

The Village of Northfield

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

January 28, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Mayor, Jesse J. Nehez at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited.

ROLL CALL was read by Lisa M. Rodriguez, Clerk of Council. The following were present: Mayor Nehez, Beatrice Greenlee, Linda Bowen, Nicholas Magistrelli, Gary Vojtush, Alan E. Hipps. Ethan Miladinovic was not present. In addition, Law Director, Brad Bryan, Police Chief Mark Wentz, Service and Building & Zoning Superintendent Jason Walters and Finance Director Timothy Clymer were in attendance. Village Engineer Richard Wasosky and Fire Chief Jason Buss were not in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Nehez asked for approval of the minutes for the Council meeting of January 14, 2015. A motion for amendment made by Alan Hipps to correct the word "service" to "surface" in Rich Wasosky's report under section C. Linda Bowen asked to amend the date for the block watch from January 17th to January 21st at the end of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Linda Bowen for the amendments, and carried with 5 ayes. The motion was made by Beatrice Greenlee and seconded by made by Alan Hipps, passed with 5 ayes.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, MEMORIALS AND REMONSTRANCES:

Summit County Councilman Nick Kostandaras stated to Mayor Nehez and Council that his pretense here at the meeting was not to cause a problem, but to help if there is any kind of a problem, to get it resolved. Nick said he has read the Village audit reports, and he has been contacted by people in the community with respect to the reports and did discuss attending this meeting with the Mayor as he also did with the prosecutors office. He said that there has been a lot in the media with respect to the audits and finances which concern him a great deal. Nick said the Village Council and himself all agree that it is about the residents and general public, that no one is perfect or walks on water.

Nick stated that his main concern was while maintaining integrity for all of the people that are represented. Nick stated that he had contacted and met with the County Prosectors office to discuss the minutes and the comments that have been in the media, it concerned them a great deal. Nick stated that while he was in Columbus on the 14th and 15th, he felt very strongly that he needed to make the Mayor aware that he would be attending the January 28th Council meeting to bring this information out. He said that Mayor Nehez did contact him that evening and Nick stated that he spoke with the Council Prosecutor's office and he suggested and recommended that we get the Attorney Generals office to come in and review the documentations of the audit. Nick said that he isn't here to cause a problem, he is here to help Council and the Mayor to restore the integrity of the finances, because he does believe financial matters are a top priority not only for the local government but also the county government.

Nick told Mayor Nehez that if there is anything he can do to help he would be more than happy to do that. Mayor Nehez stated that he welcomes anything Nick could bring to them and also he welcomes any investigation. Nick said that he feels that would be the smart move, and it would put the matter to rest. He also thanked Mayor and Council for the opportunity to speak.

Law Director, Brad Bryan stated that the people on Council spend a lot of time working for little money and there is plenty of integrity here. Brad said that the every single dime that is spent by the Village, the Mayor has no spending authority like other municipalities, and is approved in open Council meetings. Brad said as far as the Village, it is on the pay ordinance every month, with the exception of wages and possibly utility bills and wages are approved by Council. He said that Mayor Nehez and Tim Clymer told anyone they are welcome to come and ask.

Brad said to Nick that he wishes he would have come and talked to Mayor Nehez and Council first before going to the County. Nick said that the matter came up and he met with the prosecutor right here at a restaurant in the Village. He said he gave this matter a lot of thought and that is why he was here today to let Council and Mayor know, the prosecutor was happy they are communicating. Nick said that the bottom line is that there are some irregularities or differences, he doesn't want people to have the illusion that records are not being taken care of. Nick said he didn't want to make a decision on his own, so he went to the prosecutor and then he called Mayor Nehez right away. Nick asked if someone asks for a record of the financial records, is it made available? Brad stated yes the records have always been made public. Mayor Nehez stated that they have nothing to hide and they welcome any investigation. Brad stated that the auditors were here at the Village for a lengthy period of time and issued a report. Nick stated that he will talk with the prosecutor and let him handle it, just like he did in Macedonia. Brad said next time to come see Mayor and Council first.

Finance Director, Tim Clymer said that the audit brought up a lot of issues and they have already been working to rectify them since the audit began. We have been working on them and have made a lot of progress and the audit didn't find any issues of missing money, which they would be called "findings for recovery", so there aren't any prosecutable offenses that came up in the audit, everything was more or less accounting based, misclassification, issues that are more or less easily fixable.

Tim said they have made a lot of progress, especially over the last couple of months, but told Nick it is appreciated that he came to the meeting and for looking out for the residents and looking out for the integrity of what they do. Tim said that is what he is looking out for also.

Tim also told Nick that when he is looking for information regarding this issue, he would be better served coming to see Tim, Mayor Nehez or Brad than relying on that section of the paper. Nick said that he has been involved with previous administration, and that Tim has only been here with finances for a couple weeks. Tim stated that he has been here since May of 2014.

Nick stated that he appreciates the Mayor's comments that he welcomes the investigation and told Mayor Nehez that he will work with him to make sure it is getting done. Nick stated now that it is out in the open, he can even bring the prosecutor here with him.

Brad stated that when he spoke with the prosecutor, he didn't seem like he didn't want to be involved with the process. Nick stated that he does for the County, the State level and also the communities.

Village resident of Cranbrook, Joe Buzalewski stated that he comes to all of the council meetings and for 8 years was Council at Large and in his 50 years he has been a resident, he would like to commend the administration, Council and department heads for the fine job everyone is doing. Joe said he has seen a lot of changes in the Village and with the new administration and going forward it will only get better by everyone working together. He said if there is a disagreement, you still need to work it out. Joe said that all department heads work hard, but he commended Jason Walters and his employees of the many departments that he oversees, and for Jason and his employees going above and beyond their duties. He said things are changing and going to get better for this community. Joe said the goals that are being set forth are the goals years ago they wanted to see changed and he thanked everyone.

Village resident of 135 Chestnut, Mike Satola praised the Village of Northfield safety forces, the police and fire department. Mike stated that the police and fire departments were both quick to respond to the emergency he had at his residence with his health. He said people are quick to put down the safety forces. Mike said thanks to the members of the police and fire department.

Brad Bryan read emergency Resolution 2015-01, confirming the Mayor/Director of Safety's appointment of Michael Malak as a part-time police officer. A motion was made by Beatrice Greenlee and seconded by Linda Bowen, passed with 5 ayes.

Police Chief Mark Wentz now welcomed Michael Malak and administered the Oath of Office.

Nordonia Hills City School Board of Education member, Jim Szabo announced that he will be hosting an open house here at the Village Hall open to all residents on Thursday, February 12th from 7p-9p. To discuss any concerns or questions about the Nordonia Hills School District.

Kris Liljebblad, the Planning Director of Metro RTA spoke about the Call A Bus for the Village residents. Mayor Nehez stated that this was just discussed at one of the Council work sessions and said that these are good ideas that Gary Vojtush has had. Kris showed the map of where the Call A Bus currently runs, and what they have added on. Call a Bus is \$4/per trip and the resident would have to reserve with a 1-day notice; and operates from 7a-5p daily. Kris said there are currently 20 residents that use the Call A Bus.

Gary asked about the seniors who are disabled and need to get to the doctor are included. He said there is a Scat Service which is \$2.50/per trip and they will be picked up at their door, must be 62 years or older and includes any disabilities.

REPORTS OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS:

A. MAYOR JESSE J. NEHEZ stated he has been in contact with Howard Shafron, New Plaza Management owner regarding the Plaza and some possible new tenants that he can't disclose at this time,

B. FINANCE DIRECTOR TIM CLYMER stated that the pay resolution 2015-03 is up for consideration with Council. He said that some of the larger pay items were public works commission for various road projects,, a vehicle lease to Dollar Bank, Cargill for salt, and Ledge Rd Building lease. Tim also said for an annual fee for Hydrants to the City of Cleveland for water charges.

C. ENGINEER RICHARD WASOSKY was not in attendance.

D. LAW DIRECTOR BRADRIC BRYAN had no report.

E. DEPARTMENT HEADS:

1. Police Department, Chief Mark Wentz gave his report. (See attached) Beatrice Greenlee said that she will get back with Chief Wentz about some dates to hold a work session to discuss some items and also the new cruiser. Council President said they will hold off for now on discussions about ordering a new cruiser. Nick Magistrelli agreed that since it was so sudden they would like time to discuss. Beatrice Greenlee said they will hold off as long as it doesn't jeopardize the Village residents.

Gary Vojtush asked why they couldn't order that color. Chief Wentz said that pigmentation is no longer available. Gary said the new Ford's are being made with that color, can't we go to that color down the road. Chief Wentz said it must be a limited amount. Gary asked how much of the car is covered in a decal. Chief Wentz said about 50-60%.

2. Fire Department, Fire Chief Jason Buss was not present.

3. Service/Building Supervisor, Jason Walters, read a short departmental report. (See attached) Jason said he is working on having the May clean up month with three dumpsters at Ledge Rd, Houghton Rd and Chestnut sewer plant. He said that Lisa Rodriguez is working on the community shredding day information. He also said that his department is taking calls for any seniors that need help with removal of garbage or debris. Also waiving permit fees for residents for the month of May only. Brad asked if this was something that Council is interested in doing. Beatrice Greenlee said yes, and council agreed. Brad said he will put together legislation. Jason said he would like to finalize all of this information by March so we can start advertising Month of May Cleanup to the residents.

Gary asked if this information will be put on the website and advertised. Jason said yes once it is all finalized. Jason said that Mr. Buzalewski and Mr. Wiegand came and took a tour of the Ledge Rd building and had talks and it went very well.

REPORTS OF MUNICIPAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

A. PLANNING COMMISSION, ALAN E. HIPPS, had no report.

B. RECREATION BOARD, MAYOR NEHEZ, stated that they will meet on February 5th at 7:30p to discuss the Village easter party.

C. CEMETARY BOARD, BEATRICE GREENLEE, had no report.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

FINANCE: LINDA BOWEN had Brad Bryan read 2015-03, resolution for payment of the bills for the month ending January 2015. A motion was made by Linda Bowen and seconded by Beatrice Greenlee, passed with 5 ayes.

Brad read the Mayor's Court report for December 2014. A motion for acceptance was made by Linda Bowen and seconded by Beatrice Greenlee, accepted with 5 ayes.

ROADS/PUBLIC WORKS: ETHAN MILADINOVIC was not present. Gary said that he met with Jason at the Houghton Rd garage and then Ledge Rd, he is very impressed with the new equipment and he thanked Jason for taking time out of his day for about two hours for discussion.

HEALTH AND WELFARE: GARY VOJTUSH had no report.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: ALAN HIPPS had no report.

WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS: NICHOLAS MAGISTRELLI had no report.

FIRE AND SAFETY: BEATRICE GREENLEE stated that on February 11, 2015 at 6:30pm will have a fire and safety committee meeting at the town hall.

LEGISLATION:

Brad read Resolution 2015-02 emergency Resolution authorizing the Mayor to amend the rubbish collection contract with Rumpke of Ohio. Council President Beatrice Greenlee along with Council decided to put this on second reading at the February 11, 2015.

OLD BUSINESS; None

NEW BUSINESS; Councilman Gary Vojtush stated that he is having an investigation into the Village's finances

ANNOUNCEMENTS; Gary Vojtush stated that after conversing with Councilman Nick Kostandaras, he has something he would like to say. He said "At this time along with Summit County Councilman Nick Kostandaras, I am asking for an outside, unbiased agency to proceed with an investigation into the recent negative audit and the day to day operations in the Village of Northfield. I aid the Ohio Attorney General and I cannot sit back any longer and continually being ignored with my requests, for simple answers to questions that have been asked of me by my constituents. Misfeasance, malfeasance or non-feasance by this administration needs to stop. Having to agree on budgets and union contracts without knowing fiscal outlooks on the Village is not the way we should be doing business. Residents are entitled to transparency in government and the way their tax dollars are being spent. We can't continue to guess on budgets and we need to base our votes on actual numbers not fictitious or non-existent ones. This request for an outside source is not meant or intended to

embarrass anybody. It is meant to bring answers to the negative audit findings that were very disturbing. I would imagine that Council would want an unbiased outside source for the investigation to rectify any question of transparency governing by the Nehez administration. I would hope that this inquiry/investigation would finally bring closure and transparency to the day to day operations and fiscal accountabilities for the tax payers and residents in the Village of Northfield. Thank you.”

Mayor Nehez welcomes any investigation, and we have nothing to hide and we have done nothing wrong.

Brad stated that the finance director has offered to meet with you and answer any questions, and we wish you would have done that first instead of having secret meetings. Gary said he isn't the one that started this, even though everyone in this Village thinks I was the one who started this.

Linda Bowen said phone calls that they had when Gary was there. Brad stated to Gary that Tim would answer any questions that he had. Mayor Nehez stated to Tim that he didn't know we were missing any money! Tim said that we are no. Mayor and Bea said that we never were missing money. Mayor Nehez said that the audit stated “no findings for recovery” and he asked Gary “what does no finds for recovery mean”. Gary said well I have the report and you have the report. Gary asked Mayor to explain what that meant and Mayor Nehez said it means no money is missing. Gary said that when they first started this way back when with reports showing \$1.8 million. Mayor, Linda and other council stated to Gary that they have already gone over this in the past. Gary said he is sorry everyone is getting excited over this but he said he is allowed to speak his own words. Linda Bowen stated that she is also. Gary said he is allowed to ask his opinion, and what the people asked him about, he is finally going to ask. Linda stated that they all are and many people keep asking why Gary keeps bringing this up all of the time. Gary said they are allowed to have their opinion just like he is, and Linda Bowen said “and the truth will come out”. Gary said fine, when the truth comes out and it is all fine, then we can put everything to rest. Linda feels that Gary will never put this to rest. Linda stated that “we” as council don't appreciate for Gary to bring them down. Linda said that they have explained the budget and showing him the numbers at the time when he came on council were not correct but Gary could not comprehend that. Gary said to Linda that she is right, but they also said they weren't going to pass any budget until they finally got the exact numbers that they needed. Linda and Gary both disagreed on whether the numbers were correct or not. Mayor Nehez stated that is why they brought in Local Government Services in, a state agency. Linda said that it is a shame that the former people who were on finance are not on Council any more. We knew that there were problems then Linda said, and “she” couldn't handle her job. Mayor Nehez said we corrected the problem and Linda said we are moving forward.

Mayor Nehez stated that he welcomes the investigation, and Linda Bowen and Beatrice Greenlee said they do also.

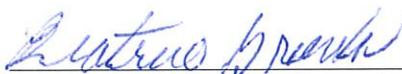
Police Chief Mark Wentz commended officer Jones on the stop that he had the other day on Northfield Rd. Two members of the Felony Lane Gang were arrested by officer Fred Jones following a routine traffic stop for a speed violation. Congrats to Fred!

Mayor Nehez said that an investigation is going to be great and now we can go into the former administration and also find out why Gary was fired, time cards being fixed and all kinds of other stuff, that is all he is saying. Mayor Nehez said he welcomes it, bring it!

ADJOURNMENT -

A motion for adjournment at 8:43p.m. was made by Beatrice Greenlee and seconded by Linda Bowen passed with 5 ayes.

Respectfully submitted by:



Beatrice Greenlee
President of Council

Attest:



Lisa M. Rodriguez
Clerk of Council

Council Meeting

January 28, 2015

Police Department Report by Chief Mark Wentz

■ POLICE PERSONNEL:

Chief Wentz has been meeting one-on-one with each member of the police department to assess and address problems, personal and/or professional, and some personnel conflicts within the department. The interviews also covered the positives, departmental and individual career goals, and potential forthcoming personnel changes in personnel and duty assignments. To date, the interviews have been deemed successful and productive. As of this date, Chief Wentz has two remaining interviews to conduct.

A police supervisors meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:00 am, followed by a full departmental meeting on Sunday, February 22, 2015, beginning at 9:00 am. Mayor Nehez has accepted Chief Wentz's invitation to attend the departmental meeting and to address the officers.

■ GOOD POLICE WORK

The police are oftentimes criticized for running stationary radar. The general opinion from certain persons is that it is nothing more than a "speed trap" and that we could better serve the public if we constantly patrolled and never sat any one place. Here is an example of why we run stationary radar:



On January 20, 2015, two members of the "Felony Lane Gang" (FLG), **Angelica Elizabella Varela** (far left), and **Patricia Ann Fromen**, were arrested by **Officer Fred Jones** following a routine traffic stop for a speed violation. The FLG is a large, loosely affiliated,

mobile criminal network based in Florida, but operating in more than thirty states. The FLG defrauds victims by cashing stolen checks and making fraudulent withdrawals, using identity documents and financial instruments stolen from parked vehicles.



Officer Fred Jones (left) was *running stationary radar* on Northfield Road, when a gray 2013 Chrysler passed by him at 45 mph in the 25 mph business district zone. He made the stop on Alexander, just east of Northfield. Further investigation revealed that the women were in possession of stolen driver's licenses, stolen credit cards, and items (wigs, glasses, etc.) for disguising themselves. A stolen Ohio license plate was affixed atop the rental vehicle's Florida plate. Another stolen Ohio license plate, along with stolen purses, had been found in a nearby

dumpster the day prior and were later tied to these two women during the investigation.

This arrest follows a string of vehicle break-ins across Ohio in recent weeks. The two women were interviewed by Officer Jones, along with Cleveland Metroparks and Macedonia detectives regarding area thefts in recent weeks. As a result of those interviews and an exchange of information with other law enforcement agencies across the state, dozens of financial crimes, car break-ins, and other

related crimes may be solved. As of this date, these two women are being tied to fraudulent transactions at banking institutions in the Boardman, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Findlay areas.

Varela and Fromen are incarcerated in the Summit County Jail on \$100,000.00 cash only bonds. Our case will be presented to the Summit County Grand Jury for indictment.

■ **GOOD POLICE WORK Continued**



Chief Wentz received a letter from **United States Marshal, Peter J. Elliott**, commending several members of the Akron Division of the Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force, including our own **Det. Sgt. Ed Carlile** (left), for the assistance provided on Saturday, November 15, 2014.

On that date, **Lt. Clark Westfall**, the Assistant SWAT Commander for the Akron Police Department, requested assistance from the NOVFTF in executing a search warrant in connection with dog fighting. Within minutes, seven members of the NOVFTF, including Det. Sgt. Carlile, committed to assist. On that day, fifty-two law enforcement officers arrested forty-seven subjects, seized several guns, over \$52,000.00 in cash, rescued eight dogs, uncovered an indoor marijuana grow, and recovered other drugs and evidence related to dog fighting.

Det. Sgt. Carlile was commended for his professionalism, dedication and willingness to assist.

■ **REQUEST FOR WORK SESSION**

Chief Wentz is requesting **Chairperson Bea Greenlee** schedule a **Fire & Safety Committee** meeting to discuss police personnel and budget issues for 2015. Please advise me of the date and time and I will make myself available.

■ **FORD SUV UTILITY VEHICLE ORDER DEADLINE**

We were informed in the beginning of the month by Park Ford that no more black Ford SUV Utility vehicles are available until the fall due to the lack of the black pigmentation they use to mix the "Tuxedo" black color. He agreed to look for a department that had ordered one in Tuxedo black, but then decided not to accept it at this time. None were found. The Mayor and I discussed the idea of switching over to a charcoal gray or other suitable color that is a match for our department decals, but decided we wanted to stay with the solid black cruisers.

Then, I was informed on the afternoon of this council meeting (Wednesday, January 28, 2015), that Ford has made a new color available, *Absolute Black*, on a limited basis that fits our color prerequisite. Unfortunately, due to the high volume of requests expected, the order must be placed by January 31st (this Saturday)! I would need council's permission to place the order. If ordered now, the vehicle would arrive in mid to late April. If we have to wait until fall to place our order, there is no guaranteed delivery by the end of 2015.

- End of Report -

The Month of May will be Northfield Village Beautification and Home Improvement Month!

- 1. Village will supply Dumpsters at 3 locations for Residents to throw trash and debris in. Ledge Rd. - Houghton Rd and Chestnut Sewer Plant.**
- 2. The Village will have a Shred it day or days where residents can have documents shred.**
- 3. Any senior Resident needing help with removal of garbage or Debris can schedule such help by calling Lisa Rodriguez at The Service Department.**
- 4. Any Village resident that is doing an Exterior Home Improvement project that requires a Village Building Permit shall have the permit fees waived during the month of May only. Permits must be pulled in May and will be good for 60 days. Examples- (Driveways-Siding-windows-roof)
Council Must Approve**
- 5. Talking with Sherwin Williams to see about a significant discount to Any Village Resident during the month of May with proof of residence.**

Mayor and Council if you should have any other ideas please let me know. I am looking at other ideas as well and would like to have this complete by the last meeting in February.