

## MS BOE Budget at \$12 Mil., One Candidate Seeks Office

By BETSEY BURGDOFF  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader/Times

**MOUNTAINSIDE** — The Tuesday, March 1, meeting of the Mountainside Board of Education (BOE) was cancelled due to a severe snow storm that hit the area late Monday night. Once again, this past Monday a winter storm hit the area, but due to state regulations requiring at least 48 hours notice to cancel a meeting, the board held an abbreviated session in order to approve items on the agenda that were time sensitive.

The board approved the 2005-2006 preliminary school-operating budget for submission to the Union County Superintendent of Schools in the amount of \$11,917,497 with a Spending Growth Limitation Adjustment (SGLA) in the amount of \$221,990. The capital reserve in the amount of \$574,963 brought the total budget to \$12,714,432. The tax levy totaled \$10,442,048.

On Tuesday, April 15, borough residents will be asked to vote for the single candidate running for office. Voters may also provide write-in votes. There are two available seats on the board. Board member John Perrin's petition was the only one received prior to the February 28 deadline.

Voters will also be asked at that time to decide on the proposed \$12 million budget for the schools.

Business Administrator Paul Vissuzotold *The Westfield Leader*. "In a case like this, obviously there will be no candidates night." He explained that one of two things would now occur — write-in voting or appointment by the county superintendent of schools.

A write-in candidate must receive at least 10 votes in order to be elected to the board. In the case of more than one write-in candidate, votes would be counted and the candidate receiving the most votes would be appointed.

If there were no write-in candidate(s), the Union County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carmen Centuolo, would appoint the person of her choice to the position.

Board President Peter Goggi announced that in accordance with administrative code, the board will be transferring as much as 50 percent of the monies received from the dissolution fund from surplus into capital reserve. The board will be using the money to fund capital projects, such as "the scope of work at Deerfield School" Mr. Goggi said.

"We will not be going to the taxpayer for any help," Mr. Goggi concluded.

Mr. Goggi stated that because of the weather and the fact that the meeting was not being televised he would be forwarding details on the report from LEW Corporation regarding the odor

at Beechwood School at the next regularly scheduled board meeting on Thursday, March 24.

Mr. Perrin stated that there is currently no detectable odor in the school. "The problem is solved as long as it is 18 degrees out," Richard Woerst, a resident as well as a parent of a student in one of the affected classrooms said.

Mr. Perrin stated that Carrier, the manufacturer of the air conditioning units believed to be the source of the odor, checked the condensate drain connections to make sure they were functioning properly.

In the fall, approximately 50 feet of wet insulation was removed from the rooftop unit (RTU) emitting a foul odor similar to that found in the classrooms.

Wayne DeVico, maintenance supervisor for the district, examined the RTU stating, "What I saw was a three quarter inch piece of pipe with a volume of water. There seemed to be a lot of water."

"Maybe the drain is not big enough to handle the flow capacity," Mr. Woerst replied.

"They were installed according to code," Mr. Perrin said.

Referring to the fact that the drain may have been installed correctly and still not adequate, Mr. Woerst replied, "That is the difference between plumbing codes versus manufacturers recommendations."

Members of the board will be meeting with LEW Corporation and Sean Reilly of Home Health Science today to discuss the problem and the course of action to be taken.

"It was utterly resolved that the wrap was installed incorrectly. It was also installed during cold weather, which was not recommended, so the insulation failed," Mr. Perrin concluded.

Mr. Perrin reported that the district has been receiving complaints from neighbors regarding the lights behind Beechwood. Residents who live in the houses directly behind the school state that the lights are shining into their windows at night and are a nuisance.

Mr. Goggi stated that the angle of the lights is going to be adjusted to try and solve the problem.

Board member Pat Knodel addressed the board on the Canadian geese problem at Deerfield School. "The geese aren't the problem," Mr. Goggi said. "It's what they leave behind."

Possible solutions to the problem are being considered with Interim Chief School Administrator stating that once the weather becomes warm and the tractors are being utilized the problem should dissipate.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Miguel Carrasco

**IN SEARCH OF PEACE...** Staff Sgt. John Cuoco, left, of Westfield and a team chief with the 4th Civil Affairs Group of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment helped secure Al Saqlawiyah, Iraq on February 26. After securing the city, the marines provided humanitarian assistance such as rice, grain, tea, flour and other food supplies to the people.

## Garwood Council Proposes Background Checks for Vols.

By ANNA GITHEMS  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**GARWOOD** — The workshop session of Garwood Borough's Tuesday night's meeting of the Mayor and Council covered assessment for curb improvements on Second Avenue and proposed background checks for volunteers.

Garwood resident, Rich Bonfanti, of 340 Second Avenue brought forth his concern as to why the curb project is costing so much more than what the residents had originally been told. When this project started, there was a public meeting and "they were talking about \$5 to \$10 a foot, now we're up to double that," said Mr. Bonfanti.

He asked if the assessment is based on a percentage of the project or if it is the actual cost of putting the curb in.

Borough Clerk Christina Ariemma said that Mr. Bonfanti is being charged what the curbing actually costs. "The original Bond Ordinance No. 02-08 was estimated at \$19,000, which is very close to what the actual cost is; and you were sent a copy of ordinance 02-08," she said.

Ms. Ariemma noted that anyone could have access to the vouchers because they are public records.

The cost of the entire project, which includes road reconstruction on Oak Street, West Street, Cedar Street, Second Avenue and Spruce Avenue and curb improvements to Second Avenue, is approximately \$215,000. There was a \$250,000 bond ordinance issued with a DOT grant of \$131,000.

During the workshop session, talks

focused around performing background checks of all volunteers in the borough. "What that deals with is children, people that our coaches are working with," said Mayor McCarthy.

The decision to do the checks is derived from "Megan's Law." An ordinance will be proposed to make it mandatory for volunteers to receive a background check every two years.

Councilwoman Villaggio noted that the Board of Education's special meeting last night indicated that their regular operating budget has no tax increase.

Councilman Lombardo said that five Garwood officers participated in President George W. Bush's visit to Westfield last Friday and that 81 tickets were given out.

Resident Monty Brown, expressed concern with traffic on East Street. "The traffic moves very swiftly down that street. My neighbors car was totaled twice," Mr. Brown said. He related that he would like to see speed humps installed.

Mayor McCarthy said, "We'll have the police take a look at it again. Maybe we can get some radar out there."

## Memorial Park Revamping Draws Public Comments

By DAVID GIALANELLA  
Specially Written for The Leader and The Times

**WESTFIELD** — The Recreation Commission held a brief public meeting Monday night to address questions and concerns about the proposed revamping of Memorial Park. A formal master plan will be presented later in the year.

Recreation Director Bruce Kaufmann hosted the event. In attendance were Councilmen Jim Foerst and Rafael Betancourt, and several members of the commission.

Robert Lynes, Vice President of Hatch Mott MacDonald, the company that will spearhead the formal plans, was also in attendance.

Mr. Kaufmann began by saying that "the demand for fields in Westfield is beyond crucial." There are a growing number of children, evidenced by recent construction at several Westfield schools, said Mr. Kaufmann. He also mentioned the increase from 3.9 to 4.3 people-per-family in Memorial Pool memberships.

Tentative plans include regrading the soccer fields, which have a tendency to flood, and moving the tennis courts, which are often bombarded by foul balls from the softball fields.

Scotch Plains Avenue resident Joe Penczak voiced concerns about a renovated Memorial Park, saying, "I don't think anybody in the area would like tower lighting, or sports played throughout the night."

Mr. Kaufmann did not indicate that there were any plans to include such lighting.

Mr. Penczak also suggested that the commission looked into improving fields behind Edison Intermediate School and creating fields in the wooded areas behind the basketball courts at Tamaques Park. Mr. Kaufmann explained that they'd begun to look into the Edison fields, but that doing so at Tamaques would encroach too greatly upon the streams in the area.

Another Scotch Plains Avenue resident complained that many people park their cars on the surrounding streets during soccer games because they are

in greater proximity to the fields than some areas of Memorial Park parking lot. He speculated that a fence might solve the problem.

Girls' softball representative John Fietkiewicz explained that there is a serious need of new backstops at the softball fields.

"I am shocked that we have avoided serious injury," Mr. Fietkiewicz said. He encouraged the commission not to rule out expanding the softball fields.

Several citizens expressed concerns that expanding the softball fields would cause considerable tree removal.

Citizens also expressed a need for a sidewalk on Scotch Plains Avenue, though some residents oppose the idea. Mr. Kaufmann told them that an appraisal had been done, and that the issue would soon be discussed by the Westfield Town Council.

Mr. Kaufmann said that they "do not foresee" any structures in the plans, except perhaps for bathroom facilities, which would be erected as far as possible from residences.

Hatch Mott MacDonald will also be working on Brookside Park in Scotch Plains, which is adjacent to Memorial Park.

When asked about the cost of the project, Mr. Kaufmann responded, "we have no idea. All we're doing now is a study."

He said that there should be a formal master plan ready for presentation by October of this year.

### Beginners Running Course Offered

**CRANFORD** — Central Jersey Road Runners Club will offer a beginners running class in Cranford beginning April 5 in Nomahegan Park. Students who have never run or have tried but failed, will integrate running and walking in the 8-week program.

Weekly workouts will be followed by lectures on how to breathe, dress, rules of the road, preparing for a race, stretching, and proper nutrition.

For information, please call 866-841-9139, Ext. 3807, or email [runcjrcc@onebox.com](mailto:runcjrcc@onebox.com).

### Stender Blasts Bush Proposal

**FANWOOD** — Assemblywoman Linda Stender (D-22) said, "The President's private-accounts proposal is seriously flawed. Social Security needs to be adjusted to compensate for changing demographics, not dismantled."

Asw. Stender's press release said, "The President lied to this country and led us to war under a smokescreen of false allegations about weapons of mass destruction to provide lucrative contracts to political contributors. The President is once again using a scare tactic to benefit his core constituency. By privatizing Social Security funds, special interests and private firms will benefit without regard for the risk to hardworking, unsuspecting Americans."

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