

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD BUDGET WORK SESSION #1
MARCH 16, 2009**

At 7:00pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Acting Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised according to Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

ROLL CALL

Present: Carew, Martinez, O'Grady, Smith, Turon, Vain, Kern

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Mazzeo; following the flag salute there was a moment of silence in honor of all volunteers in the City of Northfield. May they continue to serve.

Council President Kern deferred to CFO Marilyn Dolcy for an initial budget explanation.

Dolcy reviewed the budget in detail. The budget right now stands at a 9.5 cent increase; and we are \$18,519 over the CAP. The tax increase is due to a decline in revenues, as opposed to increases in expenditures. Revenue declines include property tax collections, construction fees, and return on investments.

Mayor Mazzeo announced that the Police Department would not be replacing an officer who left to join the State Police in January, which will result in a savings of approximately \$60,000.00 including health benefits. Dolcy advised that this change reduces the current slated increase to 8.2 cents, and will bring us under the CAP. Councilman Carew stated that there are currently 2 vacancies in the Public Works Department, one in Vehicle Maintenance and the other in the Road Department. He is working on consolidating them into one job which would yield an additional savings of approximately \$35,000.00. Councilman Turon reviewed other savings attributable to attrition, including not hiring a Deputy City Clerk, replacing the Full Time Construction Code Official with a Part Time employee, reducing the hours of the Plumbing Sub Code Official, and not filling the Administrator's position. A lengthy discussion ensued as to options for further reducing expenses.

Carew noted that the bidding environment is good and that we may want to take advantage of it by making Capital improvements. A separate meeting to discuss Capital projects was recommended.

Mayor Mazzeo will check on the status of a newly introduced Bill that may substantially reduce our Library fees; Kern suggested that Council adopt a resolution in support of the Bill.

President Kern opened the meeting for public input:

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Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court, listed other increases in County and School taxes that will result in a 16 cent increase in total. He also cited unemployment and underemployment in the area and suggested consolidating the Northfield Community School Library with the Municipal Library. Tanzola urged Council to look again at the budget for additional savings.

Jim O'Neill, 7 Cara Court, suggested that Mayor and Council review all salary increases and that they decline their own scheduled increases for 2009. He inquired about sharing Tax Assessor services with another town, suggested that there are positions in the Tax Office and in the Court that he feels can be consolidated, urged Council to consolidate communications systems to save money, and encouraged turning the thermostats down in City Hall to reduce natural gas costs.

Frank Perri, 7 Haddon Avenue, suggested a moratorium on new Capital expenditures for a year or two, an inter-local agreement for the construction office, reducing tipping fees by privatizing trash collection, privatizing crossing guards and reducing governing body representation from 8 to 5 members. He added that with a full time rescue squad, he feels the 1st responder from the Fire Department can be eliminated and suggested furloughs for City employees.

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

On motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, Acting Municipal Clerk