

## BOE Adopts Tentative \$77.8-Mil. Budget, Approves School Calendar

By JESSICA E. JASKULA  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, last Thursday, adopted a 2008-2009 tentative \$77,775,487 school budget and \$67,753,660 tax levy. The budget includes a total general fund of \$74,220,000, special-revenue fund of \$1,211,493, and debt service of \$2,343,994. Officials said the total budget is up 4.03 percent over last year.

Board members approved to hold the 2008-2009, school budget public hearing on Wednesday, March 19.

In addition, board members also

adopted the 2008-2009 school calendar and 12-month employee calendar. The adopted calendar chosen was "option 2" of two options made public and posted on the district's website for viewing. In it, school begins on September 4, ends on June 23, provides for three snow days and is closed for students (but open for staff) on Election Day, Tuesday, November 4, in response to expected heavy traffic due to the Presidential election.

The board also discussed the 2009-2010 calendar.

Superintendent of Schools Margaret Hayes recommended "option 1," which

begins school on September 10, 2009, and ends June 23. She said her choice was "based on feedback from parents and other constituent groups that voiced concern about starting before Labor Day."

Some board members voiced concern over starting so late in September. "I do believe it is smarter to start earlier in September and end earlier in June," board member Donald Parisi said. Board Member Jane Costello agreed and pointed out that schools are "much less hot" in September than they are in June.

Board member Nancy Bauer cautioned that if school started earlier in September, the district would risk low attendance on Thursday, September 3, and Friday, September 4.

"I think there are enough issues not to make a decision tonight, but to give it more thought," board member Warren McFall said.

Superintendent Hayes said she had no problem postponing this decision, and the board did not vote on the 2009-2010 calendar. Ms. Hayes suggested, though, that board members not wait too long in order to "give our families ample opportunity to plan ahead," as it was previously not customary of the district to begin school before Labor Day.

The board also awarded six vendors for girls and boys track supplies/equipment: Aluminum Athletic Equipment (\$180); Leisure Sporting Goods (\$693.79); M-F Athletic (\$12,983); MedCo (\$101.69); R&R Trophy & Sporting Goods (\$1,724.32); and Triple Crown (\$147.40). The bids were received on February 20. The district is buying the equipment following last December's fire, underneath the football stadium bleachers at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, which destroyed equipment belonging to the track and football teams.

Additionally, the board approved the first reading of the Advertising Corporation



Courtesy of Diane Coloney  
 KEEPING HOPE ALIVE...Last month, the dream of the late Peggy Coloney, co-founder of the Center for Hope Hospice, became reality as the center opened Peggy Coloney's House at Hope Village in Scotch Plains. According to Diane Coloney, left, director of the new facility, as well as the late Peggy Coloney's daughter-in-law, the 30-bed residence aims to provide more than just housing for the terminally ill. Volunteer Sue Checchio, right, using the marketing skills she has acquired as a realtor in Westfield for more than 20 years, has helped to publicize the facility. See full story on page 22.



Raynor Dentizio for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
 A GOOD RESOURCE...Gary Szelc, chairman of the Fanwood Environmental Commission, presents Fanwood's Environmental Resources Inventory to the Fanwood Planning Board on February 27.

## Environmental Commission Presents Resources Inventory

By RAYNOR DENTIZIO  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Environmental Commission presented the findings of its Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI) at the borough's February 27 planning board meeting. The inventory is an update of the borough's natural resources inventories performed in 1976 and 1991.

According to the environmental commission's website, the document "is a compendium of our community's environmental features — water bodies, soils, geology, open space, woodlands and vegetation, water supply and wastewater, noise and related infrastructure and cultural features." The commission believes the ERI is valuable not only as a resource, but

also as a historical document. "It gives us a sense of where Fanwood was 25 years ago and where it is today," said Gary Szelc, chairman of the commission.

In addition to the inventory of the borough's natural features, the ERI also provides recommendations for the borough to consider. Finding ways to preserve open space is among the recommendations. Mr. Szelc stated that only a small portion of the borough is undeveloped, and the borough should look for ways to preserve its undeveloped land.

"That's only 1 percent of our land area that's undeveloped open space," Mr. Szelc said. "Anything we can do to increase that is a plus."

One of the recommendations for

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## Kelly Hatfield Beats Marks For County GOP Nomination

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

WESTFIELD — Former Summit Councilwoman Kelly Hatfield edged Scotch Plains Mayor Marty Marks at last Saturday's Union County Republican Convention to win the organization line for Congress in the June Primary. State Senator Joe Pennacchio (LD-26, Morris Plains) defeated Anne Estabrook, also on the second ballot, to win the line for U.S. Senate. Ms. Estabrook withdrew from the race, at press deadline, citing health reasons.

Ms. Hatfield defeated Mr. Marks with 60 percent of the vote, 196-134, on the second ballot after none of the eight candidates for the open Seventh District garnered 50 percent of the vote total (plus one) to win on the first ballot. A total of 410 members of the Union County GOP Committee participated.

Ms. Hatfield won the first round, 156-113, over Mr. Marks. Discussing her victory, she told reporters, "I think they (voters) understand my message," noting she has been a "public servant for at least 15 years" in Union County. Summit had 60 delegates to Scotch Plains' 45. Westfield had 57 committee members vote; Cranford, 43; Fanwood, 11; Mountainside, 21; and Garwood, 8.

Looking ahead, Ms. Hatfield said Middlesex County does not have a local candidate. "So, they (delegates) will be looking for candidates who can bring the top vote in [Middlesex] county and have the potential to win in June."

She said six candidates reside in Somerset County. "I think everyone's got to go for it (the Somerset nomination)."

State Senator Leonard Lance (LD-23, Flemington), who won the Hunterdon County convention with 68 out of 82 possible votes, finished third in Union County with 65 votes. "I am very pleased with my showing here today," he told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* afterwards.

He told convention delegates that Congress needs a "real leader with real experience."

Kate Whitman, the daughter of former Governor Christine Whitman, finished fourth with 16 votes, followed by former assistant prosecutor and Iraq War veteran Tom Roughneen, 12; former Watchung mayor Victor Sordillo, four; and former Congress-

By TED RITTER  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

FANWOOD — At the borough council's monthly agenda meeting Tuesday night, Mayor Colleen Mahr announced that the state will reduce Fanwood's aid by \$186,669 compared to last year.

Mayor Mahr said late word came from the state's Department of Community Affairs (DCA) just a couple of hours before Tuesday night's meeting.

introducing the new budget early next month, reserving the option to apply for "extraordinary aid" from the DCA. It is not yet clear what impact the municipal aid reduction will have on the budget process, levels of service or local taxes.

In other business, the mayor and council approved a resolution raising daily parking meter fees at the south-side train station. The fee will increase by \$1.75, from the current \$3.25 to \$5, once a notice advertising the increase is posted.

Borough Engineer Joseph Pryor reported that a "pre-construction" meeting was held on February 25 regarding the planned sewer improvement project along Byron Lane. Letters will be sent to residents informing them about the project scheduled

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## Fanwood Borough Braces For \$187,000 State Aid Cut

By FRED T. ROSSI  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council will likely vote next week to spend \$17,102 on an updated and more extensive surveillance camera system, provided by Advanced Video Surveillance Inc. of Fairfield, to be installed inside and outside of the township's municipal building on Park Avenue.

Police Chief Brian Mahoney met with the council at its conference meeting on Tuesday evening to discuss the new system, which he called "hopefully, the last piece of renovation" to the police department, which was expanded as part of the building's \$3.9-million refurbishment.

Mr. Mahoney said the new system would expand surveillance in areas

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## Expanded Security Planned For SP Municipal Building

By FRED T. ROSSI  
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Mr. Mahoney said the new system would expand surveillance in areas

inside the police department to interior hallways, entrances to the building, the courtroom and court-related offices, as well as outside the building in the public and police parking lots.

The courtroom cameras, Mr. Mahoney said, "will bring us up to speed" with security-related mandates issued by the State Administrative Office of the Courts, which oversees courts throughout New Jersey.

And those cameras, he added, will allow the police to have "an extra set of eyes" to monitor meetings of the township council, planning board and zoning board, which are held in the same room.

Mr. Mahoney said, Advanced Video



ABSENT AUNT...The Frazee House committee noticed that the wooden image of Aunt Betty that was on the porch of the house was missing and filed a report with the police. It is not known if it may be vandalism or a prank. The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club asks anyone with information about the incident to call the police. If someone has it, return it to the porch. There will be no questions asked.

## New Parking Rules OK'd For Redwood Road in SP

By FRED T. ROSSI  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council, last week, approved an ordinance that will prohibit parking on a portion of Redwood Road near Brunner Elementary School during school hours.

Deputy Mayor Nancy Malool said that parking "in and around Redwood Road has been found by the police department to be dangerous, especially during school pick-up and drop-off times." The ordinance, which goes into effect in the middle of the month, prohibits parking on the south side of Redwood Road between Cedar Brook and Westfield Road between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on school days.

During the public hearing on the ordinance at the council's meeting last week, one resident called the new regulations "only a start" and urged that similar restrictions be imple-

mented for the other side of Redwood Road.

The council also approved an ordinance last week amending local storm water-control ordinances. Councilman Jeffrey Strauss said enactment of what he called a "technical ordinance" would make the township fully compliant with required floodwater prevention and storm water-management mandates in this area. He said the new regulations would apply to all major developments in Scotch Plains.

The council approved a resolution releasing \$60,418 in funds to pay for additional demolition and construction performed on the first floor of the police department after inspections late last year revealed the existence of mold.

Councilwoman Paulette Coronato said the additional construction

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BACK TO SCHOOL...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School students Saxony Nielsen and Petros Petridis celebrate Read Across America Day with Grace Cooke's first-grade students at Brunner School, the school they attended in first grade.

**Spring Ahead!**  
 Daylight Saving Time '08  
 Sunday, March 9, 2 a.m.

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