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## WF BOE OKs 6-Percent Pay Hike For WEA Over New 3-Yr. Contract

By DELL SIMEONE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD - The board of education ratified a three-year contract with the Westfield Education Association (WEA) Tuesday night, giving teachers a 2-percent raise per year, plus an extra professional development day. The vote was 4 to 2 with board members Mitch Slater and Brendan Galligan voting against the contract.

The contract begins on July 1, 2014 and runs through June 30, 2017. The WEA represents 570 teachers, nurses, librarians, guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists and educational specialists. The teachers will be required, under New Jersey Chapter 78 legislation, to con-

tribute more to their health insurance each year of the contract and/or to waive the district insurance if they have additional sources of coverage.

An additional professional development day was added for a total of two annual professional days. The extra day was added for what Board Vice-President Rosanne Kurstedt said was to give teachers time to think and time to prepare for their classes.

Members of the BOE negotiating team included Human Resource Specialist Barbara Ball, Business Administrator Dana Sullivan and board members Ginny Leiz, who was the chairwoman, Ann Cary, Gretchen Ohlig and Mitch Slater. The WEA negotiating team included its president and guidance counselor Kim

Schumacher, chief negotiator Michael Seiler, Dominick Ceccio, Scott Rotherford, Gail Alston, Debbie Vezos and Mary Wickens.

In explaining his vote, Mr. Slater said, "I wasn't ready to sign off on this contract without getting one year without a raise." He also objected to the silent demonstration by the WEA which took place outside of the BOE administration building in May during one of the negotiation sessions. He called it "a bit intimidating."

"I blame the WEA for that tactic," he added. He also said, "It's not easy. I just felt the budget's very tight. You win some, you lose some."

Mr. Galligan said he objected to the short time frame - less than 30 hours - the board had to review the terms of the contract. He said he received it on Monday afternoon and did not think it was enough time to read the 34-page contract and fully understand it. He called the vote premature and, thus, voted against the agreement.

Board President Richard Mattessich and board member Mark Friedman were both away on business and did not take part in the vote. Ms. Kurstedt said to Mr. Galligan, "Brendan, I'm sorry you feel that way. You had the green booklet with all the language that was in the contract."

She further said, "The teachers need the professional development day because they need time to work and plan." She said the salary increase was under the state cap of 2 percent and that the teachers will be contributing as much as 10 to 35 percent more to their health plan under the new contract. She also said that those requesting extended maternity leave will not be covered and will have to go on COBRA during that extended period.

"Our WEA is working with us. Let's not look back. Let's look forward. I thank everybody. They are hard decisions," Mrs. Kurstedt said.

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## Freeholders to Vote Tonight On Parks, Dam Projects

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY - The Union County Freeholders are set to vote tonight on a number of professional services contracts, ranging from construction of new turf soccer fields to rehabilitation of Lake Surprise Dam in the Watchung Reservation.

At its agenda meeting last Thursday, the freeholder board considered a resolution for a \$94,200 professional services contract to Maser Consulting, P.A., of Red Bank, for design, engineering and consulting services for installation of a synthetic turf system to accommodate two multi-purpose soccer fields with lights and two adjacent baseball fields at Cedar Brook Park in Plainfield.

Another \$28,900 contract is set to be awarded to Harbor Consultants of Cranford for engineering, land surveying and construction management services for a new parking lot at the Nomahegan Park baseball field in Cranford.

Harbor is also set to be awarded a \$26,700 contract for design and construction management for the rehabilitation of the clay tennis courts at Warninanco Park in Roselle. William Reyes, director of economic development, said the courts are in disrepair and will be resurfaced to "bring them back to usefulness."

As the county begins work on the Lake Surprise dam, the freeholders are to vote tonight to add \$44,379 to the engineering services contract to T&M Associates of Middletown to provide construction support services for the project, bringing the



WALKING TOUR...Third graders at Franklin Elementary School in Westfield recently took a walking tour of their hometown. It included visits to the Westfield Historical Society, Trader Joe's market, the rescue squad, police station and firehouse on North Avenue. Pictured are firefighters with David Latessa's third grade class.

Photo courtesy of Susan Francis

## Cranford Bd. Begins Hearing for Centennial Three-Story Building

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD - The planning board Wednesday began hearing an application by Emanuel Nimrud, who is seeking permission to construct a three-story building with retail on the first floor and six apartments on the second and third floors at 496 Centennial Avenue, a B-3 Zone. The site formerly housed Arnold's Pest Control, which burned down. The plans also include a parking lot for 10 parking spaces.

Mr. Nimrud sought the following variances and design waivers: to exceed the maximum allowable height and stories; less than the

minimum required parking spaces; less than the minimum required front-yard setback; no loading zone provided; and less than the minimum required foot candles in lighting in a parking area.

Mr. Nimrud owns Old City Café and Grill on North Union Avenue and said he has purchased other

land in town. "I am investing my time and financials and taking over properties to make it beneficial to the town and myself," Mr. Nimrud said.

Area residents said they were concerned with residents of the apartment complex and customers of the

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## Garwood Council Continues Eminent Domain Debate

By MEGAN K. SCOTT  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD - The borough council on Tuesday directed the Garwood Planning Board to conduct an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" study for the abandoned Casale factory property on South Avenue, including an eminent domain provision that drew a sharp objection from Councilman Jim Mathieu.

Mr. Mathieu was the only dissenter in the 5-to-1 vote for the resolution. Mr. Mathieu, for at least the third time on council, questioned the authority of local governments to take an individual's

property for a non-public use. For the third meeting that the issue was debated, he questioned why eminent domain had to be included.

Councilman Bill Nierstedt, who also is a member of the planning board, said the purpose is to ensure that the borough will be able to obtain public parking. He reiterated that the resolution does not authorize taking property. The council would have to take separate action to do that.

"All this really is, and I hate to use the term, is a toolbox," Mr. Nierstedt said. "It is a tool that

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NEW LEADERSHIP...The Union County Republican Committee held their reorganization meeting Tuesday night at the Newmark School in Scotch Plains, at which time a new leadership team was elected for the next two years. Pictured, from left to right, are: Mountainside Councilman Glenn Mortimer, Union County GOP chairman; Westfield Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan, vice-chairwoman; Nicole Cole of Fanwood, secretary; Springfield Councilman Ziad Shehady, associate chairman; Cranford Committeewoman Mary O'Connor, associate chairwoman; Dorothy Burger of Summit, state GOP committeewoman, and Westfield Councilman Jim Foerster, state GOP committeeman. Not pictured is Jim Ulrich of Clark, treasurer.

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GARWOOD ROCKS...Families enjoy the Garwood Rocks street fair held Sunday. The event offered a variety of food, fun and games for all.

Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader

## WF Planning Bd. Oks Summit Med. Group Signs

By LAUREN S. BARR  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD - A sign application by Summit Medical Group (SMG) for 574 Springfield Avenue was approved by the Westfield Planning Board at its June 4 meeting.

SMG received board approval last year for a change of use for the building. The 32,000-square-foot building previously housed L'Oreal offices, and will now be medical offices and an urgent care center. SMG plans to open the building on Monday, June 23.

The Westfield ordinance only allows for one wall mounted sign, and the applicant was granted three. There will be a 15.97-foot-long by 7.31-foot-high "Summit Medical Group" sign on the rear façade of the building facing the parking lot; a 12-foot-long "Main Entrance" sign, and an 18.21-foot-long "Urgent Care Center" sign.

John Michalski, an attorney with

McElroy, Deutch, Mulvaney and Carpenter who represented the applicant, said the "signs are vital to the operation of the business" and that the wall signs were important as the medical offices and the urgent care center have separate entrances.

The applicant's planner, Michael Tobia, testified that two monument signs were needed for the business to operate effectively. He said while the building's address is Springfield Avenue, the driveway entrance is located on Cardinal Drive and the building entrance faces the rear parking lot. Mr. Tobia testified that a monument sign was required at the corner of Springfield Avenue and Cardinal Drive to direct patients to the building and an additional monument sign is needed to direct patients into the driveway.

While the board had no issue with the driveway monument sign, it did

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'FUN'-RAISING EVENT...More than 400 supporters of the Westfield College Men's Club gathered at the Westfield Armory on May 30 for an evening of food, music and friendship. The club's newest fundraising event, a BBQ Band Party, featured dancing to Doug Winter's band "Best Kept Secret" and was supported by a long list of sponsors led by Vine Republic and Heineken. Formed in 1922 to provide scholarships to local high school students, the College Men's Club will award \$50,000 in scholarships to 12 members of the Class of 2014 at a special ceremony today at the Westfield home of Jet and Susan Taylor.



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