no.

Solicitor Facenda cautioned Mayor McGee not to reveal content of any conversations with labor counsel so as not to lose the attorney client privilege.

Councilman O'Neill asked for status update as to talks with Linwood regarding the Shared Chief of Police.

Mayor McGee stated he is trying to get together with Linwood's Mayor who has had a busy schedule.

Councilman O'Neill asked if testing is just for the Chief or for all positions.

Mayor McGee answered just for the Chief.

Councilman O'Neill asked when did this happen?

Mayor McGee answered just this week. He said when he came into this job there were a lot of loose ends and he had to look into them. He added that he had to ask Council for information but noted there is still time. He stated that he has to make sure that he understands to the best of his ability before moving on.

Councilman O'Neill asked how long does the process take and will Council vote on it.

Mayor McGee stated that he authorizes it. He added that they have two months to study. We still have all of April and May, and then that leaves June to complete the process. He also shared that it was not easy to gather all the information he needed when he took office.

Councilman O'Neill asked if there is enough time to have Council meetings.

Council President Travagline stated the Mayor is driving the bus and hopefully it will only take one meeting; but it will be up to the Mayor. He stated that he hopes Special Meetings are not necessary.

Mayor McGee stated there should be at least two to three meetings to discuss it. He noted he is confident there is ample time.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

Councilman O'Neill asked when the Chief is retiring.

Chief James stated June 30, 2014.

Council President Travagline urged Mayor McGee to consult former Mayor Mazzeo for guidance to keep the labor bills down.

Mayor McGee stated that former Mayor Mazzeo should have contacted him, but he did not. He noted that he called the former Mayor earlier that day, but did not hear back. He also stated that he got no lessons from any former Mayor when he took office. He added that he is doing the best he can with the tools that he has.

Councilman O'Neill stated that when he filled in as Mayor for a few weeks he found former Mayor Mazzeo to be very helpful and responsive. He asked if it was Mazzeo's responsibility to contact McGee or should Mayor McGee have contacted the previous Mayor.

Mayor McGee stated he took office after Councilman O'Neill and that Councilman O'Neill told him that the Mayor's job was not that hard and that the Mayor doesn't even have to come to meetings.

Councilman Perri stated that to keep continuity in the City they should hire a full or part-time Administrator. He commended Mayor McGee for doing a great job. He also noted that Northfield is the only town, amongst the towns around us, besides Linwood, that does not have an Administrator.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

The City Engineer's written report was provided to Mayor and Council and is on file in the Municipal Clerk's office. Dan Kwapinski of Schaffer, Nassar, Scheidegg Consulting Engineers, LLC, was in attendance and available for questions.

Engineer Kwapinski stated that Broad Street is moving along. He noted that there have been slight delays due to inclement weather. He shared that he did the calculations for fill for Veterans' Park and no additional fill is needed.

Councilman Perri asked if the Engineer could take a look at Second Street and give a report at the next meeting.

Council President Travagline directed Engineer Kwapinski to do so and to provide a report on drainage in the area of Second and Davis.

Engineer Kwapinski agreed to do so.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Travagline opened the meeting to the public and asked if anyone wished to speak on any subject.

Lisa Brown, 9 Haviv Drive, addressed Mayor McGee and stated she is appalled that he would stand on ceremony and not pick up the phone and call former Mayor Mazzeo. She further stated that Vince Mazzeo has never been anything but helpful. She added that she is appalled that he would waste taxpayer money on labor counsel instead of calling Mazzeo for guidance.

Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court, expressed concern about how many people can fit in a one bedroom apartment, referring to the Gurwicz project. He urged Council President Travagline to address the issue with Zoning. He further added that his development was built by Gurwicz and it is not elevated properly, and there are other issues that remain unaddressed, including drainage. He told Mayor McGee to take his time and do the right job.

Councilman Chau noted that Mr. Tanzola had a prior concern about the energy aggregation agreement and made the point that Mr. Tanzola can opt out; but that he does have to opt out.

Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court, stated that Council should not be dictating what energy bills are. He added that he also finds it unacceptable that Council would vote on the Commercial Utility Consultant's agreement before the rate was known. He stated that a notice should have gone out in the sewer bills telling them that their electricity was going to be switched.

Councilman Chau agreed.

Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court, stated that residents should have been consulted.

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

RESOLUTIONS / CONSENT AGENDA

Council President Travagline stated that 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.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman Chau seconded to vote by Consent Agenda on Resolutions 46-2014 and 60-2014 through 64-2014 and 66-2014.

- 46-2014** Final Approval of Government Energy Aggregation Agreement Between the City of Northfield and Commercial Utility Consultants, Inc. (CUC)
- 60-2014** Release of Escrow Monies from the Planning Board
- 61-2014** Authorize the Hiring of Adrienne Larson as a Seasonal Concession Stand Attendant for Birch Grove Park
- 62-2014** To Approve an Application for Use of Facilities
- 63-2014** To Authorize Award of Contract for the Purchase of a Triple Combination Pumper Fire Truck
- 64-2014** Authorizing Award of Contract for Professional Services without Public Advertising for Bids as per N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5 and in Compliance with N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5, also known as New Jersey Pay To Play Law
- 66-2014** Authorizing Cancellation of Tax Sale Certificate

Roll call: Mr. Chau – yes; Mr. Devine – yes; Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. O’Neill –yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni – yes; Mr. Travagline – yes Motion carries.

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman Chau seconded, to adopt by Consent Agenda on Resolutions 46-2014 and 60-2014 through 64-2014 and 66-2014.

Roll call: Mr. Chau – yes; Mr. Devine – yes; Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. O’Neill –yes; Mr. Perri – No; Mr. Piergiovanni – yes; Mr. Travagline – yes Motion carries.

RESOLUTION/2014 BUDGET

Councilman Perri motioned, Councilman Devine seconded, to adopt Resolution 65A-2014, to introduce the 2014 budget.

- 65A-2014** Introduction of the 2014 Budget
No public input on introduction
Budget Synopsis Published in the Press of AC 3/29/2014
Public Hearing and Final Adoption: 7:30 pm 5/13/2014
Full copies of the 2014 Budget are available in the City Clerk’s Office

Council President Travagline stated that the budget has been discussed in detail.

The Municipal Clerk read the Resolution by title, announced the publication, public hearing, and final adoption dates, and stated that the budget summary is posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the Municipal website. Full copies may be viewed at the Northfield Library, and may be obtained at no cost in the office of the Municipal

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

Clerk, Monday through Friday between 9am and 4pm, up until the date and time of the public hearing.

Councilman Perri thanked everyone for their hard work as all are doing more with less. He reiterated the need for full or part-time Administrator to have someone at the helm. He noted that Northfield and Linwood are the only communities in the 360 degrees around us that do not have a Business Administrator. He stated the climate is more complicated and what was passed on to Mayor McGee right now is appalling.

Councilman O'Neill thanked all for work on the budget. He noted that it was really a bipartisan effort. He stated he may not have always agreed with Mayor Mazzeo but he was always responsive and does not know what information is being withheld.

Councilman Chau stated this was a tough budget. He stated he does not disagree with Councilman Perri that we need an Administrator and would love to do that; but we don't have the money to create new positions. He noted that Councilmen Perri and O'Neill made points that are valid and appropriate. He added that he hopes the budget decisions will continue to sustain Northfield.

Council President Travagline thanked Finance Department, CFO Stollenwerk, Municipal Clerk's office and Mayor and Council for their work on an extremely tough budget.

Roll call: Mr. Chau – yes; Mr. Devine – yes; Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. O'Neill –yes; Mr. Perri – Yes; Mr. Piergiovanni – yes; Mr. Travagline – yes Motion carries.

ORDINANCES

Councilman Perri motioned, Councilman O'Neill seconded, to adopt Ordinance 2-2014, to be read by title only.

2-2014 Calendar Year 2014 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and To Establish a Cap Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)
Introduction, No Public Input, Published in the Press of AC 3/15/2014

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, and stated that since introduction, the full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies have been available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Council President Travagline opened the public hearing. Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak on Ordinance 2-2014, he closed the public hearing.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2014**

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PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman Devine seconded, for payment of bills in the amount of \$ 120,156.66.

Councilman O’Neill noted the high legal bills and urged Council to watch them.

Councilman Perri stated he feels that an Administrator can handle the legal issues.

Mayor McGee stated that if you don’t use legal advice it can be more costly than what you are paying the attorneys. He stated he does feel an Administrator would help; but can’t do without the legal bills and make good decisions.

Roll call: Mr. Chau – yes; Mr. Devine – yes; Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. O’Neill –yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni – yes; Mr. Travagline – yes Motion carries.

Councilman Perri read the meeting notices.

Municipal Clerk Canesi announced that the April 22, 2014 Council meeting will be canceled.

At 8:26pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC Municipal Clerk