

Mayor: Budget Challenges Will Not Diminish Services in Westfield

By LAUREN S. BARR
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — On Tuesday night, the Westfield Town Council held its annual re-organization meeting, where many board appointments were made and Mayor Andy Skibitsky delivered the State of the Town Address.

Mayor Skibitsky told residents that with the town facing a 2 percent budget cap and decreases in both revenue and state aid, “the issues are complex and the stakes are high.” However, he assured residents that the governing body and the town’s employees are “committed to maintaining a high level of service.”

The mayor expressed his “deepest

appreciation” to all of the residents who volunteer to serve on boards and commissions, and went on to thank all of the town employees who agreed to 0-percent raises, givebacks and furloughs to help the town meet its budget needs.

He said that while the budget issue “appears bleak...I am convinced there is much to be optimistic about.” Mayor Skibitsky also thanked “all of the residents who have put Westfield first,” and continued to keep the downtown thriving.

The council committees for 2011 include Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca as Finance Policy chairman; Second Ward Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan as Public Safety chair-

woman; Fourth Ward Councilman James Foerst as Code Review and Town Property chairman, and Frank Arena as Public Works chairman.

Councilman Foerst was reappointed as the council’s Planning Board liaison. Robert Newell, Thomas Walsh, Dan Clifford, Mark LoGripio and Kris McAloon also were appointed to the planning board.

Other reappointments included Robert Cockren as town attorney; Anthony Prieto as municipal prosecutor; Gavin Handwerker as public defender and Frederick Danser, 3rd as labor attorney.

Jamie Chaves was appointed to the Special Improvement District (SID) board as the Merchant designee. Lee Hale also was appointed to a two-year term on the SID board and Councilman Ciarrocca will serve as the council designee, while Shawn Hanna will serve as the Mayor Designee.

Mark Doherty, Mary Alice Ryan, Jack Schwetji and Andrew Wasserman all were appointed to the zoning board of adjustment.

The mayor closed the meeting by wishing everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.

Mountainside Council Members Begin Terms

By MANDY L. RUSSELL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — Borough Mayor Paul Mirabelli, Councilwoman Deanna Andre, Councilman Glenn Mortimer and Councilman Jeffrey Wass were sworn in to new terms during Tuesday night’s reorganization of the borough council.

“This year was challenging as the new mayor. When our new state government announced there would be cuts in state aid, I promised I would govern the Borough of Mountainside in a fiscally responsible manner,” Mayor Mirabelli said. The mayor was elected to a four-year term in November after being named to the post following the death of long-time mayor Robert Vigilanti in 2009.

Mayor Mirabelli told citizens that the taxpayers’ money was put to good use last year with many new youth programs created, renovations to the library, roads paved and the community basketball court expanded to regulation size.

“It warms my heart to see the kids playing ball where we used to play,” Mayor Mirabelli said.

He announced that the Mountainside Community Pool generated a lot of revenue this past year and was awarded the third best community pool in New Jersey designation by *Inside NJ Magazine*.

“In some instances we achieved more with a smaller budget, and I am proud of the leadership and volunteers in this community. By continuing to show this kind of leadership, we will continue to keep Mountainside a great place to live,” Mayor Mirabelli said in closing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



THE NEW MAYOR...Garwood Mayor Patricia Quattrocchi is sworn in to office Sunday by Congressman Leonard Lance (7th-District) as the mayor’s husband John holds the Bible.

Quattrocchi Takes Oath as New Mayor of Garwood

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — Patricia Quattrocchi took over as the second woman mayor in the borough’s 170-year history and the first Republican mayor in years as the GOP officially took a 4-3 majority on the governing body during its reorganization meeting Sunday afternoon. Also sworn in was new GOP council members James Mathieu and Victor DeFilippo. Mr. DeFilippo previously served on council from 2005-2007.

A 30-year resident, Mayor Quattrocchi is no stranger to politics as she previously served as a councilwoman and made four unsuccessful bids for a seat on the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

In a letter from Governor Chris Christie, read by John Quattrocchi, husband of the new mayor and GOP chairman in the borough, the Governor said Mayor Quattrocchi “serves as a role model for all women running for office or seeking to establish a career in government.”

In her inaugural address the new mayor said it was “undeniable that

2011 will bring many new challenges for all of us personally and of course for the borough as well.”

“We would be kidding ourselves if we thought for one minute that there would not be difficult decisions for this council to make. And we would be kidding ourselves if we did not recognize that all of us sitting up here have brought our own personal baggage, both good and bad, to the task of governing; baggage that we cannot allow to get in the way of sound decision making which should be based on what knowledge we have gleaned from our life experiences and not our emotions or political persuasions,” Mayor Quattrocchi said. “...I feel confident that though we will have our differences all of us here desire to work in concert with each other to do what will benefit the current residents and the future residents of the borough.”

She urged residents to e-mail, call or visit borough hall where she vowed to “be regular presence there.”

In conclusion she told a packed yet quiet council chambers, “It will be



BEGINNING A FULL TERM...Mayor Paul Mirabelli is administered the oath of office by Municipal Judge James DeRose to begin a full, four-year mayoral term during Tuesday’s reorganization meeting of the Mountainside Council.



MAYOR FOR 2011...Committeeman Dan Aschenbach is sworn in as township mayor for 2011 at the Cranford Township Committee’s reorganization meeting Tuesday night.



HAPPY NEW YEAR...Westfield Mayor Andrew Skibitsky presides over the town’s annual government reorganization meeting Tuesday night as town appointments are made.



EIFFEL HIGH...This snowman on Summit Avenue in Westfield towers nearly three stories high. The enterprising construction was made possible from the copious snow in the region of the blizzard of last week.

Daniel Aschenbach Takes Over As New Mayor of Cranford

By THOMAS FORTUNATO
Specially Written for Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Democrats took the majority on Cranford Township Council as committee members Mark Smith, who served as mayor in 2010, and Martha Garcia, deputy mayor last year, were replaced by Democrats Kevin Campbell and Edward O’Malley.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. O’Malley join Democrat Daniel Aschenbach and Republicans Mark Dugan and David W. Robinson on the five-seat township committee. The committee then voted Mr. Aschenbach as the township committee chairman and mayor for 2011.

Among other appointments made by the new mayor, Cranford High School freshman Matthew Cohen was appointed to serve a three-year term on the Historic Preservation Advisory Board.

“Matthew [Cohen] is the Freshman Class President and will serve well on this board,” Mayor Aschenbach stated. Cohen was not identified at this meeting.

Cranford resident and Union County Freeholder, Bette Jane Kowalski, was appointed to a three-year term on the township’s tree advisory board. Ms. Kowalski was also present at the meeting and swore in committee member Edward O’Malley. The mayor also appointed Union County Republican Party chairman Phil Morin to a special Affordable Housing Task Force.

“This bipartisan task force will focus on Cranford’s affordable housing issue and make recommendations on next steps,” Mayor Aschenbach com-

mented. “A major focus will be to guard against the proposed overdevelopment of the community.” In addition to Phil Morin, the task force will also include Lynda Feder, Ann Darby, Andy Lanset, Kevin Illing, William Montani, Joan Collins, Lou Koehler and Mr. Campbell.

The mayor also noted that March 14, 2011 marks the 140th anniversary of Cranford’s incorporation as a township, and that there will be a celebration to commemorate that occasion.

“This may have to be a low-budget celebration,” the mayor warned, “but some things we should do include placement of historic photos in the municipal building, fundraising to restore Depression-era murals and have them placed in the municipal chamber, and the development of a plan to restore the historic Droechers Mill area.”

The most hotly debated topic at the reorganization meeting was the appointment of Daniel McCarthy of the Cranford law firm Rogut McCarthy LLC, to the position of township attorney. Another attorney at his firm, Steven Rogut, serves as the bond attorney in both Cranford and Garwood.

“Dan [McCarthy] has been a lifelong resident of Cranford,” Mayor Aschenbach stated, explaining his support of Mr. McCarthy, “as the township committee tried to make a decision as to what qualifies a town-

ship attorney should have, Dan fit an important part of that description which is someone who is invested in the community.”

“Mr. McCarthy clearly is local and has the resume [we are looking for],” committee member David Robinson stated, “[however] Mr. McCarthy did not participate in [the Request for Qualifications process] therefore I don’t think he should be considered.”

The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Process is part of a “pay to play” process that defines how a municipality in New Jersey is allowed to award a contract to service provider. There are three Pay-to-Play processes available: “fair and open,” “non-fair and open,” and “exigency.” Of these three processes, “fair and open” is defined as a “best practice.”

“[Following the fair and open process] is not per se a requirement,” Mr. Robinson explained to *The Westfield Leader*, “but the more deviations from best practices, the worse [Cranford is] going to be” in terms of how much state aid it receives at the end of the year. In 2010, Cranford’s state aid was cut by \$745,000. In 2011, that reduction could be even larger as a penalty for failure to follow best practices.

“The three attorneys that did submit [through the RFQ process] we just did not believe they would be the good selection,” Mayor Aschenbach explained. “There’s no requirement

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

PAGE INDEX		Police Blotter...6
Regional	2-3	Real Estate 10-11
Obituary	6	Classifieds 12
Editorial	4-5	A&E
Education	13-14	15-16
Community ...	6-7, 13	Sports
		9-11



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