



David Samsky for The Westfield Leader

VERY IMPORTANT POLITICIANS...Local and state politicians, both past and present, attended Westfield's reorganization meeting. Above, before the meeting began, Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean Jr. (LD-21, Westfield) greets residents and checks in with former Mayor Greg McDermott, whose wife, Andrea, sits to his left. Other notables pictured include former Mayor Ron Frigerio, Assemblyman Eric Munoz (LD-21, Summit), former councilman Matt Albano and Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks.

Westfield Council Welcomes Arena, Hears 'State of Town'

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miniscule 2-percent increase in state aid," he said. "At the very least, this will have a devastating impact on our residents because the share of the district's expenses that is not paid from state aid must be picked up by property owners through property taxes."

The mayor said he has been in "continuous contact" with state representatives, including State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. and Assemblymen Jon Bramnick (both LD-21, Westfield) and Eric Munoz (LD-21, Summit) — all of whom were present Tuesday night — about the issue.

Republicans, State Senator Leonard Lance (LD-23, Flemington) and Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks, both candidates for the 7th-Congressional seat vacated by Mike Ferguson, also attended, as well as a host of former mayors, including Bud Boothe, Tom Jardim, Greg McDermott and Ron Frigerio.

Concerning mayoral-proposed employee appointments, Third Ward Councilman David Haas and Fourth Ward Councilman Tom Bigosinski voted not to re-appoint Robert Cockren, Christine Nugent and Michael Panagos to their posts as town attorney, municipal prosecutor and public defender, respectively, because of pension concerns. Mr. Bigosinski voted similarly in 2007. The measure passed, 7-2.

When discussion arose, Mr. Haas addressed his peers from the dais.

He said as opposed to last year, when he did vote in favor of the above

individuals, he could not, "in good conscience," vote to pass these pension expenses on to future taxpayers, despite his respect for the work the individuals do.

He later estimated that each individual's pension would amount to between \$400,000 and \$1 million.

Mr. Haas described to *The Westfield Leader* after the meeting how he arrived at the \$400,000 figure.

He used a hypothetical case of an individual working for 25 years and earning \$65,000 in three of them.

After employing the pension formula — whereby one would divide total years (25) by 55 before multiplying that figure by the three highest-paying years (estimated at \$65,000) — Mr. Haas took that number (roughly \$30,000), multiplied it by a 20-year life expectancy (totaling nearly \$600,000), before factoring in inflation, which lowers the figure to \$400,000.

Councilmen Haas and Bigosinski later voted not to re-appoint the labor attorney Rick Danser, obtain his services or those of the town attorney. All measures passed.

In terms of the four council committees, besides Mr. Caruana's ascension to finance chairman, all other committee chairs will remain status quo. Mr. Ciarrocca will continue to head the public-safety committee; Ms. Neylan will lead the public-works committee; Mr. Foerst will remain Code Review chairman.

Robert Newell, who is replacing Elizabeth List, will begin a two-year term as town historian.



Maria Woehr for The Westfield Leader

DEERFIELD FIELD DEMOLITION...The Mountainside Board of Education discussed the renovation of Deerfield's playground at its meeting on Tuesday night. Board members said the playground, demolished this week, would be replaced in the spring. The equipment should arrive at the end of January, Joseph Tinnarella said. The BOE conducted a first reading on the wording of more than 90 policies; members hope to finish updating policies by the end of February, BOE vice-president MaryBeth Schaumberg said.

Bramnick, Officials Discuss State School-Aid Formula

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\$18,000 over last year for his town, or roughly \$6 per household, an amount he described as "insulting."

Although the presentation centered on Long Hill, Ms. Harrington said it demonstrated the difficulty in understanding the state's new formula. Ms. Harrington showed her analysis of the data, and after multiple methods of analysis, concluded, "There is no discernible correlation between the funding increase and relative property-value growth, income growth, enrollment growth or percent of funding from the state."

Westfield Board of Education President Ginny Leiz said the bulk of Westfield's aid is "categorical," meaning it is directed toward students with "special needs." She said two thirds of the aid would be rolled into the wealth-based formula, putting Westfield at risk for cuts, directly affecting its special-education program.

Chris Connor, a Long Hill resident and former board-of-education member, asked where the \$532 million to fund this bill was coming from in this time of a state budgetary crisis.



Wayne Baker for The Westfield Leader

DELAY DENIED...Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (LD-21, Westfield) speaks with (left to right) Summit Board of Education member Eleanor Doyle, Westfield BOE President Ginny Leiz and BOE member Alice Hunnicutt last Friday in Long Hill. Mr. Bramnick and fellow Assemblyman Eric Munoz sought a delay in passage of the state's school-funding bill to allow for additional review. Despite their efforts, lawmakers approved the proposal on Monday.

Garwood Mayor Appoints Athletic-Field Committee

By KATHY MARQUES
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — At the first borough-council meeting of the year, Council President Kathleen Villaggio asked Police Chief William Legg to investigate drivers speeding in town on streets like Oak, Cedar and Walnut

MS Council

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Streets.

Mayor Dennis McCarthy appointed a committee to oversee the \$2.1-million James V. Guerriero Athletic Field upgrade project. The committee consists of Councilmen Keith Sluka and Stephen Napolitano, planning-board chairman Robert Pender, recreation-commission and planning-board member Sandro Villaraut, Borough Engineer Donald Guarriello and Borough Administrator Christina Ariemma.

The athletic field, located on Myrtle Avenue, will have synthetic turf, a walking track and other upgrades.

Ms. Villaggio, serving her eighth year as liaison to the board of education, said she "looks forward to working with the board of education and hopes that we meet more regularly."

The next BOE meeting will be held this Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Lincoln School. The BOE is searching for a superintendent to replace Wilfred Murphy, who resigned in December due to health reasons. In the meantime, Lincoln School Principal Teresa Quigley is serving as acting superintendent.

Mr. Sluka said there are still biodegradable bags for leaf pick up available at the Department of Public Works. More information is available at garwood.org.

The council will hold its next meeting on January 22 at 7 p.m. at borough hall.



Horace Corbin for The Westfield Leader

FATALITY...Westfield police are on the accident scene at North Avenue near 4th Avenue Friday morning at 7 a.m., where an eastbound vehicle struck a pedestrian crossing the street. The victim, a 57-year-old Plainfield man, died of his injuries.

Car Strikes, Kills Area Man On North Ave. in Westfield

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — A Plainfield man has died of injuries he sustained when he was struck by a car traveling eastbound early Friday on North Avenue near 4th Avenue in Westfield.

Captain Clifford Auchter of the Westfield Police Department told *The Westfield Leader* Friday afternoon that Stanley Jackson, 57, was struck at 7:03 a.m. by a 2006 Mercedes Benz as he attempted to cross from the north side of North Avenue.

He said Mr. Jackson, an employee of Atlantic Plumbing at 526 North Avenue, East, had attempted to cross the street to his workplace from a parking lot that company employees use on the north side of North Avenue. According to Captain Auchter, it was not known whether Mr. Jackson was in the crosswalk when the accident occurred.



Greg Ryan for The Westfield Leader

NEW VOICE ON COUNCIL...Former Fanwood Police Chief and newly-elected Republican Councilman Anthony Parenti, center, takes his oath of office during the Fanwood governing body's annual reorganization meeting New Year's Day, administered by former New Jersey Governor Donald DiFrancesco, left. Mr. Parenti was elected to his inaugural council term November 6.

GW Announces Holiday Decorating Winners

GARWOOD — The Celebrations Committee of Garwood has announced the results for the 2007 Garwood Holiday Home Decorating Contest.

The contest consisted of two judged categories: best-decorated home and grounds, which was awarded to three homes this year, and the "Chevy Chase Award," given to the home judged to have the most holiday lights.

Winners from the first category were as follows: 1st place - 545 Locust Avenue, 2nd place - 347 Myrtle Avenue and 3rd place - 345 2nd Avenue. The "Chevy Chase Award" went to 315 Hickory Avenue.

Each winning home received a gift certificate.

The Celebrations Committee of Garwood is a mayoral-appointed volunteer group that organizes annual public activities such as the Easter egg hunt, Memorial Day service, Christmas-tree lighting and other functions. Those interested can contact Garwood Borough Hall at (908) 789-0710.

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Kathy Marques for The Westfield Leader

NEWBIES ON GARWOOD COUNCIL...Above, first-time councilman Anthony Sytko, a Republican, takes the oath of office from Mayor Dennis McCarthy at last Sunday's reorganization meeting as, from left to right, Anthony's father Glenn, sister Angela and mother Maggie provide support. Below, Democrat Stephen Napolitano, second from right, also a first-time councilman, shares a smile with the mayor and family members after his swearing-in.



POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Sunday, December 2, police report multiple cases of windows being broken on automobiles between December 2 and December 30. The incidents involved front, back and side windows, as well as side-view mirrors.

There was one incident December 2 at Westfield High School, one December 9 on Myrtle Avenue, one December 20 on Kimball Avenue, five December 24, including one each on Everston Place, Westfield Avenue and Columbus Avenue and two on Grandview Avenue, one December 29 on North Avenue, West, and one December 30 on Barchester Way.

Additionally, police received reports of thefts from cars between December 10 and January 3. The incidents occurred at Delaware Street/Boynton Avenue, Tamaques Park, a municipal lot on Central Avenue and at a Clark Street facility.

Sunday, December 23, Javier Sanchez-Mariscal, 28, of North Plainfield was arrested on a Westfield motor-vehicle warrant at the Scotch Plains Police Department. He was released after posting \$760 bail.

Wednesday, December 26, Teresa Angelo, 36, of North Plainfield was arrested on Orchard Street on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant. She was released after posting \$175 bail.

Thursday, December 27, Farid Ali, 31, of Piscataway was arrested during a motor-vehicle stop on the 700 block of North Avenue, West, on an outstanding East Orange traffic warrant. He was released after posting \$387 bail.

Thursday, December 27, Cliff Navarro, 23, of Elizabeth was arrested during a motor-vehicle stop at West Broad and Pierson Streets on five outstanding motor-vehicle warrants and for hindering apprehension.

The warrants were from Watching, \$1,700 bail; Scotch Plains, \$600 bail; Cranford, \$500 bail; Piscataway, \$500 bail, and Kenilworth, \$300 bail.

Navarro was charged with hindering apprehension for allegedly giving police a false name and date of birth. Bail was set at \$750. Navarro posted bail on all the warrants and the Westfield charge and was released.

Sunday, December 30, a resident of Barchester Way reported that the driver's side window on her motor vehicle was broken while the vehicle was parked in front of her house.

Wednesday, January 2, Steven Jaume, 33, of Warren was arrested on Springfield Avenue and charged with possession of anabolic steroids and possession of hypodermic needles. He was released on his own recognizance with a summons.

Wednesday, January 2, Brian J. Rosener, 18, of Linden and Jeffrey L. Meierdierck, 20, of Westfield were arrested and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana following a motor-vehicle stop at South and Windsor Avenues. Both men were released on their own recognizance with summonses.

Wednesday, January 2, Alexandra J. McMahon, 21, of Westfield was arrested following a motor-vehicle stop on Scotch Plains Avenue and West Broad Street and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Further investigation resulted in an additional charge of

possession of cocaine. She was released on her own recognizance with summonses.

Thursday, January 3, Christopher Viciana, 19, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding New Brunswick criminal warrant with \$816 bail following a police investigation on the 300 block of Connecticut Street. He was turned over to the New Brunswick Police Department.

Friday, January 4, Nancy Davis, 43, of Westfield was arrested on three outstanding Westfield traffic warrants, with total bail of \$165, following a motor-vehicle stop on the 600 block of North Avenue, West. She was released after posting bail.

Friday, January 4, Andrew Garrison, 22, of Westfield was arrested during a motor-vehicle stop at Boulevard and Park Street on an active Westfield traffic warrant. He posted \$1,000 bail and was released pending a court date.

Saturday, January 5, Jim Dallas, 52, of Westfield was arrested on the 1000 block of Central Avenue on a Westfield criminal warrant. He posted \$2,500 bond and was released, with a court date to be set.

Garwood

Friday, January 4, David K. Folger, 49, of Tiverton, R.I., was arrested on the 100 block of North Avenue at the Cranford township line after police observed him allegedly driving his vehicle in an erratic manner. After stopping him, police determined Folger was intoxicated.

He was charged with driving under the influence, careless driving, failure to keep right and failure to exhibit a valid vehicle-registration card. He was released to a friend pending a municipal-court appearance.

Scotch Plains

Monday, December 31, an employee at a Mountain Avenue business reported that unknown suspects spray-painted graffiti on the back door of the business.

Thursday, January 3, Michael Brown, 24, of Morristown was arrested for obstruction of justice after police responded to a report of a disturbance on East Second Street. According to police, officers attempted to speak to Brown and he tried to flee before being apprehended. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released on bail, police said.

Thursday, January 3, a resident of Raritan Road reported that someone broke the rear window of his motor vehicle.

Thursday, January 3, a resident of Lamberts Mill Road reported that his neighbor yelled at him on several occasions for no apparent reason.

Friday, January 4, a student at the Union County Magnet School on Raritan Road reported that someone entered his locker and removed his cell phone valued at approximately \$400.

Friday, January 4, a student at Union Catholic High School on Martine Avenue reported that someone entered his motor vehicle and removed his iPhone and GPS (Global Positioning System) valued at \$800.

Sunday, January 6, a customer at a Park Avenue business reported that the owner yelled obscenities at her after they got into an argument about the pricing of an item.

Fanwood

Wednesday, January 2, Joseph B. Franks, 21, of Allentown was arrested on outstanding Newark and Princeton warrants after a field investigation.

Thursday, January 3, Amrah J. Brack, 21, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Mountainside warrant after a motor-vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Friday, January 4, Alexander M. Acuna, 24, of Elmwood Park was arrested on an outstanding Paterson warrant after a field investigation on Arlene Court.

Friday, January 4, a resident of Kyte Place reported that someone entered his motor vehicle while it was parked in the street and removed \$4.

Saturday, January 5, someone entered a Gere Place resident's motor vehicle sometime between the hours of 10 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. Saturday and removed \$40. The vehicle was parked unlocked in the street at the time.

Saturday, January 5, Renata Alford, 27, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Newark warrant after a motor-vehicle stop on South Avenue.

Monday, January 7, Marie E. Edmond, 53, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding Raritan Borough warrant after a motor vehicle stop.

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Greg Ryan for The Westfield Leader

NEW MAYORAL TERM...Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr is sworn in to her second mayoral term January 1 at borough hall. Former New Jersey Governor Brendan Byrne, left, administered the oath of office. Also pictured with Mayor Mahr are her husband, George, and three sons. Mayor Mahr won her re-election bid on November 6.