

Westfield Board of Education

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2007 data. Now, with the updated report, the cost per pupil for 2007-2008 in Westfield is \$11,460, lower than the state average of \$12,806.

Anne Riegel, finance committee chairman, said Westfield has had one of the lowest cost-per-pupil rates "for several years in a row."

According to Ms. Dolan, Westfield High School (WHS) and elementary schools have an "average" class size, while the intermediate schools are "just a bit higher" in comparison to the state average.

The elementary and intermediate schools are at the state average, and WHS exceeds it because it has a nine-period day. The school district is at the state average in terms of its student-to-computer ratio for all levels.

She also said student enrollment continues to increase district-wide, and "in the last 10 years, we saw a 28-percent increase in student population."

The student mobility rate, the percentage of students who come and go within a school year, is at 4 percent, significantly lower than the state average.

The report also showed that WHS has a graduation rate of 99.3 percent, with 92 percent of high school students continuing their education. Ms. Dolan said Westfield students consistently score above state averages on state tests.

Westfield students also score 125 points above the state and the nation on the SAT, and the percentage of students who take the SAT is 23 percent higher than the state average.



Audrey Zavetz

"We want as many of our students to take the SAT," she said. "We encourage them to take it."

The data compiled said that Westfield pupils took 676 advanced-placement tests and that 84 percent of them received scores of three (out of five) or higher. Three is deemed proficient, Ms. Dolan said.

Westfield's student-to-administrator ratio is higher than the state average, and the district's student-to-teacher ratio, at every school except the high school, is higher than the state average. The high school's student-to-teacher ratio is considered average.

"I would predict that next year we will be higher on every level," said Ms. Dolan. She also said the district's staff mobility rate is lower than the state's average.

In the narrative section, a part set aside for principals to write specific achievements for their respective schools, stated that more than 65 percent of WHS students study one or more languages for three or more years.

In addition, it noted that 1,300 high school students participated in athletic teams, winning 10 state championships, 10 county and nine conference finals, and at every level, students have opportunities to participate in the arts.

A group of WHS students started off the meeting by presenting the work they have achieved as members of the Model U.N. extracurricular group.

The next BOE meeting is Tuesday, April 29, at 8 p.m. at 302 Elm Street.

Steve Lonigan

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Mr. Lonigan also said Gov. Corzine is attempting to create the Thomas Edison Commission, which would decide on which businesses and inventors enter the state.

He then described that because of taxation, New Jersey is the 50th worst state to start up a small business.

He ended his speech by saying that anti-capitalistic countries, such as Russia, are adopting capitalistic tendencies.

He said the state was "yearning to return to its roots," when it had been the least-taxed state in the union, and the only way to do so was a return to capitalism.

Afterwards, there was a question-and-answer segment, in which resi-

dents voiced their concerns about the control of local government. The most vocal words were against Gov. Corzine, saying that, "He [Corzine] has no regard for the working-class people, and he has no will." One member of the public asked if he could be taken out of office.

As the evening ended, many of the attendees were pleased by Mr. Lonigan's words.

"He had good ideas. He really calls for more basic government principles," said Harry McNally of Fanwood.

"He was very compelling and really spoke for citizen activism," Fanwood resident Monica Felsing said. "The government of New Jersey is the real problem that people need to fix."

Mountainside School Tax

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costs for Governor Livingston High School (due to a drop in enrollment of high school students).

In Mountainside, the polls will be open April 15 from 2 to 9 p.m. at Deerfield School, borough hall and the Presbyterian Church on Deer Path and Meeting House Lane. Voters will be asked to consider the budget and the three candidates seeking election to the board for two open seats.

Other business items, originally scheduled for the meeting canceled on March 25, were moved to the public meeting on Tuesday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m. The agenda includes the proposal to promote Deerfield School Principal Jeanette Baubles to CSA to replace Mr. O'Malley, who is leaving at the end of the school year to become superintendent of the Matawan-Aberdeen regional

school district. The board is set to vote on a three-year, \$135,000-per-year contract for Ms. Baubles. If approved, she would continue to serve as Deerfield principal through Friday, May 16. The appointment is subject to the approval of Union County Executive Superintendent of Schools Carmen Centuolo.

The board also will vote on hiring RLF Associates to conduct a search for a new Deerfield principal at a cost of \$3,200.

The school tax is about 60 percent of the total property tax bill in Mountainside. Municipal and county property tax portions have yet to be determined by the respective government entities. The school budget details can be examined at mountainsideschools.org/images/docs/user_friendly_budget.pdf.



SMILES...The Chelsea at Fanwood hosted a pancake breakfast on March 22, with proceeds donated to the Fanwood Police Benevolent Association (PBA) Local 123. The PBA officers donate their time, energy and passion to the community. They sponsor events such as Santa's fire truck gift delivery, an annual Kids Safety Day and fundraisers for local families in need. "It was a great day and really meant a lot to the PBA to receive so much support," said Tony Espinosa, PBA president. Pictured are Fanwood police officer Robert Sanchez and his son.

Jail Guard, Maintenance Worker Indicted in Scheme

ELIZABETH — A corrections officer, maintenance worker, four inmates and the girlfriend of one of the inmates were named last week in a 19-count indictment for allegedly smuggling tobacco in to the Union County jail in Elizabeth, according to Union County Prosecutor Ted Romankow. The indictment was handed up by a grand jury last Wednesday afternoon, after press deadline. An indictment is a list of charges that must be proven in a court of law.

According to the prosecutor's office, Corrections Officer Stephen Matthews, 48, of Union was indicted for three counts of bribery, three counts of official misconduct and one count of conspiracy to commit bribery and/or official misconduct.

Also indicted was Joseph Pecoraro, 37, of Elizabeth, a senior maintenance worker at the Union County jail, authorities said. Pecoraro is facing two counts of bribery, two counts of official misconduct, two counts of conspiracy to commit bribery and/or official misconduct, as well as one count of providing an electronic device, the prosecutor's office said.

Both men were suspended without pay from their jobs in August when the charges first surfaced.

Four inmates were also named in the indictment, as was the girlfriend of one of the inmates. They are: Jeremy Watson, 22, of Plainfield, who was convicted of murder after a trial last month; Abdul Griggs, 36, of Piscataway and Sheriff Raymond, 27, of Elizabeth, both awaiting trial for murder in separate cases; Jadon Russell, 29, of Linden, who was recently convicted of drug and weapons charges, and Watson's girlfriend, Kelly Spicer, 36, of Elizabeth, law enforcement officials said.

According to Union County Assistant Prosecutor William Kolano, who heads up the office's Special Prosecution Unit, Matthews and Pecoraro were accused of smuggling tobacco prod-

ucts and a cell phone into the jail over a five-month period last year. He said Watson was running a lucrative underground sales network with the assistance of Griggs, Russell and Raymond.

"The contraband consisted of Marlboro cigarettes and Bugler loose tobacco," Mr. Kolano said. "Watson and his cohorts were selling the smuggled goods to other inmates for a large profit. Spicer acted as the outside link between the inmates and the public employees by providing the money to pay off Matthews and Pecoraro for their part in the operation. On three different occasions Spicer left the money in Matthews' late-model Lexus SUV, which was parked in the Union County parking lot."

Lieutenant Robert McGuire of the Union County Police Department and Investigator Donald Johnson of the Union County Department of Corrections Internal Affairs Unit headed up the investigation.

"The investigation involved extensive surveillance and detailed monitoring of movements among the players," Mr. Kolano said. "In less than two months, Lieutenant McGuire and Investigator Johnson had built a solid case."

"The motivation for the charges listed in the indictment was simple greed," Mr. Romankow said. "It is another troubling chapter in the history of the Union County jail as it existed prior to the changes that were put into effect as a result of the escapes in December, 2007."

Corrections

A photo caption on page 2 in the March 27 issue incorrectly identified Mountainside Fire Chief Neil Williams as being in the photo when, in fact, it was Fire Official George McGrath, pictured on the far left.

In a front-page article on March 20 on the concept of merging municipalities, it was incorrectly stated that Scotch Plains and Fanwood have a shared fire department and rescue squad. They have separate volunteer fire departments and rescue squads.

Westfield Council

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ture. Each of the separate pieces, when taken independently, doesn't achieve the goal," Mr. Foerst said.

In response to charges that the changes would lead to the majority of Westfield homes being out of conformity, Mr. Foerst said that the taskforce made sure that any changes enacted would not have that result; if they did, it would subject the town to lawsuits, he noted.

"If [a potential change] didn't meet those tests, it wasn't acceptable to the committee," Mr. Foerst said.

Mr. Foerst also said the taskforce reviewed pending applications that were before the board of adjustment and examined how the changes would affect specific applications.

Mr. Foerst admitted that there were applications that would need to be adjusted, "but anytime there is a change in law, [that occurs]."

He said the taskforce examined all "unintended consequences" and weighed if the consequences helped "achieve the goal" of controlling overdevelopment or acted as a "detrimment" to the public's ability to "live their dream."

Mr. Foerst said the taskforce did consider the tax and revenue implications of all changes proposed and worked to "prepare for the future, so that [Westfield] can compete with other towns."

To sum up his point, speaking on opening night for the New York Yankees, Mr. Foerst tried his hand at a "Yogism."

In the vein of famous Yankee catcher Yogi Berra, known for his witticisms, Mr. Foerst said, "We don't want Westfield to change so much, and become so popular, that nobody comes here anymore."

Rob Nehring of Carleton Road, commenting on how the worth of homes would be affected by the process, said, "Value is not measured in dollars and cents...by preserving the character of an area, you're preserving the value of a home."

William Fischer, who lives on Sandra Circle, said his family is close to finalizing the design of its "dream house" but feared the home would not conform

under the new changes.

He said that the LUTF's recommendations "limit" his family's ability to fulfill its "dream."

Mr. Foerst emphasized that the recommendations would take months to finalize and that "nothing has changed yet." He encouraged Mr. Fischer, and whoever is undertaking the eventual work, to investigate if the house would truly be affected.

When asked about a timeline for the implementation of recommendations, Town Administrator Jim Gildea said the town hopes to have amendments completed by the end of the calendar year.

In other business, the town passed a resolution that opposes the adoption of Senate Bill S-770 and A-1645.

Sal Caruana, first ward councilman and Finance Policy Committee chairman, said the bill would mandate that the Town of Westfield hire a "qualified purchasing agent."

In a letter found at the New Jersey League of Municipalities' website (njlom.org), William Dressel, the league's executive director, writes that towns, at present, can use their discretion when choosing to utilize the services of a purchasing agent during a bid process.

The bill in question would effectively "redefine the role" of purchasing agents and require all municipalities to use them. This, according to Mr. Dressel, amounts to an "unfunded mandate."

Mr. Caruana said, "This is a budget year when we are going to reduce jobs and reduce headcounts, but this state is now issuing a mandate, saying, 'We think you should increase headcount in this particular area.'"

"We say, 'really?'"

Mr. Gildea said the bill would require the "reorganization" of the town's purchasing functions into a separate agency that would not be controlled by the administrator's office, the town council or the chief financial officer.

"We believe this is an intrusion into our management prerogatives," he said. He added that the policy "will not reduce costs; as a matter of fact, it will probably increase personnel costs...This is not something we need."

WF Police Training

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and officials hope this will give them an overview of the tactics necessary to deal with active shooter situations. "Over the course of the eight days of training, everyone will be trained in the active shooter and in the breaching tools," said Capt. Wayman.

Capt. Wayman said that he was pleased with the cooperation of school officials in making the high school available to them for training. He also credited his fellow officers for their eagerness to participate in the program.

"Every officer realizes the impor-

ance of not only being able to provide service for the town in which they work, but it [an active shooter] could happen anywhere," said Capt. Wayman.

In addition to the training being conducted at the high school, eight officers in the department have also attended a two-day active shooter response course run by the Union County Emergency Response Team. Police Chief John Parizeau said that the department hopes to send more officers to the county training program in the future.



POLICE BLOTTER

Fanwood

Saturday, March 29, Michael J. Krasnor, 23, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Garwood after a motor vehicle stop on the 400 block of LaGrande Avenue. According to police, he posted bail and was released.

Sunday, March 30, Khanh M. Nguyen, 23, of Blackwood was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Mullica Township after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue. According to police, he posted bail and was released.

Sunday, March 30, a Fanwood resident reported that while she was shopping in an establishment on the 100 block of South Avenue, someone removed her purse from her shopping cart.

Monday, March 31, Kimber J. Thomas, 27, of Brooklyn, N.Y. was arrested on an outstanding Scotch Plains warrant after a field investigation. According to police, she posted bail and was released.

Scotch Plains

Monday, March 24, a resident of Plainfield Avenue reported that someone obtained personal information about him and opened a credit card in his name without authorization.

Monday, March 24, an owner of a Route 22 business reported that someone removed several hundred dollars in merchandise without paying.

Tuesday, March 25, police received a report that someone ordered \$40 worth of gas from a Route 22 gas station and fled after trying to pay with a stolen credit card.

Tuesday, March 25, James Brown, 37, of East Orange was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, March 27, Alejandro Gonzalez, 26, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, March 27, Bruce Edwards, 54, of Blairstown was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Sunday, March 30, Beth Nugent, 44, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, she was processed and released after posting bail.

Mountainside

Tuesday, March 25, a Globe Avenue resident reported that someone removed approximately 1,000 pounds of scrap metal from a container in the rear of the property. According to police, 10 counterweights also were removed. The approximate value of the stolen items is \$1,200, police said.

Tuesday, March 25, Tyrone A. Garner, 48, of Jersey City was arrested at the

Hudson County jail on outstanding warrants in the amount of \$580.

Wednesday, March 26, Ryan P. Priest, 18, of Berkeley Heights was arrested and charged with underage driving while intoxicated (DWI) and refusal to submit to a breath test after being involved in two motor vehicle accidents. According to police, Priest also was issued summonses for careless driving and unsafe lane change. He was released pending a court date, police said.

Thursday, March 27, police responded to a report of a hit-and-run accident on Route 22. According to police, the victim was traveling in the left lane when a small, black Volkswagen entered the roadway, striking his vehicle on the passenger side. The victim was able to get the other driver's license plate number before the driver fled, police said.

Thursday, March 27, a Summit Avenue dentist reported that someone entered her unlocked office through an adjacent hallway and removed her laptop when she stepped out of the office for approximately three minutes. According to police, two receptionists stationed to the right of the office said they did not see or hear anything unusual.

Friday, March 28, Dwayne E. Howell, 40, of Plainfield was arrested at the Somerset County jail on an outstanding warrant.

Saturday, March 29, Patrick M. Blewitt, 33, of South Plainfield was arrested and charged with DWI after being involved in a single car motor vehicle accident on Route 22. According to police, he also was issued summonses for unsafe lane change, careless driving and driving while suspended. He additionally was charged with outstanding warrants out of Hillside and Roselle Park.

Saturday, March 29, an employer at a Route 22 tennis club reported that someone removed \$1,700 from a cashbox in his office. According to police, the victim returned from a tennis lesson and found the cashbox opened and the money removed. The victim stated that he is the only one who touches the box and that any fingerprints on the box other than his would most likely be those of the suspect, police said.

Sunday, March 30, a resident of Central Avenue reported that sometime overnight someone damaged her mailbox. According to police, several mailboxes in the vicinity were damaged.

Westfield

Tuesday, March 25, Robert Carter, 51, of Westfield was arrested on the 600 block of Stirling Place on an active traffic warrant from Cranford. He was released after posting \$89 bail.

Saturday, March 29, Adrianna N. Rouillac, 25, of Plainfield was arrested at Plainfield police headquarters on a Westfield criminal warrant. She was transported to Westfield police headquarters, where she was processed and held on \$118 bail.



A BIG BOOST...The Scotch Plains Fire Department is presented with a \$5,000 check from the Fireman's Insurance Company. Pictured, from left to right, are: Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks, Michael Avalone, of Commerce Insurance Services, Inc., Scotch Plains Fire Chief Jonathan Ellis and Danny Perry of the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company.

SPFD Receives \$5,000 Boost For Equipment, Training

SCOTCH PLAINS — Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) members in Scotch Plains — who, during emergency operations, arrive at the scene to support the potential rescue of firefighters in danger — received a boost thanks to a grant earmarked for equipment and training.

Commerce Insurance Services, Inc. and Fireman's Fund Insurance Company partnered to award the Scotch Plains Fire Department a \$5,000 grant. Specifically, grant funds will be used to train departmental firefighters, through a standardized program created by Union County, on proper rapid intervention techniques. In addition, funds will purchase rescue ropes, forcible-entry tools and bolt cutters to support rescue efforts.

"Under state regulations, if I send two firefighters into a building, I must provide two firefighters outside, whose sole responsibility is to rescue the firefighters in the building should they get trapped," said Scotch Plains Fire Chief Jonathan Ellis. "In Union County, because of our mutual-aid system, those firefighters often come

from surrounding departments, so it's critical our firefighters receive the same training as firefighters from neighboring departments. This grant will allow that to take place."

"Firefighters put themselves in grave danger everyday," said Michael Avalone, vice president of Commerce Insurance Services. "It's critical they have the proper training and tools to do their jobs safely. The result is a community whose residents and property are better protected."

The grant package is part of a nationwide program called Fireman's Fund Heritage, which is funded by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. The program is designed to provide needed equipment, training and educational tools to local fire departments. Since 2004, Fireman's Fund has issued grants to hundreds of different departments, totaling more than \$17 million. Independent insurance agencies/brokers that sell Fireman's Fund products, like Commerce Insurance Services, are able to direct these grants to support fire stations in their communities.

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