

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 28, 2016

At 6:06pm this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

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

Councilman Piergiovanni was absent when attendance was taken, but entered the meeting at 6:07pm.

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Kris Facenda and Engineer Kwapinski were also in attendance.

PRESENTATION – NEW JERSEY AMERICAN WATER

Council President Travagline welcomed everyone to the meeting and deferred to Councilman Perri for introduction of the representatives from New Jersey American Water.

Councilman Perri reminded Council that New Jersey American had given Northfield a proposal several years ago; since AQUA America was at the last meeting, New Jersey American Water Company would be giving us the same presentation tonight.

At 6:07pm Councilman Piergiovanni entered the meeting.

Dave Marino, New Jersey American Water Company, introduced himself. He explained new regulations and how they can benefit the towns, and introduced Kevin Watsey, Government Affairs Manager for New Jersey American Water Company.

Mr. Watsey referred to the Water Infrastructure Protection Act that was introduced last year in February. Prior to the new regulations if towns wanted to sell water or sewer infrastructure, they only had one path, and that involved doing an RFP and then a public question on the ballot. The new law set up very strict guidelines whereby a municipality could apply to DEP for a Certificate of Emergent Conditions, which involves satisfying 5 specific criteria that would allow the town to sell the asset without a referendum. The new legislation also allows for the sale of the asset at full market value, and at minimum, has to cover the debt on the system. An example was the Town of Haddonfield, where an independent engineering analysis showed that the town had to invest millions of dollars in the ensuing years just to bring their system up to average.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 28, 2016

Mayor Chau asked about rates and increases.

Mr. Watsey replied that New Jersey American Water had customers such as Ocean City, Lakewood, Howell, and 20 other towns across the state. Right now those systems are paid for only by the residents of the individual towns, and the costs of operation aren't spread across all of the systems equally. Rate increases go through the BPU and take about a year, and historically, they never get what they ask for.

Mayor Chau asked why a company would want to take someone else's problems. He assumed that future rate increases would be the way to ensure that they make money.

Mr. Watsey agreed, but said the size of the company allows them to operate the systems more cost effectively and efficiently than an individual town can.

Solicitor Facenda asked how often systems were eligible for the Emergent Conditions method.

Mr. Watsey anticipated there would be 6 towns in the next six months to a year; it was a process and required some upfront investment from the towns to get the independent analysis.

Councilman Piergiovanni asked what the rates would be.

Mr. Watsey noted that New Jersey American Water would adopt the rate the town charged, from day one, and rates were often frozen for a period of 2-3 years.

Solicitor Facenda asked if the rate increases take into account expenses incurred during the frozen years.

Mr. Watsey replied yes, it is a backward looking process.

Councilman O'Neill asked, if pipe needed to be moved for a county or state project, who paid for that?

Mr. Watsey noted they would try to have the entity, such as the DOT, absorb the cost as it is often built into the cost of the project, but if not, New Jersey American Water would pay for it. In situations with the County, New Jersey American Water always paid.

Councilman Perri asked if there was a backup, is it a contractor or an employee who would respond?

Mr. Marino stated it depended on the situation, in most cases it would be a New Jersey American Water employee.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 28, 2016**

Mr. Watsey replied the RFP could be whatever Council wanted, for example, if you want a 2-3 year rate freeze, then put it in there. It was up to the interested companies to see what it would cost them to bid on that.

Mr. Marino added that it could go beyond rate freezes; it could involve employees.

Council President Travagline thanked Mr. Watsey and Mr. Marino for their attendance.

Council President Travagline moved to the sidewalk information session for Cedar Bridge Road.

- Sidewalks on Cedar Bridge

Engineer Kwapinski introduced himself to the audience and stated that he would be presenting a conceptual plan for sidewalks on Cedar Bridge Road. He informed the audience that the City had applied for a grant. He reviewed an overhead presentation that showed areas that did not have sidewalk, and areas where proposed sidewalks would go. He explained the project area and the concept of narrowing the street in order to add sidewalk. The road was wide enough to use this method.

Councilman Dewees asked if engineering costs were included in the \$225,000.00.

Engineer Kwapinski stated no.

Bob Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue – said it was good idea but in the long run it saves the City money, but is still money out of the taxpayer's pocket. If it's not broken, don't fix it.

Phil Breslin, 2507 Cedar Bridge Road – asked if the City needed the permission of the residents.

Engineer Kwapinski explained that right now we are proposing it without easements.

Carol Fontana, 2512 Cedar Bridge Road - asked if there would be sidewalks on her side.

Engineer Kwapinski pointed out on the map where the sidewalks would start, which would be on the left corner, facing her home.

Roberto Fontana, 2512 Cedar Bridge Road - expressed concern that there would be accidents as a result of the plan, doesn't like the idea of bikes on the sidewalk.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 28, 2016**

Engineer Kwapinski explained that parking would be restricted to one side, and there would be a bike lane in the road. This was a conceptual plan and there are options.

Charles DeSantis, 2415 Cedar Bridge Road - asked how many feet from the center of the road belonged to the City.

Engineer Kwapinski replied that the road was 28 feet wide.

Councilman Dewees added that 16.5 feet would be from the center of the road.

Heather Mellon, 2509 Herbert Drive – asked why the speed bump was removed.

Councilman Dewees stated that the bolts came loose and it did not pass today's standards, so had to be removed.

Carol Fontana asked would residents get updates on this.

Council President Travagline replied absolutely.

- Sign Ordinance Changes

Council President Travagline moved to discuss the sign ordinance changes.

Solicitor Facenda stated that the changes were a work in progress; he hoped to have for next month's meeting.

Council President Travagline added that he has set up a committee, anyone who wanted to be a part could contact Council President Travagline.

Councilman Dewees asked about other fee waivers in our Code.

Solicitor Facenda noted the only waivers were for Uniform Construction Code fees only.

Solicitor Facenda informed Council that feedback from council members had been limited.

Municipal Clerk Canesi explained the list of fees would need to be reviewed and individual items identified. This could not be done by email with each member of council responding as it may violate sunshine.

Council President Travagline stated that he would meet with Councilman Lischin and the Zoning Department to hammer out fees and would report at next meeting

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 28, 2016**

AGENDA REVIEW

Council President Travagline made assignments for the Regular meeting.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Travagline opened the meeting to the public for discussion on any topic.

Bob Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue - asked if construction would start on the Veterans Park soon.

Councilman Dewees replied yes.

Mr. Webb noted that plows had damaged the street; he thanked Council for patching the road. He was very satisfied with sewer and stated that he was against privatization.

Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court - stated that New Jersey American Water was bought out by a German company, rates have increased tremendously, urged that Council not continue without putting it out to referendum.

Darren Boyd, 402 Franklin Avenue – noted that what the water company did not mention is that the systems they purchased are combined systems, sanitary and storm, they are getting fined repeatedly by the DEP. We do not have a combined system, and it is nowhere near time to sell.

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

At 7:22pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk