



*Betsey Burgdorf for The Westfield Leader*  
**MOVING FORWARD...**Downtown Westfield Corporation Executive Director Sherry Cronin discusses the future of the downtown with newly-elected Chairman David Martone and other members of the board. Pictured, left to right, are: Mrs. Cronin, Special Officer John Morgan, Board Treasurer David Capodanno and Mr. Martone.

## DWC Focuses on Clean, Safe Downtown as 2005 Objective

**By BETSEY BURG DORF**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*  
**WESTFIELD** — The Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) elected David Martone as its new chairman during Tuesday night's Board of Directors re-organization meeting. "Thank you for the nomination. I humbly accept and I will try and take this board to the next level," Mr. Martone said.

Other appointments included Joe Spector as Vice-Chairman, David Capodanno as Treasurer and Dominic Verdic as Secretary. Lee Hale was welcomed to the board as a resident member.

The main focus of the meeting was to address the goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

DWC Executive Director Sherry Cronin stated, "A special focus will be on keeping the downtown cleaner."

The board discussed the Blue Machine owned by the town, which was estimated to have cost approximately

\$25,000. The machine is a self-propelled sidewalk cleaner that has been out of service for some time.

Special Officer John Morgan stated that the machine "is in the garage requiring parts." He continued stating, "It's a matter of making that (the repair) a budget item."

Mrs. Cronin stated, "My complaint is not in the trash receptacle pick-up, it is in other areas." She added that

she would like to see a "pan and broom litter pickup" two days a week.

Mr. Spector suggested educating the business owners about what they need to do to keep the areas around their businesses clean.

Board member Frank Arena asked, "Does the town have a description or details (regarding litter management) they share with you?"

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### **BREAKING NEWS: Michael Chertoff, Former Westfielder, nominated for Homeland Security Post**



*From the Archives of The Westfield Leader*  
**HOMELAND SECURITY...**On Tuesday, President George W. Bush nominated former Westfielder Michael Chertoff to head Homeland Security for the nation. Mr. Chertoff is pictured with his wife, Meryl, in 2001. See Page 4.

## Projected BOE Budget Hike at 4.85 Percent

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

**WESTFIELD** — Westfield Board of Education Secretary Robert Berman revealed at the board's meeting Tuesday night that the town's school district budget for the 2005-2006 school year will see a proposed increase of 4.85 percent over the current school year.

The increase, which is down from last year's increase of almost 6 percent, is "considerably lower" than usual, said Mr. Berman.

The state of New Jersey allows for an increase of 3.01 percent over the previous year's budget, which would account for an increase of \$2,090,427.

Additionally, the Westfield school district is entitled to seek spending growth adjustments in the amount of

\$1,100,172 to cope with growing enrollment and \$180,000 to offset the cost of special education services.

Projections indicate that the school district could have as many as 80 to 85 additional students for the 2005-2006 school year.

"We are still seeing enrollment growth, but we are managing it well," said Board member Kimberly Rhodes.

In total, the district will seek \$1,280,172 in spending growth adjustments.

Adding the allowed increase of 3.01 percent and the amount to be sought in spending growth adjustments to this year's base budget equals a budget increase of \$3,370,599, officials said.

The total budget cap for the 2005-2006 school year budget is \$72,820,015. At this point, the proposed budget comes in at a total of \$72,982,339, which is \$162,324 over the cap.

Mr. Berman noted that cuts would have to be made, saying, "We cannot do everything we want to do."

The main expenditures involved in this year's budget are medical insurance for district employees, tuition costs for out-of-district placement of special education students, utilities for the district's various facilities, and contractual obligations towards staff, Mr. Berman said.

In addition, a new guidance counselor is being budgeted for Westfield High School (WHS), a full-time teacher will be hired to instruct the district's first class for autistic students, new computers need to be purchased for the second grade, and a number of capital projects need to be

figure improved.

In other business, the board approved an application to carry-over funds dedicated to the borough for the federal government's No Child Left Behind program from the 2004 fiscal year in the amount of \$7,060.

Board Secretary Paul Vizzuso told *The Leader* that grants can normally be carried over for one year unless otherwise indicated in the language of the grant program.

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## Ferguson Describes Region Hit By Tsunami Like A War Zone; Proud of Troops for Relief Efforts

**By HORACE CORBIN, PAUL PEYTON, SUZETTE STALKER AND BETSEY BURG DORF**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

**COLUMBO, SRI LANKA** — In a live telephone interview from South Asia on Monday morning, Congressman Michael Ferguson described for *The Westfield Leader* the devastation wrought by the tsunami on December 26 and the collective efforts by individuals from around the globe to help victims of the disaster.

Congressman Ferguson and his delegation, which included U.S. Senator Jon Corzine, received a firsthand account of the devastation that struck the region, where "It's as bad as could be imagined — a war zone; everything blown to smithereens," he remarked.

The congressman left Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. on Thursday night, traveling all day Friday, and arrived on Saturday to board a military cargo plane for a three-hour trip en route to the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln*.

"This (the air trip) was not for luxury traveling. We had life preservers on, along with helmets, earplugs under our earphones, goggles and we were strapped in so tight I could not get a deep breath," the congressman said. He described the landing on the carrier as "like a severe roller coaster."

On Saturday, Mr. Ferguson took a helicopter tour of Banda Aceh.

"We landed at the airstrip in Banda Aceh, where they are bringing in most

of the supplies and then distributing them to the camps which have been set up," he said.

He emphasized that United States military helicopters are getting the supplies where they need to go. The congressman noted that a U.S. Navy Seahawk helicopter carrying relief supplies to the region crashed Monday, but fortunately all 10-crew members survived.

Survivors have been spread out in camps. Officials on the ground feel that by spreading out the camps they will be able to reduce the spread of disease. Congressman Ferguson noted that U.S. helicopters are getting supplies to the victims of the devastated areas.

While in Banda Aceh, Congress-

man Ferguson met with a high government official/Indonesian minister and some local military and reviewed relief efforts. The delegation then re-boarded choppers to take another aerial tour of Banda Aceh before heading back to the *Abraham Lincoln*.

Mr. Ferguson and the delegation had breakfast on Sunday with United States Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, B. Lynn Pascoe, to discuss relief efforts and the general political situation in Indonesia and what role the U.S. is playing and might play in the future.

Next, the congressman flew to Bangkok, Thailand where he stayed at the U.S. Embassy for meetings that covered a range of topics including malaria-related healthcare crisis in Aceh, anti-terrorism efforts underway countrywide, HIV/AIDS, and the efforts to combat child trafficking.

On Monday, Congressman Ferguson met with Dr. Sandy Waran, a friend from New Jersey who is a native of Colombo, and others who are coordinating relief efforts of their own.

Congressman Ferguson said New Jerseyans should continue their support of the relief effort through financial donations and by contributing supplies, as well as their prayers for the survivors and those who were lost lives in the tsunami.

He explained that the most serious threats currently are outbreaks of malaria, cholera, and hepatitis. In this

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## Borough Soliciting Businesses For Donations for Town Clock

**By KIMBERLY BROADWELL**  
*Specially Written for The Leader*

**MOUNTAINSIDE** — The Borough of Mountainside is continuing its effort to raise private donations for a town clock that will be placed in front of Valley National Bank on Mountain Avenue.

Mayor Robert Vigilanti reported that 60 letters had been sent to businesses that are associated with the borough asking for a \$1,000 donation.

The mayor also noted that a four-page letter is presently being constructed to go to every Mountainside resident outlining the project and asking if they want to be a part of it.

The mayor stated that if a resident wishes to purchase a small nameplate on the clock it will cost \$250. He also stated that a \$350 donation would give a citizen a line on the clock plus a collectible miniature of the clock.

During the discussion it was noted that Donald and Bob Maxwell, of Maxwell Furniture Restoration on Mountain Avenue, would be donating a metal English-style bench to be placed next to the borough clock.

Mayor Vigilanti said that Valley National is donating the land to erect the clock as well as \$5,000 to help

finance the \$35,000 to \$40,000 bill to pay for the clock itself.

The mayor has noted that it looks very similar to the clock in Fanwood. He added that both Garwood and Clark have similar clocks. He concluded that this particular clock can be found in Mount Joy, Pa., between Elizabethtown and Lancaster.

Council members reiterated that any additional money raised that ex-

ceeds the cost of the clock would be donated to the borough's rescue squad.

In other business, a discussion regarding the community pool fees for the 2005 summer season was held as the Recreation Committee is recommending an increase. It was reported that the committee is asking for \$235 for a resident family, up from \$220; a \$10 increase to \$120 for a single

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## Town to Purchase 14 Pay Stations; Looks to Add Spaces in Downtown, Honor Late Town Clerk

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

**WESTFIELD** — In the aftermath of the defeat of plans for parking garages, the town is now looking at more minor fixes previously discussed to increase downtown parking capacity.

The town will increase the number of pay stations in the downtown will look once again at plans to gain additional spaces at existing municipal lots.

The council is set to vote on Tues-

day, January 20, to grant a \$175,000 contract to Metric Parking of Lyndhurst to purchase 14 pay stations. The stations will be installed in lot 5 behind the Rialto Theatre (replacing existing pay stations with more modern equipment), in lot 4 behind Baron's Drug Store and Victoria's Secret, in lot 7 across from the Westfield Post Office on Central Avenue, and lot 2 on North Avenue at the Westfield Train Station.

Town Administrator Jim Gildea explained that the town is also looking to once again look at plans to make what currently are lots 1 and 8 on Elm and Prospect Streets into one lot. Mr. Gildea said by reconfiguring the lots the town could pick up another 22 spaces. Also, by reconfiguring the train station lot another dozen spaces could be generated.

On a related issue, the a divided council opted to hold off taking action on an ordinance next week that would have eased up parking restrictions on a section of Stoneleigh Park, located near Westfield High School.

In other business, Mr. Gildea said the town has been in discussion with the Township of Scotch Plains for a plan to allow residents of the township to purchase permits to utilize Westfield's conservation center on Lamberts Mill Road.

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca called the proposed shared services agreement, "one of the most important issues we face." He said with costs for recycling operations

projected to increase it is important that the town generate additional revenue to reduce these costs.

Scotch Plains is also looking to join Westfield in its bulky waste residential pickup program. Mr. Gildea said an agreement is still in the talking stage.

Staying on the subject of shared services, Mr. Gildea said the Borough of New Providence has become the eighth town to join the Westfield Regional Health Department. The administrator said the health department would not need to hire additional employees at this time since

New Providence has an existing nursing program.

The other towns beside Westfield that are served by the regional department are Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, Roselle Park and Springfield.

"That's very good for us," said Mr. Gildea, noting the cost savings of the program as well as the regional power Westfield gains from operating the health department.

The council is also set to vote to approve the demolition of four, single-family homes located on Hillcrest

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## Mountainside School Bd. Ratifies Three-Year Deal With Teachers

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

**MOUNTAINSIDE** — On Tuesday, the Mountainside Board of Education ratified a new three-year contract with the Mountainside Education Association.

The new contract allots a 4.3 percent raise in teacher salaries, but otherwise does not change much from the previous contract.

Interim Chief School Administrator Walter Rusak called it a "cookie cutter contract," and added that, "we're happy to have the teachers back on board."

Teachers' Union President Jeannette Maraffi said that everyone

was happy with the salary increase, but explained, "What everyone is happiest about is that health benefits stayed intact. That was a big negotiation point."

Ms. Maraffi told *The Westfield Leader* that considering Mountainside's socioeconomic level, teachers are "trying to move up a little bit in the county."

She added that 47 percent of Mountainside teachers are untenured, and said she would like to see that

figure improved.

In other business, the board approved an application to carry-over funds dedicated to the borough for the federal government's No Child Left Behind program from the 2004 fiscal year in the amount of \$7,060.

Board Secretary Paul Vizzuso told *The Leader* that grants can normally be carried over for one year unless otherwise indicated in the language of the grant program.

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## Swastika Drawn on Forehead Of Baby Jesus in Crèche

**By SUZETTE F. STALKER**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

**WESTFIELD** — Vandals struck the crèche display at the Westfield train station on North Avenue sometime late last week, damaging five spotlights and drawing a swastika on the forehead of the Baby Jesus figure in the manger.

It was the second time an outdoor nativity scene has been targeted in Westfield recently — last week, the Baby Jesus was reported stolen from the crèche in front of Saint Helen's Roman Catholic Church on Rahway Avenue. The statue, valued at \$500 in financial terms, has not yet been recovered.

The train station display is spon-

sored by the Knights of Columbus. It was discovered vandalized by one of the Knights members and reported to police at 9 a.m. last Saturday.

Lieutenant John Parizeau of the Westfield Police Department stated the swastika had been drawn on the Christ child figure's face in black ink. He confirmed that the incident remains under investigation.

He said there have been no other recent incidents reported in the town involving sacred images or houses of worship being defaced with swastikas or other such symbols. Anyone with information is asked to call the Westfield Police Department at (908) 789-4000. All calls will be kept confidential.

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