

## Battiloro Sworn In as Police Chief, Mayor Looks Ahead to 2019

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—A new police chief was sworn in, new members to various boards, committees and commissions were appointed, and Mayor Shelley Brindle, in her State of the Town Address last Thursday at the annual reorganization meeting, started off by highlighting the accomplishments during her first year as mayor.

Those highlights, she said, included improved communication, transparency and engagement with the community, noting the live-stream of town council meetings, introducing a request for proposals/qualifications process for town professional services, and forming new committees, among

others.

"On the budget and operating front, we maintained a robust \$10 million budget surplus while delivering the lowest municipal tax rate increase in decades," Mayor Brindle said.

The temporary Westfield ice rink that opened this fall atop the basketball courts at Gumbert Park was, "part of my commitment to improve services to residents without using taxpayer dollars," Mayor Brindle said. This public/private partnership, she said, converted "an underutilized town asset into one with broad community benefit paid for by a private operator."

The success of downtown business will include strategies to increase foot

traffic or policies that will entice new business to set up shop here.

"While our downtown remains in a transitional phase, and it's tempting to focus on the stores that have closed, I find it more promising to focus on the 29 new businesses that opened last year, with eight more scheduled so far this year," Mayor Brindle said. She also noted Lord & Taylor's commitment to "stay and grow in Westfield."

The parking shortage downtown is an issue Mayor Brindle is also looking to address. "It's time that we investigate new solutions to address our parking shortage as a means to attract employers, to not only provide daytime foot traffic to sustain a vibrant downtown, but also to diversify our tax base to reduce our reliance on property taxes as a primary source of revenue."

The one-seat ride into Manhattan is another initiative Mayor Brindle is focused on bringing to fruition. She is the co-founder and co-chair of the Raritan Valley Line Mayors Alliance, which is lobbying for a Raritan Valley Line peak one-seat ride.

In 2019, Mayor Brindle's objectives include responsible fiscal management through a long-term approach, completion of the master plan reexamination and parks strategic plan, and addressing congestion and walkability.

The town is also to hold its first public budget forum this month, as well as public meetings for the master plan and parks plan, where resident input would be sought.

"In closing, as I reflect back on 2018, there was one singular event that seemed to encapsulate my vision for our community, and that was AddamsFest. It wasn't the weekend itself, per se, but rather everything that led up to it—from celebrating one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



PROUD MOMENT...Christopher Battiloro takes the oath of office for Westfield police chief from Mayor Shelley Brindle at last Thursday's town reorganization meeting as his family looks on. The official ceremony follows an informal swearing in last month. Chief Battiloro became acting chief in August.

Courtesy of Patrick Connor



FIRST TERM...Garwood Mayor Sara Todisco, center, poses with Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle, left, and Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr during the Garwood reorganization meeting January 2, when Ms. Todisco was sworn in to serve her first term as mayor.

Paul Lachenaier for The Westfield Leader

## Sara Todisco Sworn In As Garwood Mayor, Youngest to Hold Position

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD—Sara Todisco was sworn into office as the Mayor of Garwood at the annual borough reorganization meeting held on January 2. Ms. Todisco is the youngest person in Garwood's history to serve as mayor. Newly-elected Democratic council candidates Michael Ince and Sean Benoit were sworn into office for three-year terms. Councilman

Marc Lazarow was approved by Mayor Todisco and the council to serve as council president.

"One of the most impactful people in my life was my late grandfather Frank Todisco. With family roots going back to before Garwood was even incorporated as Garwood, he loved this town," said Mayor Todisco, describing during her public address how "honored" she is to serve as Garwood's mayor.

Mayor Todisco outlined personal expectations of her mayoral tenure during a "state-of-the-borough" address, including the launch of an "official Garwood social media page in the next 100 days." Mayor Todisco stated "quarterly meetings" will now be held to increase communication between the planning board, council and the board of education.

"I envision Garwood to stay true to its small-town core, even as it faces changes and challenges. I envision Garwood to always remember and treasure its rich 116-year history. However, I also envision Garwood to adapt with the times to ensure communication is improved so residents know what is going on in town," Mayor Todisco said.

Mayor Todisco announced the establishment of a Citizens' Advisory Panel to "solicit resident feedback

about potential capital projects," namely road projects and professional equipment.

The borough's municipal street sweeper is over 18 years old and is no longer "operable," stated Mayor Todisco. "Putting together a vote to finance much-needed equipment is an initial priority (the council will address)," she said. "I cannot turn this vision into a reality alone. To all of you on this dais (council members), we are a team who will share in our future success together."

Mayor Todisco stated she wanted to address bipartisan collaboration, emphasizing a "council team of six" not a 5-to-1 Democratic majority.

"I will be your biggest ally and your biggest supporter," said Mayor Todisco, pledging assistance to all council members throughout their terms.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Oster, Root Named BOE President, Vice-President

By SARAH McGRAIL  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—Westfield's \$106-million-plus schools operating budget looked to be in capable hands as two economics graduates took over the top roles at the board of education during last Thursday's reorganization meeting.

President Peggy Oster, a graduate of Goucher College, and Vice-President Amy Root, a Princeton graduate, are both long-time residents who have a history of giving back to their adopted town.

Mrs. Oster moved to Westfield 30 years ago, initially commuting into New York City to work for Salomon Brothers as the manager of the International Arbitrage Financial Reporting Department.

As her five children, now all in their 20s, moved through the Westfield school system, Mrs. Oster spent many years volunteering with Parent Teacher Student Organizations (PTSOs) and with the College Woman's Club and the Junior League before her election to the board of education four years ago. She cur-

rently works as the chief executive officer of Sterling Products in Passaic.

Mrs. Root will celebrate the 20th anniversary of her move to Westfield this year. She worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as a bank examiner for 10 years and went on to share her skills with PTSOs, the Parent-Teacher Council and now the board of education while her two sons went through the Westfield schools.

Her younger son will graduate from Westfield High School this year. Mrs. Root may look familiar to some from the eight years she spent working at downtown toy store Learning Express.

Both women were warmly endorsed by their board colleagues who unanimously elected them to the roles.

Outgoing President Gretchen Ohlig nominated Mrs. Oster, saying she was "thoughtful and considerate and she listens better than just about anybody that I know, and so I think she would serve us very well in the year to come."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



NEW ORDER IN CRANFORD...Township Clerk Patricia Donahue administers the oath of office to 2019 Cranford Mayor Patrick Giblin, pictured right, as he is surrounded by family members at the January 2 Cranford Township Committee reorganization meeting.

Brooks Crandall for The Westfield Leader

## Patrick Giblin Sworn In As Cranford Mayor for 2019

By JESSE WINTER  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD—The township will start the new year with a new mayor. During the governing body's reorganization meeting January 2, the township committee nominated and elected unanimously Democrat Patrick Giblin as committee chairman and mayor for 2019.

Former Mayor Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. was re-elected to the committee and will serve another three-year term. The five-person body also will see Commissioner Ann Dooley reassume the position of deputy mayor in 2019.

Mayor Giblin began his address by highlighting the importance of federal support and the impact Congress has on the future of Cranford.

Mr. Giblin was supported by his brother, Ted Giblin, who is a councilman in Verona, and his father, Thomas Giblin, a state assemblyman, as he began his tenure as mayor.

"Tomorrow morning (January 3), I head down to Washington, D.C., for the swearing in of Tom Malinowski, our newest Congressman here in the 7th Congressional district," Mayor Giblin said. "It's vital a town like Cranford continues to push on Congress and work with Congressman Malinowski, Senators (Cory) Booker and (Robert) Menendez," he said.

"I know there's lots of talk about different things that may or not be funded down in Washington right now, but I like to think flood-control projects are paramount," said Mayor Giblin. "These are things [projects] that won't be funded without their help."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

"We intend to stay on top of them—



NEW GARWOOD MAYOR...Sara Todisco, pictured center, is sworn into office as New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy, pictured left, watches.

Paul Lachenaier for The Westfield Leader

### PAGE INDEX

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



WESTFIELD WEST  
COLDWELL BANKER  
RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

### FOR ALL MARKET INFO:

- Twitter: @cbwestfield
- Instagram: @cbwestfieldnj
- Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/westfieldwest
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/cbwestfieldnj

Westfield West Office • 600 North Avenue West, Westfield, NJ 07090 • 908-233-0065 • ColdwellBankerHomes.com

© 2019 Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Operated by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. Coldwell Banker® and the Coldwell Banker logo are registered service marks owned by Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC.

#600NORTH