

## Preliminary Municipal Budget Increasing \$2.4 Million Over '04

**By PAUL PEYTON**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — The Town Council is set to introduce a budget, possibly by as early as March 1, that increases municipal spending by \$2.4 million over last year and includes between two and three new positions.

Town Administrator Jim Gildea said at present town government is looking at a 7.4 cent increase per \$100 of assessed valuation in the municipal tax rate. Last year municipal taxes jumped 11 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation or an average of \$200 per household. He said the municipal tax rate should be half of last year's increase.

The \$32.3 million budget represents a 7.9 percent increase of the \$29.9 million spending plan adopted in 2004, according to Mr. Gildea. The biggest increase on the appropriations side of the budget is in statutory and/or required expenses where the town will see a 15.7 percent or \$773,871 increase.

"This is only preliminary," Mr. Gildea emphasized during an interview with *The Westfield Leader* yesterday morning.

Among the hikes in this area are the municipal library requirement allotment which is \$188,301, the Public Employees Retirement System

(PERS) where costs jumped \$40,000, a \$217,270 or 139.5 percent spike in the Police & Fire Retirement Systems costs, and a \$248,000 or 17.3 percent increase in the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority budget.

Operating expenses are 9.3 percent or \$650,000. Of that total, health insurance cost are up \$415,000, legal expenses will increase by \$62,000, and the planning board budget is up 77.7 percent or \$26,900. Also, the building department budget will increase \$61,000 with utilities seeing a slight hike to \$24,000.

Mr. Gildea said salaries and wages typically account for half of the budget each year. The proposed 2005 budget salaries are up \$650,000 or 4.4 percent.

In terms of revenue, Mr. Gildea said the town is assuming state aid will remain at last year's level of \$84,120. The town is also proposing using \$4 million of its surplus to lower the amount of money needed in property taxes. The surplus represents a half-million dollar jump over last year.

Mr. Gildea has proposed adding a human resources director at an annual salary of around \$60,000 to \$75,000, and filling the now vacant position of assistant director of pub-

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## Exterior Design For PNC Building Okayed by Board

**By DAVID GIALANELLA**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — On Monday evening, the town's planning board approved exterior designs for the PNC Bank building at the intersection of Broad and Prospect Streets.

Westfield-based architect Barbara Vincentsen appeared before the board with renderings of the building's proposed facade. Ms. Vincentsen said the building would feature a facade of stucco and standard brick, making the structure somewhat darker than it is currently.

The tinted glass that now spans from the ground to the third floor will only remain on the ground level. Board Chairman Jay Boyle questioned whether keeping any of the glass was completely necessary, and Ms. Vincentsen told him that the bank would not agree to having any glass

removed on the ground floor.

Ms. Vincentsen explained that the plans are to take the existing building, "keep the base" and "rework" it — structurally. She said the building will not change and that PNC Bank will retain its site at Prospect and Broad Streets.

Three members of the board abstained from voting on the application, and board member Robert Newell voted against the application, remarking that he was "really unhappy" with some aspects of the plans.

The majority of the board approved the plans. Mr. Boyle commented, "I think it's a big improvement over what's there."

The board heard only one other case that evening, James Watson of EKA Associates, P.A., an engineering, surveying and planning firm,

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## Gary McCready Seeks WF BOE Seat; Incumbent Hunnicutt Seeks Reelection

**By BETSEY BURGDOFF AND PAUL PEYTON**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — Gary McCready of Mohican Drive in Westfield launched his campaign this week for one of three seats in this spring's board of education races.

A computer systems manager with Summit Mitsu Bank in Jersey City, Mr. McCready has lived in Westfield for 10 years. His oldest child attends Roosevelt Intermediate School and his two youngest are students at Wilson Elementary School. The family moved briefly to California where the candidate had taken a job, but moved back to Westfield less than a

year later.

Mr. McCready was involved in the district's strategic planning committee in 1998 and was co-president of the former Advanced Learning Program. That program was replaced by the Gifted and Talented Program.

"I feel I could contribute a lot (to the board) especially in the area of technology," Mr. McCready stated.

Saying he would like to see more community involvement, the candidate proposed having forums available on the district's Web site where residents could comment on school issues. "I would like to get more of the community involved in passing ideas on to the board," said Mr.

McCready.

Incumbent Alice Hunnicutt will be seeking to maintain her seat on the board, and told *The Westfield Leader*, "I have a comfort level being in the role (of board member); it is a learning experience for me, too." She was elected three years ago to the three-year term and is hoping for a chance at a second term.

Mrs. Hunnicutt and her husband, George Bogatoo, have lived together in Westfield since 1984, although he is a native Westfielder. They were both professional musicians living in New York City when the opportunity arose to purchase Mr. Bogatoo's child-

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## John Murphy Visits Town In Quest For Republican Gubernatorial Nod

**By PAUL PEYTON**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — Republican gubernatorial candidate John Murphy visited Westfield on Tuesday afternoon as he continues his quest for the GOP nomination. The candidate, a Morris County freeholder, said he is targeting the upcoming Union County Republican Party Convention.

Currently, Bret Schundler and Doug Forrester are considered the front-runners to capture the party's nod to run against United States Senator and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jon Corzine. Acting Governor Richard Codey has announced he will not challenge Senator Corzine for the Democratic Party nomination.

Mr. Murphy said he received the

endorsement of Clark Mayor Salvatore Bonaccorso on Tuesday and is also being supported by Scotch Plains Township Council members Nancy Malool, Paulette Coronato and Carolyn Sorge. He additionally has the support of all Republican Morris County mayors.

"We are putting it together. Endorsements are key," he said.

Admitting that he is running a "distant third," Mr. Murphy believes that as the only Morris County candidate and with his grassroots effort, he is a "direct contrast" to Senator Corzine

and his personal wealth. He said the winner of the June Primary would likely need between 28 and 32 percent to become the party's nominee. He envisions at least half of his support coming from his home base of Morris County. In terms of the county GOP conventions, Mr. Murphy said he needs to "make a respectful showing."

"We have been out (seeking party support) for over two years with our toe in the water," said Mr. Murphy, who officially launched his campaign

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**FOND FAREWELL...** Friends, family, and loyal customers gather at the Station Coffee Shoppe on South Avenue on their last day of business. Proprietor and Westfield resident Pat Guglielmi, far left, and her husband, Joe, opened in 1995. She said that she was only able to continue on her own after Joe passed away about six years ago because of the support she got from her friends. In a farewell letter given out to all of her customers, Mrs. Guglielmi said, "Through the good and bad, happy and sad, I could always count on you ... I hope you know how I feel about each and every one of you."

Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

## MS BOE Narrows Chief School Admin. Search; Presents Budget

**By BETSEY BURGDOFF**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

At the Tuesday night meeting of the Mountainside Board of Education, Board President Peter Goggi announced that the search for a new Chief School Administrator (CSA) has been narrowed to two potential candidates.

Dr. Richard O'Malley and Dr. Vincent Taffaro will be presented to the Criteria Committee, faculty and staff and community members today and again on Thursday, February 17. Dr. O'Malley and Dr. Taffaro will be touring Beechwood School with Interim Chief School Administrator Walter Rusak at 1:30 p.m.

The candidates will then tour Deerfield School with the Community Group panel question and answer period being slated for 3:30 p.m. at Deerfield.

The introductory forum, billed as "A Day in the District," will give interested parties an opportunity to meet, as well as ask the candidates questions.

Rating sheets will be provided to all who have the availability to come. The opinions reflected on the sheets will be considered in the selection of the CSA.

In other business, Mr. Goggi stated

that LEW Corporation, the environmental testing company hired to investigate the odor at Beechwood School would be submitting their findings from samples taken January 31 next week.

The board will report their findings to the public at the Tuesday, February 22, meeting.

Mr. Goggi also reported that the

board received a letter from Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21) amending Senate Bill S1701. The bill, if passed, would revise the calculation of budget caps and reduce allowable surplus for public school districts.

Sue Winans, Director of the Mountainside Recreation Department, made a presentation to the board

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## Higher Building Permit Fees Proposed In Boro

**By KIMBERLY BROADWELL**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

MOUNTAINSIDE — Borough Council members discussed new ordinances protecting homeowners regarding builders and the restriction of feeding wild animals during their agenda Tuesday evening.

Members of the governing body held discussions regarding raising fees for building permits and also implementing an ordinance requiring contractors to register with the building department before they can work in Mountainside.

The suggested fee by council members was \$100 every two years. Councilman Paul Mirabelli stated that the problem of contractors taking homeowner deposits and not delivering services has reached an all-time high everywhere.

"A builder can be just a guy with a truck," he stated. "Half of these builders don't apply for proper permits."

He also noted that he has personally seen many homeowners who have never seen their contractors again after paying their initial deposit.

In other business, a handful of residents were present at the meeting to ask the governing body to support an ordinance regarding prohibiting homeowners from feeding deer. The residents stated that the feeding of wild animals was a problem, as it attracts raccoons, mice, rats and squirrels as well as deer to local properties. They noted that it then adds to a waste problem in their yards.

Council President Glenn Mortimer stated that he and the governing body, along with Borough Attorney John Post, would look into the adoption of such an ordinance.

Last month, resident Don Sharkey asked Mayor Robert Vigilanti and the council if there was an ordinance in Mountainside prohibiting homeowners from feeding the deer, as his neighbor leaves out bags of feed for the animals. He noted that this not only attracted the deer but also mice.

At that time, Mr. Post stated that at present, Mountainside did not have such an ordinance but that the mayor and council could look into the possibility of passing one. He also stated that he knew of other towns having such an ordinance and that he and the governing body would do some research into the matter.

Mountainside, along with many other towns within the county, are participating in Union County's Deer Management Program scheduled in March.

In other business, two ordinances are scheduled for a second reading at next week's council meeting, both having to do with price increases. The first would increase the Community Pool fees for the 2005 summer season. The Recreation Commission recommended the increases.

It was reported that the fee would be set at \$235 for a resident family, up from \$220, while the fee for a single membership would increase by \$10,

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## BOE Hears Arts, Sports Budget Plans

**By ED COONEY**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — The integration of technology into the Westfield school district's fine arts curricula is one of the driving forces behind an increase of 4.27 percent in the proposed fine arts budget for the 2005-2006 school year.

The total proposed fine arts budget comes to \$3,445,441, up \$140,989 from the 2004-2005 budget. Dr. Linda King, Supervisor of Fine Arts, presented the board with a budget proposal on Tuesday night that includes the purchase of 20 laptop computers for fine arts instructors at the elementary level at a cost of \$8,000.

The purchase of the computers would also come with the purchase of \$5,000 in software. At the intermediate level, the proposed budget asks for \$10,000 towards the purchase of multimedia carts for the district's two intermediate schools.

Each cart would include a projector, DVD player, and a sound system. To go along with the multimedia carts, the budget also asks for \$1,600 to purchase four laptops to enable use of the carts. Dr. King was quick to note that she does not intend for technology to take over the instructional portion of the curriculum, saying, "We're not looking to replace tactile interaction with technology."

The new equipment would be used to help instructors better illustrate the concepts they teach. Salaries for art teachers, drama teachers, instrumental and vocal music teachers, and the department's administrators accounts for \$3,101,097, or approximately 90 percent of the budget. The fine arts department currently has 45 teachers.

Stipends for co-curricular activities, including dramas, musicals, orchestras, jazz band, and marching band come to a total of \$135,876.

The proposed budget also includes \$127,987 in instructional supplies, \$26,205 in instructional equipment, and \$17,000 in transportation costs for the Westfield High School (WHS) marching band, the jazz band, and all other group travel expenses.

Also at Tuesday's meeting was Ed Tranchina, the district's athletic director. He presented the board with a proposed athletics budget of \$1,144,272 for the 2005-2006 school year, up \$72,070 or 6.72 percent from this year's budget. Mr. Tranchina attributed the increase to the fund-

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## Two MS BOE Seats Will Be Open in April

**By BETSEY BURGDOFF**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

According to Mountainside Board of Education Administrator Paul Vizzuso, the board has not yet received any nominating petitions for the two open seats on the board.

The terms of Board President Peter Goggi and Board Member John Perrin expire this year. Although Mr. Vizzuso confirmed neither has of yet submitted a petition for reelection.

When asked whether or not he would be seeking reelection, Mr. Perrin told *The Westfield Leader*, "definitely." He has occupied a seat on the board since October 1998.

Mr. Goggi has served on the board since May 1999 serving in the capacity as Board of Education President since April of 2003.

When asked whether he would vie for reelection Mr. Goggi stated that he is undecided but "still cogitating."

Anyone interested in running for a position on the school board can obtain an information packet from the board offices located in Beechwood School.

Candidates must be residents and are also required to obtain signatures from 10 registered voters. Petitions must be filed with the board offices by Monday, February 28, at 4 p.m.



**SEEKING TO BE GOVERNOR...** John Murphy from Morris County, GOP candidate for governor of New Jersey, seeks endorsements and support in Union County in preparation for upcoming Republican party caucuses in March and the Primary election in June. Mr. Murphy met with leaders in Clark, Westfield and Scotch Plains on Tuesday. Pictured above are Westfield Councilman James Foerster, left, and Mr. Murphy.

Horace Corbin for The Westfield Leader

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