

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD ANNUAL REORGANIZATION
JANUARY 7, 2025**

At 6:59pm this meeting was called to order by Deputy Municipal Clerk Shannon Campbell, who welcomed the audience. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on December 7, 2024, and in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau. Mayor Chau looked forward to working together to create a brighter future, a fresh start and working in good faith for the community.

Roll Call: Mrs. Bucci – yes; Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mrs. Kern – yes; Mr. Notaro - yes, Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Smith – yes.

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda and Chief VonColln were also in attendance.

CEREMONIAL OATH OF OFFICE TO COUNCILWOMAN CAROLYN BUCCI

Administered by County Clerk Joe Giraldo

County Clerk Giraldo announced it was a pleasure to work with Councilwoman Bucci, the governing body, and with Clerk Canesi; Council should be proud of her and the job she does for Northfield.

Clerk Giraldo administered the Oath of Office to Councilwoman Bucci. Councilwoman Bucci was accompanied by her husband George, who held the bible, and son Nick.

At 7:04pm, on motions properly made and seconded, Council took a brief recess.

At 7:07pm Council resumed the meeting.

ELECT COUNCIL PRESIDENT FOR 2025

Deputy Clerk Campbell opened the floor for nominations for Council President for the year 2025.

Councilman Polistina nominated Councilwoman Bucci.

Solicitor Facenda asked if there were any other nominations, seeing none, the floor was closed for nominations.

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman Polistina seconded, to elect Councilwoman Bucci as Council President for 2025.

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All members present, were in favor of electing Councilwoman Bucci as Council President for 2025.

ELECT COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE FOR 2025

Council President Bucci opened the floor for nominations for Council President Pro Tempore for the year 2025.

Councilman Notaro nominated Councilman Dewees.

Seeing no other nominations Council President Bucci closed the floor for nominations.

Councilwoman Kern motioned, Councilman Polistina seconded, to elect Councilman Dewees as Council President Pro Tempore for 2025.

All members present, were in favor of electing Councilman Dewees as Council President Pro Tempore for 2025.

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Chau read the following statement:

“Good evening members of City Council, honored guests, friends, family, and residents of Northfield.

2024 was once again a challenging year for the municipal budget. The costs of goods and services and employment costs continued to rise, as they have for the past several budget cycles, resulting in a 3.7 cent increase in the local purpose tax. As your elected officials, we worked hard to minimize the impact to you, as taxpayers, and to be creative with revenues and expenses so we could uphold the high level of service that our residents expect and deserve. I am proud to share that we continue to operate our wonderful City at a cost of just over 28 cents of every tax dollar collected.

I am equally pleased to announce that our financial position remains stable. In 2024, we retired \$760,000 in debt and have current debt of \$7.295 million dollars. We maintained our Double A Minus bond rating and as well as a strong surplus balance.

In 2024 we had 7 tax appeals, resulting in zero decrease in assessed valuation. Our tax collection rate is strong at 98.77% and our 2024 total assessed valuation is just over \$880 million dollars. The real estate market has leveled off after an astonishing rebound in 2023, but values remain robust. We have no outstanding tax court matters.

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We continue to share services as a means of operating more efficiently, and in 2024 entered into a new contract with AtlantiCare for the provision of emergency medical services, under a cooperative pricing agreement with our sister City of Linwood. We share the services of a Chief Financial Officer with the Boro of Folsom; we share emergency and non-emergency dispatch services with the Township of Egg Harbor; and until December 31st of last year, we shared municipal court operations with the County of Atlantic.

The commercial sector saw minimal growth, with only 3 new business *locations* opening in 2024. Building Department revenue grew moderately over 2023, at a 5% increase year over year. To foster economic growth, our City Officials remain active with the City of Northfield's Economic Development Commission, and thanks to collaboration with the Atlantic County Economic Alliance, we received assistance with the Economic Element of our Master Plan. Together, with members of our community and planning professionals, we are working to attract and retain commercial enterprise. This is an impressive group of people, and we are lucky to have business leaders like this in our community.

Other Key Accomplishments for the year 2024 included:

- City Council adopted 249 resolutions and 10 ordinances.
- We were awarded \$530,000 in grant funding for roadway improvements, public safety, recreation, recycling efforts, community education, and more.
- In September, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the City of Northfield Volunteer Fire Company with a wonderful parade and party, and 'housed' our new state of the art \$1.3M ladder fire truck which will improve our capabilities in fire suppression, control, and rescue efforts.
- We completed the first 9 holes of our frisbee golf course at Birch Grove Park and converted one of our baseball fields to a 50/70 field to provide more opportunities for competitive play.
- We had the City Hall roof replaced, with the majority of the cost funded by monies received via the American Rescue Plan Act.
- We purchased new vehicles for Public Works, and the Police and Fire Departments
- We completed our third and final year as a participant in the Central Municipal Court of Atlantic County.
- We completed grant-funded energy savings improvements to lighting and HVAC facilities at municipal facilities, with an estimated annual energy savings of \$5,000.
- The Police Department and Municipal Alliance hosted many events this year, including:

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- Coffee with a Cop, Life Skills through Bike Skills, Hooked on Fishing, Movie Night at the Park (twice), and Trunk or Treat at Birch Grove Park with a record-breaking number of exhibitors and attendees
- Regrettably, Our National Night Out event was canceled due to rain
- We held our annual Memorial Day Ceremony at our beautiful Veterans Park, and a special Nine-Eleven ceremony held here at City Hall in front of our own piece of steel from the World Trade Center Twin Towers.
- We conducted the Mayor's annual Holiday Light Contest
- We completed the Paving of Oak Avenue, from Mill Road to Burroughs Avenue
- We began work on the paving of a portion of Ridgewood Drive, from Sutton Avenue to Route 9
- We began work on ADA-related improvements in the bandstand area of Birch Grove Park, and awarded a contract for additional, related improvements to the bandstand, including updated seating in this area, and accessibility improvements – all grant-funded.
- We were awarded a grant for added parking at Birch Grove, in anticipation of future pickle ball and basketball courts
- Thanks to the conscientious efforts of our residents, we collected 800 pounds of bottle caps to be recycled and used by a local youth for the creation of handicap-accessible picnic tables at Birch Grove Park.

As another year ends and we begin anew, I want to take a moment to recognize our most valuable assets – our employees and volunteers. Thank you to all for your service to our residents.

In 2024, we congratulated several employees as they embarked upon their new lives as retirees:

- Crossing Guard Supervisor Heather Mellon, with 26 years of service; Captain of Police Steve Steinecke and Firefighter Tom McFadden, each with 25 years of service, and
- Edward “Butch” McGrath, who served 17 years as our Fire Protection Inspector.

We welcomed 9 new employees, including 5 crossing guards, a new police officer, a new firefighter, who I'm happy to say joined us from the volunteer ranks, a deputy tax collector, and a new laborer in the public works department.

In our Police Department, we had promotions to the positions of Captain, Lieutenant, and Sergeant. We also filled the newly created position of Inspections Department Supervisor with an internal candidate, and congratulated our long-time Deputy Tax Collector on her well-deserved promotion to the position of Collector.

I am grateful for the members of the Volunteer Fire Company and the Ladies Auxiliary; these men and women spend countless hours away from their families to

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ensure the safety of ours. I would also like to congratulate them on having their 8th annual Antique Car show in October.

Thank you to the members of the Planning Board, the Cultural Committee, the Library Board of Trustees, and all involved in planning and organizing events, such as the 4th of July Parade and the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting.

Thank you to the Veterans of our community, for their past service, and for their dedication and effort to honor all who serve and have served.

Thank you, as well, to the many parents who spend their time on the City's athletic fields, coaching our youth sports, helping the children of our community to develop physical skills, make friends, have fun, learn teamwork, and to learn to play fair. These are life lessons that extend well beyond their time here in Northfield, and that will benefit future generations to come.

And thank you to the members of City Council for their ongoing hard work and commitment.

Our Year 2025 Objectives include:

- As of January 1st, we began a new partnership for municipal court operations with the Town of Hammonton, at an annual savings of \$120,000
- Completion of the paving on Ridgewood Drive, from Sutton Avenue to Route 9
- Completion of ADA-related improvements and upgrades in the bandstand area of Birch Grove Park.
- We were awarded a grant for more added parking at Birch Grove, in anticipation of future pickle ball and basketball courts
- We will be paving Wabash Avenue, from Mill Road to the Linwood City limit
- We will be paving Forrest Drive, and Juniper Drive from Mill Road to Cedar Bridge
- The upgrade of the Zion Road Sanitary Sewer Pump station will be completed
- We will be entering into a new shared service agreement for website hosting with the County of Atlantic
- We will adopt an updated Master Plan with a fully developed Economic Element designed to spur growth in the commercial sector
- We will conduct additional slip-lining activity on our sanitary sewer system to continue to reap the financial benefits of improving the integrity of our service lines

I look forward to working together with everyone to continue to provide excellent services to the residents of Northfield.”

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Mayor Chau recognized our honored guests: Senator Vince Polistina, County Commissioner Maureen Kern, and Atlantic County Clerk Joe Giraldo,

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Councilman Dewees with a second by Councilwoman Carfagno, all members present, with the exception of Councilman Smith who abstained, were in favor of approving the minutes of December 17, 2024, without formal reading.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Bucci opened this meeting for any member of the public to speak on any topic.

Senator Polistina wished all a Happy New Year; he was available to work with Council if needed.

Seeing no one else from the public wishing to speak the public session was closed.

RESOLUTIONS / CONSENT AGENDA

Council President Bucci read the following statement: “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. ”

Council President Bucci asked if anyone wanted anything pulled; there were no responses.

On motion of Councilman Notaro, seconded by Councilwoman Carfagno all members present were in favor of voting on Resolutions 1-2025 through 41-2025 by Consent Agenda.

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| 1-2025 | Annual Schedule of Meetings |
| 2-2025 | Temporary Appropriations |
| 3-2025 | Designation of Official Newspapers for the Publication of Legal Notices for the City of Northfield |
| 4-2025 | Annual Appointments |
| 5-2025 | To Authorize the Tax Assessor to File a Petition of Appeal or Appeals for the Tax Year 2024 |
| 6-2025 | Safety and Health Committee Appointments |

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7-2025	Establishing Charges for Municipal Public Records
8-2025	Appointing Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner for the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
9-2025	Appointing Public Agency Compliance Officer
10-2025	Appointment of Risk Management Consultant in Accordance with the Bylaws of the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
11-2025	A Resolution Authorizing the Contact Persons to Access the Employment Practices Liability Consultation Service (EPL) / ACMJIF
12-2025	A Resolution Adopting Robert's Rules of Order
13-2025	City of Northfield Local Emergency Management Council Appointments
14-2025	A Resolution Adopting a Cash Management Plan
15-2025	To Establish the Rate of Interest for Nonpayment of Taxes or Assessments
16-2025	Authorize Delinquent Tax Penalty Charges
17-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Registered Municipal Accountant through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
18-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Licensed Land Surveyor through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
19-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Bond Counsel through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
20-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Labor Relations Attorney through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 40A:11-5 and N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
21-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Tax Appeal Attorney through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 40A:11-5 and N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
22-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Municipal Engineer through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
23-2025	Authorizing Award of Contract for Municipal Solicitor through a Fair and Open Process Pursuant to N.J.S.A 19:44A-20.5, Et Seq.
24-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Public Auction of Abandoned / Unclaimed Vehicles
25-2025	Resolution Recognizing Members of the Northfield Volunteer Fire Company
26-2025	Resolution Recognizing Members of the Northfield Volunteer Company Ladies' Auxiliary
27-2025	Resolution Authorizing Contracts with Certain Approved State Contract Vendors for Contracting Units Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12a
28-2025	Designating Custodians of Records in Accordance with the Open Public Records Act

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- 29-2025** Resolution Authorizing Cancellation of Tax Refunds and / or Delinquencies of Less than Ten Dollars Pursuant To N.J.S.A. 40A:5-17.1
- 30-2025** To Appoint Certified Municipal Registrar
- 31-2025** Memorialize Resignation of Police Officer Brenden S. O'Brien
- 32-2025** Rescind Approval of Resolution No. 241-2024
- 33-2025** Employment Status Change For Substitute School Crossing Guard - Holleran
- 34-2025** Employment Status Change For Substitute School Crossing Guard - Maldonado
- 35-2025** Employment Status Change For Substitute School Crossing Guard – Schwoer
- 36-2025** Authorizing Award of Professional Services Contract for Continuing Disclosure Agent Services and Independent Registered Municipal Advisor of Record
- 37-2025** Participant's Resolution Leap Implementation Grant Highway Digital Message Boards
- 38-2025** Participant's Resolution Leap Implementation Grant Speed Feedback Signs
- 39-2025** Approving Job Description for Fire Protection Inspector
- 40-2025** Approving Job Description for Fire Protection Sub Code Official HHS
- 41-2025** Authorization to Hire Substitute Adult School Crossing Guard

Councilman Notaro motioned, Councilwoman Carfagno seconded, to adopt the Consent Agenda.

Roll Call: Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mrs. Kern – yes; Mr. Notaro – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mrs. Bucci – yes; Motion carried.

ORDINANCE

Councilman Dewees motioned; Councilwoman Kern seconded to introduce Ordinance 1-2025.

- 1-2025** Ordinance Providing for and Establishing Salary Ranges of Officers and Employees of the City of Northfield and Repealing All Ordinances Heretofore Adopted, the Provisions of Which are Inconsistent Herewith
*Introduction / No Public Input / Published in the Press of AC 1/04/2025
2nd Reading / Public Hearing / Final Consideration 1/21/2025*

The Deputy Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, stated that this is the first reading, and announced the publication, public hearing, and final consideration dates.

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The full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requests same, up until the date and time of the public hearing.

Roll Call: Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mrs. Kern – yes; Mr. Notaro – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mrs. Bucci – yes; Motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS \$ 28,652.28

Councilman Polistina motioned, Councilman Dewees seconded, for payment of bills.

Roll Call: Mrs. Carfagno – yes; Mr. Dewees- yes; Mrs. Kern – yes; Mr. Notaro – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mrs. Bucci – yes; Motion carried.

MEETING NOTICES

Councilwoman Carfagno read the meeting notices.

Deputy Clerk Campbell advised Council that they needed to pick three dates for budget workshop meetings and a special meeting, if needed, between January 22nd and 31st.

Solicitor Facenda and Clerk Canesi explained the purpose of the special meeting requested by our Affordable Housing Attorney. The budget meeting and special meeting could be held on the same day. If action regarding COAH was taken at the next Council meeting, Council would not need to take action on the COAH matters during the budget workshop.

All members present decided on January 30th for the special meeting and budget workshop and February 13th and February 27th budget workshops, all beginning at 4pm.

At approximately 7:32pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Campbell, RMC, Deputy Municipal Clerk