

## DJ Salvante Begins Tenure As Recreation Director

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township's new recreation director was introduced to the recreation commission on Monday night. DJ Salvante replaces Matt Mercurio who resigned after just a year to assume the recreation director position in his hometown of Old Bridge. Mr. Salvante was most recently recreation director in Union.

Mr. Salvante was present at Monday's recreation commission meeting, preparing for his transition into the role. Mr. Salvante will begin overseeing department operations in January, including recreation commission meetings.

Recreation Commission Vice-Chairman Alfonse Akins said he had concerns with a concrete base. He said a concrete base would be a deal-breaker for his support regarding the project moving forward.

The commission will include more meetings in its projected 2018 meeting schedule. An action item or voted decision will be at the top of each agenda. Mr. Walsh said the change will provide a systematic approach to addressing program decisions.

### Westfield Reorg. on Tues, Jan. 2 at 6 P.M.

WESTFIELD — Westfield's town council Reorganization meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 2, at 6 p.m., at the municipal building, 425 East Broad Street. This will be the first meeting of the year with newly-elected Mayor Shelley Brindle and council members Linda Habgood, Mike Dardia, David Contract and Dawn Mackey, joining existing council members Frank Arena, Jo Ann Neylan, Mark LoGripio and Doug Stokes.

At this meeting, the positions appointed to fill the vacancies on the current boards and commissions will be announced. Over 400 submissions were received from Westfield residents through the open application process. Mayor Brindle also will give the annual State of the Town address. All residents are invited by the council to attend.

### Free Parking Offered In Westfield Until Jan. 1

WESTFIELD — The Town of Westfield is providing complimentary parking at designated on-street meters and parking lots through January 1. The meters and the pay stations will be covered during this time, and free parking is available for up to two hours at on-street metered spaces and up to four hours in the pay station lots.

The town is enforcing the time limits, so anyone exceeding the time limits may be ticketed.



Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
HERE COMES SANTA...Santa rides of the front of a Fanwood fire engine during Saturday's Santa Parade, an annual tradition in the borough. With his helpers from the Fire Department, Rescue Squad and PBA Local 123, Santa delivered more than 1,000 gifts to about 380 homes across town.

## Kalnins Says Good-Bye; Stiansen Promoted to Sgt.

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — The Cranford Police Department (CPD) advanced Thomas Stiansen to sergeant, and appointed three new probationary patrolmen to the police force at the township committee's official meeting Tuesday.

Sgt. Stiansen has advanced from a detective in the investigations division. He is a recipient of the New Jersey State Police Valor Award, and was recognized by the New Jersey State Assembly for his effort leading to the arrest of a serial burglar, Police Chief Ryan Greco said. Ryan McSharry, Nicholas Cook and Christopher Gross were sworn in as probationary patrolmen, bringing the department to a total of 52 officers.

Tuesday was the last committee meeting Andis Kalnins will sit in as a commissioner, after serving six years on the committee, including three years as mayor. His fellow Republican commissioner, Mary O'Connor, recognized Mr. Kalnins for his service and dedication to the township. She cited Mr. Kalnins' accomplishments, noting his efforts that put in place a road resurfacing schedule, supporting pedestrian safety and police, reducing density at 215-235 Birchwood Avenue, and his work on the Mayors Council Railway River Flood Control (Mayors Council).

"He treated everyone with respect and was always willing to help out and lend a hand," Commissioner O'Connor said.

"I hope I did some good over the last six years," Commissioner Kalnins said. He thanked commissioners and mayors who he served with over the years, municipal staff and department heads, and he especially noted former Township Clerk Tara Rowley, calling her "the best clerk ever." Commissioner Kalnins also thanked the residents who supported him. "There is one thing about Cranford, is people care," Mr. Kalnins said. Commissioner Kalnins, with tears in his eyes, then thanked his family.

During the business portion of the meeting, Commissioner Ann Dooley abstained and Deputy Mayor Patrick Giblin voted against a resolution allowing 2017

vacation carry-over requests.

Maureen Tinen resigned as an owner member of the Downtown District Management Corporation.

Also, \$9.7 million of general improvement bonds were authorized to be published for sale and also were authorized to be combined into a single-issue bond. The funds were slated over the last decade for a variety of improvements within the township, including road resurfacing, park improvements, building improvements, recreation improvements, brook and river improvements, and the acquisition of the Solomon Schechter school, among other items.

A \$370,000 contract was awarded to S. Brothers for a new traffic signal at North Union Avenue and Alden Street, as well as repaving of the road and handicapped ramps.

The committee agreed to continue contributing to the annual payment of \$20,000 for a cost-sharing agreement with the members of the Mayors Council.

A contract for winterizing and startup of the Centennial Avenue and Orange Avenue Outdoor Pools for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 seasons was approved, totaling about \$150,000 for the two periods. Part of the cost is for new filters for the Orange Avenue Pool, Commissioner Ann Dooley said during the committee's workshop meeting Monday.

In closing on Tuesday evening, Mayor Thomas Hannen, Jr. made note of the Menorah Lighting that took place Sunday night. "I couldn't help but think that with the respect we pay towards Hanukkah and the Christmas season in the time of year when there is the least light available in the northern hemisphere, these two faiths have gotten together to light up our world and light up our lives...with all the troubles in the world, this is something special."

The governing body's reorganization meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 2.

**LEADER/TIMES CLASSIFIED ADS PAY**

## Courthouse Jury Room Getting \$360,000 Upgrade

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

COUNTY — The Union County Freeholders are expected to vote tonight to award a \$360,000 contract for improvements to the jury waiting room at the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth.

Joseph Graziano, director of the Department of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities Management, said part of the courthouse tower staircase project will be going through the existing jury room. The county is adding a second stairwell that will go from the top of the 100-year-old courthouse tower down to the ground floor in order that the facility meets current state fire code requirements.

Mr. Graziano said the county is doing some of the work in-house with county employees. He said the current jury room holds 160 people with only one form of entry and exit and no restrooms. The new room, which will be located downstairs in the new courthouse annex, will hold 260 jurors and will have restrooms and improved ingress and egress.

Mr. Graziano said the county's "in-kind" work will total around \$314,000. "So we are basically splitting the work with the contractor," he said.

Also on tonight's regular meeting agenda will be a resolution to approve the county's deer management program for sometime between January 1 and February 10, the state's shotgun season. The program, which utilizes licensed hunters per guidelines set by the state's Fish and Game division, will include the Watchung and Ash Brook Reservations, Nomahegan Park, Lenape Park, the Summit portion of Passaic River Park, Oak Ridge Park and the Hawk Rise Sanctuary. The estimated cost for the program is \$6,700.

Freeholder Angel Estrada said he has been receiving complaints from Hillside residents of deer sightings. Dan Bernier, director of park planning and environmental services, said all the areas included in the deer-management plan, ex-

cluding the Watchung Reservation, which is county-owned, were included following a request from the town in which they are located. He said a request from the town of Hillside asking for the county's help would help expedite the matter.

Mr. Bernier said the county will be assisting Plainfield with its deer problem after the city council approved a deer-management program at its December 11 meeting.

Also discussed at Thursday's meeting, per the office of the county clerk, was contracts for the printing of election ballots. Among them is a \$533,074, two-year contract with B&B Press of Lebanon to print the mail-in and provisional ballots for the 2018 and 2019 primary, general and school board elections. The contract runs from February 1, 2018 through January 31, 2020. Deputy County Clerk Nicole DiRado said the contract includes two special elections if needed.

Freeholder Estrada also questioned an \$853,000 change order in the contract for the renovation of the Warinanco Park ice-skating rink. Armando Sanchez, director of recreational facilities, said 84 percent of the change order was the result of "unforeseen circumstances" such as "unsuitable soils" found during the excavation of the site for the foundation of the new field house building. He said that alone amounted to an additional \$200,000, "in order to stabilize the site to support the (new) building."

In addition, PSE&G said the building lacked sufficient load for the upgrade of the electrical systems. Also, the water company requested an additional line off the street to support the new building in order to separate the potable water and fire suppression systems so they are not run off the same water main.

The \$7.9-million modernized Warinanco Sports Center includes a new 11,000-square-foot field house.

The board will also vote tonight on raises for themselves and department

## Board Gets Presentation On 298-Unit Building

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD — Russo Development's attorney, Christopher H. Minks, gave a presentation to the Garwood Planning Board last Thursday for the South Avenue I site plan application. The proposed building will include 298 apartment units, with 19,366 square feet set aside for retail space.

Mr. Minks called upon testimony from Minno Wasko Architects and Planners senior associate Stuart A. Johnson and Melillo + Bauer Associates landscape architect John T. Duda. Mr. Minks will continue testimony at January's planning board meeting before a final site plan is recommended to the borough council.

"We have overcome many hurdles and disagreements; reviewing and revising the plan. All to the good of bettering the plan," said Mr. Minks.

Reminding the planning board he has shopped in Garwood, often utilizing the downtown business district, Mr. Minks said, "we really want to be your good neighbors."

The proposed building will have an on-site leasing office, on-site amenities for residents including a fitness facility and pool, a parking deck enclosed by the building on three sides, and an open plaza, according to the planning board application. The parking garage will be wrapped on three sides, meaning the garage will only be visible to the railroad tracks, stated Mr. Johnson. Evergreen trees will be planted to grow vertical to the parking garage, Mr. Duda said.

From the streetscape view, a three-story residential facade will be visible, with retail space set aside for patrons entering from the sidewalks. The fourth residential floor will be set back to remove a towering building aesthetic, stated Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson said the type of businesses that will eventually occupy the retail space will differ depending on the apartments' occupant demographics.

Cafes and restaurants are probable possibilities, he added.

Two different color bricks, masonry variations, and several other diverse design aesthetics have been proposed in illustrations presented by Mr. Johnson. He said the design goal is to make the building complement the borough's existing architectural aesthetic.

Garwood Mayor Charles Lombardo said he wanted to thank the joint committee for its efforts at moving the site-plan review along to adhere to court-set timelines while keeping the borough's interest in mind.

The application includes variance relief requests for associated variances, including expanding several parking spots by six inches, sizing parking spots at 9-by-18 square feet instead of the initially proposed 8.5-by-18 square feet.

Mr. Minks said the variances are for "minor deviations" to the proposed site plan, as he emphasized the applicant is not seeking bulk variances, infrastructure waivers, any infringement on setbacks, nor building height increases.

### Coleman Comments on Rejection of Garrett

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-12th) released a statement following the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs rejecting the nomination of former New Jersey congressman Scott Garrett to lead the Export-Import Bank in a 10-to-13 vote.

"In rejecting the nomination of Scott Garrett to lead the Export-Import Bank of the United States, Senators — both Democrats and Republicans, alike — affirm how damaging his leadership would be to this vital agency. Throughout his tenure in Congress, Mr. Garrett led the charge to oppose ExIm, so, it defies logic that he would ever be considered to lead the bank with the opportunity to sabotage it from within..."



Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS BACK IN CRANFORD...Christmas decorations are back up on the Cranford train trestle after NJ Transit officials reversed a decision to have towns pay a fee to install the lights on NJ Transit property following a call by The Westfield Leader and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times to Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield). The newspaper was told there is no fee to put up the decorations, but an NJ Transit supervisor should be present to oversee the installation.

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Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
SANTA STOPS IN FOR VISIT...Santa poses with Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr and members of the Fanwood Volunteer Fire Department's Santa Parade, an annual tradition. With his helpers from the fire department, rescue squad and PBA Local 123, Santa delivered over 1,000 gifts to about 380 homes across town.



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