

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JULY 26, 2016**

At 6:05pm 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: Lischin, Murray, Perri, Piergiovanni, Travagline

Absent: Dewees, O'Neill

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

Council President Travagline announced the absence of Councilman Dewees and Councilman O'Neill and introduced Paul Miola, Executive Director of the JIF.

PRESENTATION – JOINT INSURANCE FUND

Paul Miola gave a brief history of Northfield's membership in the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF). He stated that he was here to respectfully request that Northfield renew its membership. It had been estimated that the JIF had saved NJ taxpayers \$1,000,000.00 over what they would have paid private insurance companies. He explained the collaborative nature of the JIF and the commitment to safety and risk management, and reviewed a presentation packet he distributed to all of Council. Mr. Miola reviewed the roles of various city representatives, including Safety Coordinator Lauren Crooks, Claims Coordinator Mary Canesi, and Fund Commissioner Jim Dickinson. Northfield's loss ratio was good, and Mr. Miola pointed out that our premium had gone down 5%. He noted that dividends in the amount of over \$900,000.00 had been distributed to Northfield alone, with over \$28,000,000.00 to all members since the inception of the fund. The JIF was a not for profit and spent less than 10 cents on the dollar in administration. He thanked Council for the opportunity and offered to answer any questions.

Mayor Chau recognized Rich Gerber, Risk Management Consultant, in the audience and thanked him and Mr. Miola for the work they did on behalf of Northfield.

- Police Promotional Ordinance

Mayor Chau referred to the Police promotional Ordinance. All Council members had been provided with a draft, which it was hoped would be introduced at the meeting in August. The draft had been reviewed with Chief Newman, Labor Counsel, the City

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Solicitor, Mary Canesi, and Acting Detective Sergeant Buccafurni. He explained that there were two methods of assessment in the promotional exam, oral and written. Officers had the option of signing up, at their own expense, for a review class to prepare, and there were costs to the City with having a professional group, such as the State Association of Chiefs of Police, administer the exam. Mayor Chau noted that he had consulted with several towns. There had been discussion of eliminating the written portion of the test; he felt there were pros and cons to eliminating the written portion. If we proceeded with promotions, Mayor Chau suggested we start with the sergeants, and then captain and lieutenant.

Council President Travagline asked what were the other components beside the oral and written?

Mayor Chau replied there was also an interview.

Council President Travagline noted that he understood that an officer could pay and get help to know the answers, but was there a risk if the town does not have a written test? Hypothetically, if we just had the oral exam and the interview, was there exposure to a lawsuit? He asked would candidates sign off saying that if there was no written exam, and they didn't get the job, that they would not or could not sue. He also questioned as to whether work experience could be substituted for the written exam?

Mayor Chau informed Council that there was a performance component to the test.

Council President Travagline felt that the possibility could exist that an individual cannot afford to take the class; and that may result in us not getting the best candidate.

Councilman Murray added that he was under impression that the classes helped on the oral exam as well.

Mayor Chau replied they probably did.

Solicitor Facenda reviewed the five components of the test.

Council President Travagline asked if Labor Counsel recommended removing the written test.

Mayor Chau replied no, they had no opinion.

Councilman Lischin asked if there was a cost to the test, other than the test prep, if the officer chose to take the course.

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Mayor Chau replied no.

Council President Travagline asked if there was combined testing; for Captain and Chief as one test, for example.

Solicitor Facenda asked Chief Newman if he was aware of any combined testing.

Chief Newman replied no he was not, but if that were the case, under that thought process, when he tested for Chief and the City chose Chief Hickey, then he, Newman, should have been made Captain.

Municipal Clerk Canesi clarified that it would have to be made clear up front that the test was for two ranks.

Councilman Lischin asked why you wouldn't test from the top down.

Mayor Chau said we'd have to fill the top ranks first to have the interview process make sense.

Clerk Canesi explained that Sergeant and above can test for any superior rank. If you fill from the bottom up, for example, instead of top down, somebody may put in for Captain but then can't test for Lieutenant because you already filled Captain. He or she may have wanted to test for the most superior rank but didn't have the opportunity, so this way if you fill from the top down if they don't get Lieutenant they can test for the next subordinate rank. She added that they don't have to pay anything; that is up to the officer.

Mayor Chau informed Council they had one month to provide any suggestions before the ordinance was introduced

Solicitor Facenda explained that the City had received a street vacation application from a resident of Helen Drive; the City had begun the proper process and that may be heard at the meeting in August.

AGENDA REVIEW

Council President Travagline reviewed the regular meeting agenda and suggested that Resolution 150-2016 be removed from the agenda due to Councilman Dewees' absence; there were no objections.

Councilman Perri informed Council that he had received an email from a resident requesting a crosswalk at Revere and Shore Road; she was in a wheelchair and had a motorized scooter. He asked that Council send a letter requesting a crosswalk at either Revere or Oakcrest, similar to that at Ridgewood Court.

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Council President Travagline replied that he had received the same email and believed that the resident contacted the County directly and that the crosswalk is being taken care of.

Councilman Perri asked about the fee waiver ordinance.

Solicitor Facenda explained that he reviewed the fee schedule and attempted to pull out only those fees paid directly to the City. He reminded Council that this would only affect a situation with an accessibility issue. He reviewed those fees that have been incorporated into the ordinance.

Councilman Perri questioned the inclusion of a use variance fee.

Solicitor Facenda noted that he and Clerk Canesi discussed it, and while it may be improbable, if the case could be made, the applicant would then be eligible for the fee waiver. Applicants still have to meet the two prong criteria of a disabled individual with an accessibility issue.

Councilman Perri asked who would oversee and interpret it? Solicitor Facenda replied that would be the Planning Board.

Clerk Canesi suggests that the language be made more specific, since the fees have to be collected at the time of application.

Solicitor Facenda noted that section C, shall read "upon Planning Board approval", before the word "shall".

Council President Travagline asks if there were any other questions or comments; there were none.

PUBLIC SESSION

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

Bob Webb, 218 West Revere Avenue - asked if there had been any further discussion about the sewer issue since the last meeting.

Council President Travagline replied no there had not.

Mr. Webb added that all actions the Council has taken have cost the City money; he encouraged exploring other options for insurance, and said he felt there were ethical issues. In his past as a police officer, he passed the test but was passed over for promotion because he was told he would run the department like the military. He noted that on Revere, New, and Oakcrest, there should be a sign to advise motorists

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to be cautious about the number of handicapped people who cross the street there.

Rosemary O'Dowd, 605 First Street - had lived there for 53 years, wanted to know where her flags were from Shore Road. She wanted to know why the flags were not up this year. Northfield was the first town to put up flags, other towns followed suit. She was angry and frustrated that the flags were not on the poles; she said it makes driving through Northfield feel un-American.

Mayor Chau explained that the flags were placed on private property, namely poles from AC Electric. About a year ago we were told that the flags were illegally installed and needed to be removed. This was very close to the 4th of July, and he challenged them. They presented him with an application to place the flags on the poles, which they claimed was the result of a lawsuit in Washington State. AC Electric claimed to have sent an application to the City in the past that would have allowed us to keep the flags up, but that since the City did not return it, we were subject to the new policy. No one from AC Electric could account for who in the City the new application was sent to, or when it was sent. New regulations required a new type of flag and could only be mounted on the sidewalk side of the street. He was told that other towns such as Linwood and Ventnor were grandfathered. Mayor Chau said he was still fighting AC Electric's policy, to get them on the street side, and it would cost about \$200. He stated that he did not want to put the City in any sort of legal bind. In addition, we don't have the equipment to put them up or take them down; in the past we have shared Somers Point's equipment. It had been a very frustrating process to see other towns have what we are being denied. He reiterated that the decision to remove the flags was not the decision of this governing body.

Councilman Perri noted that the committee at that time did a great job, and generated thousands in donations. He suggested that someone from the AC Electric corporate office come in and explain it.

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

Council President Travagline made assignments for the Regular meeting.

At 7:19pm, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk