

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 27, 2012**

At 7:00 pm, 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 a moment of silence was observed

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mrs. Brown, Dewees, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Perri, Mr. Polistina, Mr. Vain, Mr. Carew

Mayor Vincent Mazzeo, CFO Dawn Stollenwerk, City Engineer Matt Doran, and City Solicitor Fran Ballak were also in attendance.

**VETERAN HONOREE FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL**

Mayor Mazzeo introduced Northfield's Veteran of the Month honoree as a diamond in the rough. On April 21, 1924 Mr. Roy Gibson was born in a Gastonia, North Carolina, where cotton mills were then a major industry. On July 8, 1943, at age 19 he received a letter from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt advising that he was being drafted into the US Army. After boot camp Mr. Gibson was a Private Sharpshooter for Company C, in the 323<sup>rd</sup> Infantry. His duties in World War II were in the Pacific, fighting against the Japanese. His squad's job was to clean up after the Marines. The Marines would stay on an island for thirty days fighting and forcing the Japanese out of caves that they built to fight our troops. Mr. Gibson's squad would come in and try to finish the job. On October 22, 1944 they landed on Palau Island in the Pacific. It was in the evening and Private Gibson and his squad came up behind a cave occupied by the Japanese. In front of these caves were large craters from bombs where the squad had settled in. Mr. Gibson was in one when a member of his platoon came running down saying he had been shot. That soldier had been fatally wounded but Mr. Gibson tried to help him. While working on this soldier, the Japanese threw a hand grenade that rolled in between Mr. Gibson and this wounded soldier. Mr. Gibson had been taught to scoop and not throw the grenade. While scooping, he said the grenade rolled toward him. Without enough time he put his hands over the grenade and it went off. Mr. Gibson he fell back and noticed his fingers were gone but the other men yelled that they were going. He was lying there, and yelled for them to wait for him. He got up but couldn't walk so he rolled down the hill until he came to a fellow soldier, an Indian American who carried him down the hill and who, along with another soldier, a college star running back, took him to the ambulance. The Chaplain was there; and he asked Gibson if there was anything he could do. From the tone of the Chaplain's voice, Gibson said he felt he was going to die. He asked them not to cut off his foot or hand. In the service the doctors don't have a lot

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of time. Gibson said the Lord was with him, and here he is today. What proceeded the next year was the amputation of three toes and he lost three fingers and still to this day has shrapnel down the right side of his body. He was in the hospital for 362 days ending up at Haddon Hall hospital. His total service in World War II was two years three months and twelve days. The medals he earned include the Combat Infantry Badge, the Battle Star, the Purple Heart, and the Silver Star. Mr. Gibson has strong faith and believes that God was watching over him. He met his first wife in Atlantic City and after being discharged from the Army he moved back down south but came back to South Jersey and has lived in Northfield for 60 years. His first wife died and he met Carol, who is here tonight, and they have been married 37 years. They have four children. Mr. Gibson worked for 30 years at Northfield's post office where he retired in 1985 as Postmaster. Mazzeo told Mr. Gibson he was being honored for his heroism, and that for the month of April the flag in front of City Hall will be flown in his honor. He thanked Gibson for his service and told him he is truly an American hero. Gibson was presented with a certificate of appreciation.

Mazzeo added that on June 2, 2012, the Honor Flight will transport America's Veterans to Washington, DC, to visit those memorials that are dedicated to honor their service and sacrifices. The Honor Flight will depart Southern New Jersey from Williamstown, and will include Northfield residents Mr. Henderson Hemphill, Mr. Robert Webb, American Legion Commander Robert Burness, and Mr. Roy Gibson.

At 7:13pm, Council President Carew announced a five minute recess.

**AGENDA REVIEW**

At 7:19pm, Council President Carew resumed the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilman Vain, Second by Councilwoman Brown to dispense with the reading of the minutes of February 15, 2012, and February 23, 2012. They have been posted, distributed to Council and are on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – abstain; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill – yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain –yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Perri said on March 15<sup>th</sup> there was a Senior Meeting; Chief James and Captain Faden provided information on how to identify suspicious behavior. The

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Fire Department was also in attendance with information about smoke detectors. Perri said he met with the Committee last night and came up with good ideas regarding transportation and special events. At their April meeting they will show a documentary on trains and trolleys in Northfield, which will be presented by Mr. Webb. Perri said he is working on internal controls for the organization as well. He said there is no word back on the Sewer Interlocal; he is waiting for next meeting to be scheduled.

Councilman O'Neill said he went to the MRHS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala; it was a nice event and raised a lot of money. He mentioned an article in the paper about 'See, Click, and Fix' that will let residents use their cell phone to report problems and concerns directly to the City. He said the County will give us a demonstration at no charge to Northfield.

Councilman Vain attended Dave's Day on Saturday at NCS, and said it is a great cause. The poles and fittings are in for the flashers at Mill and Burton, and we are waiting on the lights. There will be an Antique Appraisal on April 12<sup>th</sup>, with proceeds to benefit the Northfield Museum.

Councilman Polistina attended the grand opening of Shore Physicians at 2605 Shore Road, noting that it is a very nice setup and should do well in that location. The Tax Office has taken over the dog licensing function. Delinquent bills for tax and sewer went out this week. Approximately 8% of tax bills and 17% of sewer bills are delinquent. Polistina met with representatives from Atlanticare this week; he read the most recent report of response times. He said they were at 91% under 5 minutes for last week. He is waiting on the ability to get reports from Egg Harbor Township, since switching service on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Councilman O'Neill asked Polistina if we have talked to Linwood. Polistina replied that they met with Linwood earlier in the week. The service will go out to RFP. O'Neill asked who pays our legal fees, the lead agency or us. Polistina replied that our fees are our fees. Councilman Perri spoke, saying that the City should not do an interlocal; Northfield should bid out alone. Polistina replied that any options will be entertained at this point; and solicited input from the community as well. He concluded his committee report by announcing that the City will be introducing our budget tonight.

Councilman Perri asked if there has been any resolution with regard to past CFO. Fran Ballak replied that Solicitor Keith Bonchi has been in discussions and in negotiation; working towards a resolution. Council President Carew added that he hopes there will be an Executive Session to discuss the matter on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Dewees announced that the ACUA will resume yard waste collection as of May 1<sup>st</sup>; their first collection date will be May 5<sup>th</sup>. Calendars will be printed and

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be available. We are also working on obtaining yard waste stickers for placement on yard waste cans by residents.

Councilwoman Brown said NCS passed their budget on Tuesday. She said the Economic Development Committee is still in progress; she will be attending the Chamber of Commerce meeting next month.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Council President Carew urged the public to sign up for the email blast. He said the fields and parks are busy, with a lot of traffic. He cautioned all to be aware when traveling and to stop at crosswalks.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Mazzeo said he participated in the celebrity basketball event at Dave's Day, adding that it was very well attended and is a great fundraiser. He attended the Atlantic County Mayors' Association meeting and reported that the group supports the return of energy receipts to municipalities. Mazzeo said over \$550 million has been diverted from municipalities from these receipts. He said Northfield got \$220,000 in municipal aid to pave Broad Street up to Putting Green. He gave budget highlights; noting that we are under the levy cap and appropriations cap, and are at a \$ .01 increase. He cited various reasons for increase, including \$75,000 in lost revenue from property valuation appeals. Mazzeo received a letter from Governor Christie about pension and benefit reforms, and said they have made a difference. The new mobile video recorders in police cars will start this week. He thanked Sergeant Dettinger for assisting with installation. These will help protect the City and motorists. He read statistics from Police Department report, and said that regarding shared court, they are still negotiating with Linwood; he added that Northfield intends to hold firm.

**ENGINEER'S REPORT**

The City Engineer's report was provided to Mayor and Council and is on file in the Municipal Clerk's office. Updates were as follows: Doran reported on damaged asphalt on Madison Avenue and Mazza Drive. They got three quotes and the low bid was \$15,000. There may be room for miscellaneous repairs. He noted the municipal aid award for Broad Street and said the project to address drainage at Revere Avenue will be called Marita Ann Phase II.

Councilman O'Neill stated that he has gotten concerns from residents and that he will forward them to Doran.

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**RESOLUTIONS / CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman O'Neill seconded, to vote by consent agenda on resolutions 49-2012 through 53-2012, and 55-2012.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

**49-2012** Refund of Escrow Fees by the Planning Board

**50-2012** Authorizing the Issuance of a Raffle License to the Betty Bacharach Rehabilitation Hospital Auxiliary

**51-2012** Authorizing Doran to Proceed

**52-2012** A Resolution Approving Participation with the State of New Jersey Safe and Secure Communities Program Administered by the Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Law and Public Safety

**53-2012** Authorizing the Police Department to Apply for and Obtain a Click-It-Or-Ticket Grant from the NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety

**55-2012** Authorize Hiring a Seasonal Concession Stand Attendant at Birch Grove Park

Councilman Perri stated that a resident has approached him requesting public input prior to the adoption of any resolutions.

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman O'Neill seconded, to adopt the consent agenda for resolutions 49-2012 through 53-2012, and 55-2012.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

**RESOLUTION**

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilwoman Brown seconded, to adopt resolution 54-2012.

**54-2012** Authorizing an Agreement for Shared Emergency and Non Emergency Dispatch Services for the Municipalities of Northfield and the Township of Egg Harbor

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Councilman O'Neill stated that at the last budget meeting he left with the impression that we were still negotiating and deciding what we were going to do, but then got a contract via email. Carew responded, and said that at the budget meeting the general consensus was that we were moving forward with Egg Harbor Township. Carew said due diligence was done and this contract is in the best interest of our town. Mayor Mazzeo spoke, saying he concurs that at the budget meeting he thought all were in agreement. O'Neill asked if legal counsel reviewed the contract; Carew replied yes, and said the Mayor did as well. O'Neill reviewed particulars of the contract and asked for clarification. Carew replied that nothing has changed since the budget meeting. Councilman Perri stated that he feels that we could do it ourselves for the same amount of money that we are paying.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – abstain; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - no; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

**ORDINANCES**

Councilman Polistina motioned, Dewees seconded, to introduce Ordinance 2-2012, to be read by title only.

**2-2012**           Calendar Year 2012 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 March 31, 2012  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Public Hearing/Final Adoption April 24, 2012*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, and stated that full copies of the ordinance have been posted on the City Website, on the bulletin board at City Hall, and are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Councilman O'Neill asked for an explanation for the public of a cap bank. CFO Stollenwerk replied, saying that statute limits expenditures to 3.5% and with this ordinance you can bank the difference; it has no impact on the budget or the tax rate. It allows you to bank the difference for future emergencies. Councilwoman Brown said she reviewed past increases, and asked if next year residents could be hit with 4 or 5%. Stollenwerk replied; she said probably not because the City still has to be under the 2% levy cap. O'Neill asked for an example of an emergency. Stollenwerk gave the example of a revaluation. This gives you the flexibility to self-fund. She provided other examples. O'Neill asked why the City can't just use surplus. Stollenwerk stated that the funds still have to be appropriated it first.

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Discussion ensued amongst O'Neill, Brown, and Stollenwerk with regard to surplus, how much we have, how much was used last year and this year. Brown gave examples of other towns that use more of their surplus and have less than us. Council President Carew spoke, and explained that the City got a few one-time large influxes of revenue that we are trying to spread out; anything we put in from surplus has to be made up again next year.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – no; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - no; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

Councilman Polistina motioned, Dewees seconded, to introduce Ordinance 3-2012, to be read by title only.

**3-2012** An Ordinance Adopting a Codification and Revision of the Ordinances of the City of Northfield, County of Atlantic, State of New Jersey, Providing for the Maintenance of Said Code; Repealing and Saving from Repeal Certain Ordinances Not Included Therein; Establishing a Penalty for Altering or Tampering with the Code; and Making Certain Changes in Previously Adopted Ordinances  
*Introduction/No Public Input/Published March 31, 2012  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Public Hearing/Final Adoption April 24, 2012*

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance by title, and stated that full copies of the ordinance have been posted on the City Website, on the bulletin board at City Hall, and are available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

**RESOLUTION/2012 BUDGET**

**56A-2012** Introduction of the 2012 Budget  
No public input on introduction  
*Budget Synopsis/the Press/March 31, 2012  
Public Hearing and Final Adoption: 7:30pm April 24, 2012*  
Full copies of the 2012 Budget are available in the City Clerk's Office

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Councilman O'Neill suggested another budget meeting; he said he wants to get a zero increase by cutting another \$97,000. He requested that the motion to introduce be withdrawn a motion be made to have another budget meeting. Mayor Mazzeo asked O'Neill where he was looking to find the additional money. O'Neill responded that he doesn't think every line item was reviewed. The Municipal Clerk clarified when the budget could be amended. Stollenwerk added that the City would not be able to adopt until the end of May.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Councilman Perri motioned, Councilman Vain seconded, for payment of bills in the amount of \$ 1,350,912.45.

Roll call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Dewees – yes; Mr. O'Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Mr. Vain – yes; Mr. Carew – yes. Motion carries for payment of bills.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

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

Robert Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue, said Egg Harbor Township dispatch is too expensive, as is Atlanticare. He asked if the breach of contract with Atlanticare been addressed. Council President Carew responded that the City is looking into it. Webb said the City needs time clocks to keep track of people, taxes are too high and that purchases are made that we don't need.

Steve Wynne, 107 Haviv Drive, referred to surplus numbers provided by Council earlier in the evening. He said Council has not consistently used surplus; this year a higher percentage remains in the account than in prior years. Council President Carew replied that he feels Council has managed budget responsibly. Wynne disagreed.

Mike Wolfe, 2306 Merritt Drive, referred to 2307 Merritt Drive, and stated that he is one of 8 homeowners in attendance to complain about noise, partying, loud vehicles, racing, harassment, etc at all hours of the night. The homeowner is rarely around; her teenaged and early 20-something children are the primary occupants. Wolfe said he

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cannot get out of his own driveway because of the way the cars that visit this home park. He said he has personally tried to work it out with the homeowner, but has had his home vandalized. The Police have come out, but it is not working. Something has to change; they are hostages in their neighborhood. 2307 is becoming a flop house.

Carlos Martinez, 2308 Merritt Drive, moved here one year ago. He chose the neighborhood because it was so peaceful. He is concerned for his children because of the house at 2307.

Steve Serrano, 2305 Merritt Drive, can't sleep with his windows open because of the noise. He has a three year old child that can't play in his yard because foul language is used constantly. He wants a safe neighborhood and said not enough tickets are being written. He reiterated most of the complaints as the prior residents.

Police Chief James spoke; he has had conversations with his Sergeants and the officers; they have said they have been sitting at the end of the streets and have not heard the noise. James had a meeting with the resident, Daniel Diani, today and explained that no more warnings would be issued, and that within the confines of the law that actions will be taken. James said he also spoke with the Zoning Officer regarding the zoning and occupancy issues.

Council President Carew asked the neighbors to appoint a point of contact for the City to work with; Mike Wolfe volunteered to be the contact. Carew said he will be talking to various departments to see what can be done.

Rob Ford, 2315 Merritt Drive, said he lives far enough down the street that they don't have many of the same problems as the others who spoke, but the speeding is an issue and the house in question has compounded the matter. The amount of traffic and the speed and noise have been increasing and are going to drive quality residents out of town, not to mention the safety issues. Kids can't even play in their yards and the residents want the City's help. He suggested a speed bump, extending the bike path to eliminate the cut through, or making Merritt a dead end at Route 9. The residents are concerned for the safety of their children.

Rachel Diani, 2307 Merritt Drive, said they are not running a business. Her brother and his friends like to work on cars and there is no law against it. She said the noise levels are within the law and visitors to her home do not speed. Her Mom works three jobs and can't be there all the time. Diani said she does not feel they are doing anything wrong. If it was a problem the cops would have done something.

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Council President Carew explained that Diani may be able to help resolve the situation. He told her there have never been this many people who came out; this is an entire neighborhood. She replied that the neighbors don't approach her.

Kelly Grillo, 502 Burton Avenue, has questions about Marilyn Dolcy and said the management letter from the audit concerns him. He asked who approved her comp time, how much she was paid, and if there was an investigation.

Council President Carew replied that the City has been working back and forth with attorneys, and there is not much that can be disclosed. Mayor Mazzeo also spoke, and explained that time records are now provided to the City Clerk's Office.

Michael Lohrer, Galloway Township, said he is vice president of his son's junior football league. The Cape League has authorized them to draw kids from towns including Northfield and he is looking for adult volunteers. Council President Carew asked if it was a travel league; Lohrer replied that it is an unlimited weight league.

Emily Ford, 2315 Merritt Drive, agreed with an earlier comment that Rachel Diani is very eloquent. However, when Ford said she was leaving the building with her baby and someone yelled a rude comment about the welfare of her baby.

Seeing no others wishing to speak, Council President Carew closed the public session.

Councilman Vain read the meeting notices.

At 9:01pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk