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SIXTY CENTS

WF BOE Not to Renew UCESC Hillcrest Lease

By MEGHAN GILL. WESTFIELD — The board of education last week announced it would terminate the lease of Lincoln School to Hillcrest Academy South...

erty, which is the extent of complaints. According to Scotch Plains police records obtained by The Leader/Times, there have been approximately 74 calls made to the facility over the past five years...

In an e-mail sent to residents and The Leader/Times, Board President Anne Riegel said, "Dr. Foley has recommended to the board that we not renew the lease for one more year."

Mr. Hartnett said that there are metal detectors in all of the UCESC secondary education buildings and that there is one full-time security guard at the Scotch Plains campus.

"The board of education is regretful that the situation has developed to this point," the e-mail read. According to the terms of the lease, the UCESC must vacate the facility by June 30.

Regarding the future of Hillcrest Academy South, Mr. Hartnett said, "Our students don't have a school now; it is very distressing to them. We are looking at available schools through the Archdiocese of Newark, which would be our first choice."

One of the solutions Westfield residents suggested to the board was to move the existing population of Hillcrest South to Hillcrest North, located in Scotch Plains.

Mr. Hartnett told The Leader/Times that the commission plans to petition the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) commissioner's office of controversies and disputes for "emergent relief, which means we will be asking the commissioner to direct the Westfield Board of Education (BOE) to give us time to locate a new facility."

"Moving the students to that location will definitely not happen," UCESC Superintendent Ed Hartnett said. "Our contract with the Elizabeth School District is for 150 students, and the Hillcrest North campus holds nearly 70 students, which is the maximum capacity for the building."

According to the DOE website, the office of controversies and disputes is designed to assist Commissioner of Education Lucille Davey, a former Westfield resident, in "fulfilling her responsibility to decide, through the

AM Educational Associates of Elizabeth owns the Scotch Plains property and has leased it to UCESC since 1995. According to Mr. Hartnett, UCESC pays \$153,000 per year to lease the facility.

"The only problem that we have had there is a noisy air conditioner," Mr. Hartnett said. "On occasion, there are complaints from neighboring residents about the kids encroaching on prop-

Work on Mini-Golf Course Begins; SP to Address Neighbor Concerns

By FRED T. ROSSI. SCOTCH PLAINS — With construction of the miniature golf facility at Scotch Hills Country Club now

underway, township officials will seek to "constructively address" the concerns raised two months ago by neighborhood residents, according to Township Manager Thomas Atkins.



WORK BEGINS...Construction begins on a miniature golf course at the Scotch Hills Country Club in Scotch Plains.

At the township council's conference meeting on Tuesday evening, Mr. Atkins said eight specific issues had been discussed in a meeting earlier this month with Township Attorney Brian Levine, Assistant Attorney Lawrence Woodruff, Construction Official Robert LaCosta, Police Chief Brian Mahoney and Parks and Recreation Director Ray Paoerio.

At an April planning board meeting, residents living near the golf facility raised concerns centering on the miniature golf facility's operations, traffic and pedestrian safety and off-site parking. Township officials will look at a possible reduction in the speed limit on Jerusalem Road and Plainfield Avenue as a way of alleviating concerns about pedestrian and traffic safety.

A bicycle rack will be installed at the new facility and a speed limit survey will also be done. A trailer

notifying drivers of their speeds via electronic display may also be placed on one or both roads.

The recreation department has said it would try not to cross-schedule events at the golf club's main facility in an effort to cut down on people loitering in the area after hours. The new facility will close at 10 p.m.; security lights will be the only lighting remaining on during the overnight hours. Officials said this effort would also cut down on golf facility guests parking on nearby streets when the main parking lot is full.

Mr. Paoerio said signs indicating where it is appropriate to park might be placed on the property. He also said the miniature golf facility would have no music or loudspeaker system.

The recreation department and the recreation commission will also come up with ideas on how best to supervise and staff the new facility, which will be completed by the end of the summer. They expect the police department to play a role in this area, especially in the early days of the facility's operation. A proposed three-foot deep detention basin will be enclosed for safety reasons.

In other business, Councilwoman Nancy Malool said Scotch Plains and Westfield will enter into an inter-local agreement allowing a limited number of township residents to buy permits to utilize the Westfield Conservation Center on Lamberts Mills Road for the disposal of grass clippings, tree branches, leaves and other biodegradable items.

Starting on July 10, up to 300 per-

Bank application will be continued at the next monthly meeting of the board to be held on Wednesday, June 28 at 7:30 p.m. The board will also hear three bulk variances for private residences and they will continue their discussion on the oversized-homes ordinance at that meeting.

Fanwood Planning Bd. OKs Razing Older House for New Home on Farley Avenue

By DEBORAH MADISON. FANWOOD — At a special meeting on Monday night, the Fanwood Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment unanimously approved an application from JMG Properties of Scotch Plains to raze an old house to make way for the construction of a new one on Farley Avenue.

Mahgoud Dariani told the board that he had serious flooding problems in his yard, which abuts the lot to the rear, and asked Mr. Galbraith what provisions he was making to offset the added impervious coverage. Mr. Freud testified that a storm water seepage pit in the front yard would collect run-off and an inlet system would route additional run-off to the storm system on Farley Avenue.

Michael Galbraith and his father, Jim Galbraith, principles of JMG Properties of Scotch Plains, presented their plans before the board to construct a two-and-a-half story Victorian house with a first-floor footprint of 1,344 square feet and a two-car garage. The average roofline of the house of 35 feet and the structural coverage limit of 25 percent are both extended to their maximum allowable sizes under the ordinance for this R-75 zone.

Borough Engineer, Joseph Pryor asked Mr. Freud to review his calculations, which he did not agree with. Mr. Freud agreed to comply with Mr. Pryor's analysis of the area and the need for a larger storm water management system. Mr. Pryor told the board that the drainage system he was recommending would not remedy the flooding problems on Byron Lane, but that it was adequate to not make the problem worse.

Mr. Galbraith testified that in his opinion, due to age and condition, the existing house was not salvageable. The present owners, Norbert and Estelle Bernstein, who have lived in the house for 35 years, said that they are moving to Massachusetts to be closer to their children. Neither the builder nor the owners knew the exact age of the house, but they all testified that it was possibly the oldest house standing on Farley Avenue.

Board Chairman Gregory Cummings said that the development was an improvement by taking a piece of property without any drainage and adding a storm water management system.

Robert Freud of EKA Associates, the applicant's engineer, testified before the board regarding drainage issues. Byron Lane resident

Mr. Galbraith previously bought and developed the property next door to this lot, at 116 Farley Avenue, in 2005 and constructed a new house on the property. Mr. Galbraith told The Times he hoped to begin construction by the fall and to complete the house by the spring.

The Goddard School and Town



SHE SHOOTS, SHE SCORES!...Second-grader Jessica Vilarino gears up for a goal-scoring shot during a soccer match at Terrill Middle School on Saturday.

Union County Education Services Commission Budget More Than Doubles Since 1996

By DON WILLIAMS and DAVID RIGGS. Editor's Note: The operation of the Union County Educational Service Commission (UCESC), with facilities in Westfield and Scotch Plains, has been discussed by the Westfield Board of Education (BOE) following the arrest of four students from the commission's Hillcrest Academy South campus in Westfield.

Budget and 10-year history data from the UCESC's 2005 annual report are included in this report. See Table 1 on page 10. An interview with UCESC Superintendent Edward Hartnett appears on page 10.

WESTFIELD — The UCESC operates schools at four locations in Westfield and Scotch Plains that cater to children with special needs. It also provides transportation for approximately 3,500 special-needs students from the county to other non-district schools, according to UCESC Superintendent Edward Hartnett.

struction budget was \$8.5 million.

In 2005, 299 students were enrolled in UCESC schools, according to the annual report. In 1996, 285 students were enrolled, rising to a high of 366 in 2003 and then dropping in 2005.

Mr. Hartnett said that the UCESC has a contract with Elizabeth to educate 150 students at Hillcrest Academy. Thomas Beese, director of Special Services for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood schools, reports that nine students are in UCESC programs from his district, and Westfield Board of Education member Alice Hunnicut, who is also Westfield's UCESC's commissioner on its board of directors, reports that between 12 and 18 students from Westfield attend UCESC schools.

According to the UCESC website, ucesc.k12.nj.us, the UCESC was created in 1969 with special state legislation. As of now, all 21 county public school districts are members, although not all have voting privileges on the commission. In addition to the schools operated by the UCESC, the commission is also responsible for vocational education and special projects such as educating students at the Union County Juvenile Detention Center.

The chief administrator of the UCESC, Mr. Hartnett, will retire on June 30. Rahway School Superintendent William Petrino will replace Mr. Hartnett as superintendent.

According to the annual report, almost half of the UCESC 2005 budget (\$18,152,240) funded transportation for about 3,500 students both to UCESC schools and other special education schools all across New Jersey as required by students' Individualized Education Program. The in-

FANWOOD — Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks and Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr have authorized an inter-local agreement for a tax collector service.

Fanwood's tax collector Colleen Huehn will offer tax-collector support and will report to Scotch Plains Chief Financial Officer Lori Majeski, as well as mentor the township's tax clerk.

Scotch Plains Township Manager Thomas Atkins told The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times, "I know from (Ms. Huehn's) extensive experience that she will be a strong asset to providing general support."

Ms. Huehn has worked for the Borough of Fanwood for 17 years and has been the tax collector for the borough for 11 years.

The early retirement of Scotch Plains' former tax collector prompted Scotch Plains to look to Fanwood for help, Mayor Marks said. Scotch Plains and Fanwood have a history of working together with shared service agreements such as the school district, ballfield space, senior citizen bus,

the commission officials are: President Frank Cicarelli of Rahway, Vice President Thomas Bistocchi of Union County Vo-Tech, Helen Kirsch of Berkeley Heights, Henry Varriano of Clark, Camille Widdows of Cranford, Francisco Gonzalez of Elizabeth, Linda Koenig of Garwood, Nathalie Yafet of Hillside, Gerard Laudati (non-voting) of

Scotch Plains, Fanwood To Share Tax Collector

By KATIE NEWINGHAM. FANWOOD — Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks and Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr have authorized an inter-local agreement for a tax collector service.

welfare director and maintenance equipment.

Fanwood's tax collector Colleen Huehn will offer tax-collector support and will report to Scotch Plains Chief Financial Officer Lori Majeski, as well as mentor the township's tax clerk.

Mayor Marks said Scotch Plains will benefit from "ultimately getting a competent tax collector (while) being able to do it at a reasonable cost." Scotch Plains will pay Fanwood \$25,000 a year to have Ms. Huehn's services, Mr. Atkins said.

Scotch Plains Township Manager Thomas Atkins told The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times, "I know from (Ms. Huehn's) extensive experience that she will be a strong asset to providing general support."

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Ms. Huehn said, "It's very good to see this progressive move to help both towns cut the tax burden."

Mayor Mahr said, "The purpose of inter-local agreements demonstrates to the members of the town that their tax dollars are being used effectively along with signifying the ability for towns to work together and help each other out."

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