

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 12, 2016**

At 7:20pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau, followed by a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Piergiovanni

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Kwapinski and Acting Chief Newman were also present.

PRESENTATION: Northfield Community School Budget

Council President Travagline welcomed all; hoped the public would have no objection to having the school present a brief budget presentation before the Oxford Circle presentation.

Linda Albright, Northfield Community School Board Administrator and Board Secretary, introduced herself and explained that Mr. Garguilo could not be here tonight due to a conflict, but she was here with Board President Steve Wynne. She explained that the tax levy was flat this year due to retiring debt service; Mrs. Albright briefly reviewed the improvements that had recently been made at the school, including energy efficiencies, safety and security improvements, and more. She reviewed contractual obligations and the increases in health care costs; all employees were in the last tier for contributions under Chapter 78 Reforms. They strived to continue to provide the highest quality education to the students at the best price. She touched briefly on some technological improvements, including the purchase of increased band-width necessary to support the increasing number of devices. Northfield students continued to excel technologically.

The tax levy from 2015 to 2016 will decrease approximately \$300,000.000, or about 1.75 cents per \$100,000.00 of assessed value. The decreasing ratable's continued to have an effect, as they did throughout the county. The Board was happy to present a decrease and invited all to attend the public hearing on the budget.

Steve Wynne, Northfield Community School Board of Education President noted the reduction is largely due to the debt service; the improvement project did come in under budget. The decrease in enrollment seemed to have plateaued, barring any

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additional housing that would be built in town. The school is maintaining all of its programs. The school would be debuting a tuition program this year; the school and its curriculum are very attractive, including the STEAM program. Recently students had been awarded grants for their projects and Principal Robbins would be going to the White House.

Councilman Perri stated he appreciated the job they did and the outcome for the students; he asked when the new debt would be applied.

Linda Albright replied that it was in the budget; the old debt was retired in September of 2015, the first payment on the new debt would be in August of 2016.

Mayor Chau commended the Board of Education on the high academic programs that it supported, particularly the STEM program. He asked what the current enrollment was, and the projection for next several years.

Linda Albright replied that there were 908 students, although the number has continued to decline, the tuition program was expected to level it off.

Mayor Chau asked what the capacity of the school was.

Linda Albright replied between 1100 and 1200.

Mayor Chau thanked Linda Albright and Steve Wynne again.

Council President Travagline also thanked Linda Albright and Steve Wynne.

PRESENTATION/PUBLIC INPUT: Oxford Circle Proposed Traffic Plan

Council President Travagline spoke regarding Oxford Circle. He stated that four years ago when he first took office he had residents come to him about the traffic in the area, some of which had since been alleviated by the Mill Road traffic light. He had talked it over with the Councilmen in the Ward, and with the Engineer. They came up with improvements that wouldn't cost much, to the residents of Northfield, and would beautify the area. The planners who created a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the City offered suggestions that would reduce cut through traffic and beautify Northfield. There were concerns about these issues in the Bay Drive, Oxford Circle and Steelman Avenue area of the City. These plans tried to address it all and they came up with a plan that he thought was workable. The plan does not have to be done, but that is why the City reached out to the residents; if we need to make changes or scrap it altogether we would. He let the residents know that the Council was there for them and to address the safety concerns as well. He then deferred to Engineer Kwapinski to briefly review the plan.

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Engineer Kwapinski introduced himself. He explained that the City was looking to pave the area, and once it was paved, traffic may increase and the tendency to travel at increased speed may increase. The goal of this plan was to reduce speed, reduce traffic and cut throughs, increase aesthetics and reduce drainage. He further explained the planned improvements and the reasons for each. He noted that Bay Drive was very wide; the stop signs were way off to the side and not easily seen. He noted that access will be maintained on all roads. The reduced road width naturally slows traffic. He reviewed several display boards that depicted the planned improvements.

Larry Martino, 1905 Bay Drive – inquired as to how many parking spots residents were going to lose on Bay Drive.

Council President Travagline opened the public comment portion of the meeting.

Mayor Chau noted that a letter was sent out from his office mapping the proposed changes. He had received several letters and comments; all of which had been forwarded to Council for review.

Paul Filippi, 2008 Bay Drive - came forward to review the engineer's renderings, and asked where the stop signs were going. He asked why these plans were being made on a road that everyone loves and lives on.

Richard Levitt, 2204 Bay Drive – noted that he had lived on Bay Drive since 1977, this was not the first time Bay Drive had been paved and it did not change the dynamics of the road. Once the signal at Mill and Shore was improved, the situation improved. He believed that bump outs were a hazard to bicyclists. The main hazard in the area is drainage; because it flows from the streets above.

Council President Travagline addressed the group and stated that if the residents were not in favor of the plan, then the Council was not in favor of the plan.

Richard Levitt was concerned that the landscape islands were going to have dead vegetation because they couldn't be irrigated. It would detract from the beautifully landscaped homes that were there.

Curt Bopp, 16 East Mill Road – was in favor of a stop or two but not in favor of the other improvements.

Larry Martino, 1905 Bay Drive – noted that Atlantic City put all these islands in on Atlantic Avenue and two years later they removed them all. He asked if this job was out for bid now.

Council President Travagline replied yes it was, but Council could reject that bid.

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Paul Filippi advocated for one stop sign, but not the rest of the plan.

Jim Llewellyn, 1908 Bay Drive - expressed concern that the island would restrict parking. Parked cars would eliminate the need for a bump out.

Mayor Chau asked Mr. Martino during what months the traffic increased.

Mr. Martino answered May to September; traffic going to Margate.

Councilman Dewees asked if there would be any objection to a stop sign to control the East West traffic.

Robin Kennedy, 21 Steelman Avenue – stated that she and husband did have concerns about traffic cutting through Oxford Circle, she did not suggest dramatic changes to the whole neighborhood, but something needed to be done.

Councilman Murray stated that as a resident of East Rosedale Avenue he agreed that a stop sign or two may be warranted.

Pat McCarthy, 2000 Bay Drive – stated that he was initially opposed to the plan, but now feels differently, he saw no harm and felt it may actually increase property values. He appreciated the time and effort the Engineer and the City put into the plan.

Elizabeth Berenato, Esquire, 1901 Bay Drive – noted that the proposal eliminated the parking in front of her home, and having an obstacle in the middle of the road in front of her home was absurd. The road was already beautiful; doing this would chop up the road and create a hazard at the corner. She had not seen any issues with speeding and has lived in her home for 14 years. She believed the islands would be a problem and would cause a hazard.

Richard Levitt engaged in a discussion with Engineer Kwapinski.

Councilman O'Neill asked the audience if anyone in the audience was in favor of the plan.

Pat McCarthy spoke in favor of the plan.

Council President Travagline asked Council if any of them were in favor of the plan.

Councilman Murray felt the Council should listen to the people.

Councilman Lischin agreed to go with the residents and not do the majority of the plan, but perhaps retool the plan.

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Council President Travagline stated there will be no retooling the plan; we'd just pave it and that's it.

Council President Travagline asked if there were any questions as to the rest of the plan.

Brian Rutter, 128 E. Steelman – replied that he was not in favor of the plan.

Valerie Hanson, 124 Steelman Avenue - noted she was not in favor of the center cement island; it would reduce visibility. She was not in favor of the plan.

Beth Walters, 102 Oxford Circle - liked some of the improvements, not all, but some.

Stacy Powers, 20 East Mill Road - appreciated the effort, and on behalf of her parents, they are totally opposed to the plan. Her only issue was near Mr. Leeds' house. She lived there her whole life and there had never been an accident there. She thought a stop sign or two would help but the rest of it was unnecessary.

Bob Loftus, 102 Oxford Circle - also appreciated the effort but was not in favor of the plan. He felt it would increase traffic.

Brian Carmen, 2006 Bay Drive - appreciated the effort; asked how the bump outs and improvements would be maintained.

Engineer Kwapinski noted that it would become part of your property.

Mr. Carmen didn't feel there was enough of a traffic problem to warrant the change.

Councilman Murray noted that they were discussing something that was no longer going to happen.

Council President Travagline stated that Bay Drive had to be addressed now because it had to be paved; we would address the other areas at another time, hopefully in the next few months.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Council President Travagline closed public session; and thanked all for coming.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilman Lischin, seconded by Councilman Murray to dispense with the reading of the minutes from March 22, 2016. They have been posted, distributed to Council, and were on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

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Roll call: Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. Lischin –yes; Mr. Murray –yes; Mr. O’Neill –yes; Mr. Perri –yes; Mr. Piergiovanni –absent; Mr. Travagline –yes; Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Perri - Sewer Inter Local, Planning Board, Senior Citizens

Councilman Perri announced that the Sewer Department and Engineer Kwapinski met with the ACUA regarding the odor problem at Wilson Drive and Dolphin Avenue, they had a good meeting, but had more issues than they started with. The Engineer is in the final stages of design for the Rosedale Avenue pump station. The Planning Board approved a use for a theater deal at the Mainland Professional Plaza. The meeting next month would include extending an application for a major subdivision that was passed.

Councilman O’Neill - Court/Violations, FAN, Library, Shared Services

Councilman O’Neill stated that he had a shared service meeting with Linwood and was setting up meetings with departments regarding potential shared services.

Councilman Piergiovanni – Insurance and Safety, Chamber of Commerce, Municipal Alliance, Northfield School

Councilman Piergiovanni was absent.

Councilman Dewees - Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields, Bike Path, Veterans’ Park, 1st Street Playground, Birch Grove, Public Works, Roads, Engineering, Little League/Babe Ruth, Sign Sub Committee

Councilman Dewees announced a seasonal employment opportunity at Birch Grove Park, (read job announcement verbatim). The museum handicapped ramp was on the agenda for a vote for a grant to fund it; there are some structural issues with the corner of the building and he had spoken with the Engineer. He noted that he would keep Council informed. There were about 25 trees that needed to be replaced along the Bike Path due to loss or damage; the trees would be purchased with Clean Communities funds and installed by the Department of Public Works. They would start at the South end and work North. The fields and ground aeration was scheduled for Thursday, weather permitting. Councilman Dewees informed Council that Clerk Canesi had the estimate for the light pole that blew down in the recent storm. One proposal had been received and he was seeking 2 others to address the drainage at Veteran’s Park. He was scheduled to meet with CFO Stollenwerk to discuss further. The Arthur Henry property appraisal came in with the value appraised at \$720,000.00.

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Council President Travagline directed Clerk Canesi to prepare letter to owners stating the value and providing a copy of the appraisal, noted the letter should be from Councilman Dewees; put the ball in their court.

Councilman Dewees noted that all City vehicles that have old or faded decals would be re-decaled to identify them as City vehicles, and by Department. He received a letter from a resident of Jack Sloan Court about a tree in an easement; the City would have to retain a contractor to address it. Councilman Dewees asked Councilman Lischin if the Code Enforcement Officer had been using the decommissioned police car that was assigned him.

Councilman Lischin replied that it was his understanding that he was using it.

Councilman Dewees noted that the car would be logoed as the Code Enforcement vehicle. Vicky Rutter will also be given a decommissioned police vehicle for Birch Grove Park; at least temporarily.

Councilman Murray - Finance/Collections, Mainland Regional, Economic Development, Traffic Safety

Councilman Murray reported that the final reading and public hearing of the budget would be at the next meeting.

Councilman Lischin – Fire Department/EMS, Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning, Technology/MRHS Channel 2, Cultural Committee, Green Team, Sign Sub Committee

Councilman Lischin read the Fire report for the month of March.

Council President Travagline noted that now that were paying for EMS we needed to look carefully at the duplication of services.

Councilman Dewees informed Council that the EMS employees stand or sit at the bottom of the stairs and smoke; can the ashtray be moved.

Clerk Canesi replied that there were similar complaints on court day, she was researching how far from the building we could extend the no-smoking limits that exist inside the building.

Councilman Lischin noted that 1112 First Street had been put into our Community Champions system and he would follow up. He then read the Inspections Department report for March.

Councilman Lischin mentioned that the Green Team was having a meeting with the “joule box” provider regarding generators and the Cultural Committee had scheduled

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their summer concert series. Thanked Councilman Dewees for the work he did with the jogging path along the Bike Path.

Mayor Chau asked for a status on shared services for Code Enforcement.

Councilman Lischin replied that Linwood is putting together a flow chart. He would meet with our Building Department after it was received; he would report back to Council.

Mayor Chau asked Councilman Dewees for an update on installation of policies and regulations for the Bike Path memorials.

Councilman Dewees said he had a conversation with one individual, had to meet with one other family before we sent out the letters.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Chau informed Council that the P25 radios were in and would be installed by the end of the month. There was a vacancy on the Library Board, in the position of Treasurer, if anyone knew anyone who was interested. He announced the details for the Memorial Day Celebration. Mayor Chau announced that the Safe Routes to Schools Grant Application period was now open; a copy had been provided to the Engineer. National Night Out had been moved to the Burton Avenue Fire Station; the school is being re-sodded and would not be available. He would be attending a ceremony at Mainland Regional High School and would present an award to Tom Sher. He asked Engineer Kwapinski for the status of the Rout 9 sidewalk project.

Engineer Kwapinski stated there had been some delays, due to issues with materials, but he had been told it would be started soon.

Mayor Chau read the Police Department report. He had received positive feedback from residents about noticeable Police activity; he extended appreciation to the Police Department.

Councilman Perri noted that the Police apprehended the person who had committing several robberies, he commended the Police Department. He asked the Mayor to bring the Council up to date with regard to the status of the promotions.

Mayor Chau announced that he recently sent the Department a letter to commend them, and to dispel rumors that had recently occurred, such as that the Council was considering disbanding the Department. The letter included that the mayor intended to move forward with the promotions. The Mayor stated he would get together with the labor counsel to review the promotional ordinance.

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Solicitor Facenda noted that the lawsuit was resolved and the settlement agreement had been received. There were minor changes to the agreement, nothing that resulted in a material change to the agreement.

Councilman Perri knew nothing about rumors that the Department would be disbanded.

Council President Travagline explained that Acting Chief Newman came to him last week and asked about the rumors; he told Acting Chief Newman that there had been no official discussions with the Mayor or the Shared Service Committee about merging the Departments or disbanding the Department, in quite some time; over a year.

Councilman Perri felt it should be in the minutes, on the record.

Mayor Chau said he took offense to the rumors.

PUBLIC SESSION

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

Seeing no one wishing to speak Council President Travagline 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.

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman O'Neill seconded for Resolutions 93-2016 through 98-2016 to be voted on by Consent Agenda.

Roll call: Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. Lischin –yes; Mr. Murray –yes; Mr. O'Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni –absent; Mr. Travagline – yes; Motion carried to vote by consent agenda.

93-2016 Authoring the Tax Collector to Conduct a Tax Lien Sale

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- 94-2016** Approving a Request for Proposals for a Court Fine Debt Collection Service for the City of Northfield
- 95-2016** Authorizing an Increase in the Bid Threshold
- 96-2016** Acknowledging Employment Resignation of School Crossing Guard
- 97-2016** Authorizing an Individual Agreement with E-Consult as an Expert in Determining the City of Northfield’s Affordable Housing Obligation
- 98-2016** Approval for the Municipal Engineer to Submit the Project known as ADA Improvements at Birch Grove Park, Phase IV, as the City’s Application for the 2016 Community Development Block Grant Program

Councilman Dewees motioned, Councilman O’Neill seconded for Resolutions 93-2016 through 98-2016 to be adopted by consent agenda.

Solicitor Facenda noted minor changes to the Econsult Agreement. Changes were: changing the word “various” to “municipalities” under Scope of Services and adding “as pre-approved by the Municipality” after the word fee under Expenses.

Councilman Perri asked if there was a not to exceed.

Solicitor Facenda replied that there was not but at present our contribution was \$2,000.00.

Councilman Perri said he would hate to get stuck with a large bill.

Solicitor Facenda stated that we could terminate with 15 days’ notice, it may be worthwhile to explore the mini consortium concept and we may want to join it later. He informed Council that he would contact Absecon to explore.

Roll call: Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. Lischin –yes; Mr. Murray –yes; Mr. O’Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni –absent; Mr. Travagline – yes; Motion carried to adopt by consent agenda.

ORDINANCE

Councilman Perri motioned, Councilman Piergiovanni seconded to adopt Ordinance 6-2016.

- 6-2016** Calendar Year 2016 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

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2nd Reading / Public Hearing / Final Consideration
Published in the Press of Atlantic City 4/16/2016

The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinance, and stated that this is the public hearing. Since Introduction the full Ordinance has been posted in the lobby of City Hall and on the City website, and copies were available at no cost in the office of the Municipal Clerk between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday to any member of the public who requested same.

Council President Travagline opened the public hearing, seeing no one wishing to speak he closed the public hearing.

Roll call: Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. Lischin –yes; Mr. Murray –yes; Mr. O’Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni –absent; Mr. Travagline – yes; Motion carried to adopt Ordinance 6-2016.

PAYMENT OF BILLS \$ 1,373,066.10

Councilman Murray motioned, Councilman Lischin seconded, for payment of bills.

Roll call: Mr. Dewees –yes; Mr. Lischin –yes; Mr. Murray –yes; Mr. O’Neill - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Mr. Piergiovanni –absent; Mr. Travagline – yes; Motion carried.

Council President Travagline read the meeting notices.

Council President Travagline stated that, as all members of Council were, he was concerned with the area of Oxford Circle, he was glad to have given people their time to speak, but apologized for losing control of the meeting at times, and wouldn’t let it happen again.

Councilman Dewees still thought there are some calming devices that could be put to use on the East/West roads.

At 9:33pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk