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Westfield Community Says 'Yes' To \$11.7 Million School Bond By Vote of 2800-1033

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

On Tuesday, the Westfield Board of Education received resounding acceptance from Westfield citizens in all 25 districts of an \$11.7 million school bond for improvements to schools throughout the district. With a vote of 2800 to 1033, residents gave their support to the bond, which will fund construction of new classrooms, technological infrastructure work, and capital improvements. Out of approximately 19,489 registered voters in Westfield, a total of

3,751, or 19 percent, participated in the election, not including absentee ballots.

Fifty-nine absentee voters decided to cast a "yes" vote, while 23 absentee voters chose to reject the bond. Since the referendum was officially approved for formal vote by the board on October 8 and thus presented to Westfield voters, there has been a mixture of moderate debate and overwhelming support regarding the necessity and importance of the bond. But the board's long and winding road in pursuit of the bond has culmi-

nated in what it maintains is a continued commitment to excellence.

The successful referendum will allow the board to fund everything from window replacements to computer cabling to new classrooms to combat the reported enrollment crisis.

At the October 8 meeting, school board President Danielle Walsh had asked members of the community to become as informed as possible about the issues included in the referendum. She also asked citizens to provide as much support as possible at

the polls.

When *The Westfield Leader* first contacted Mrs. Walsh on election evening, she stated that some polls had registered votes of 2 to 1, 3 to 1 or 5 to 1.

After the votes were in, Mrs. Walsh stated that she was "thrilled that the community has come out and set priorities for the children in the com-

munity." She called the vote a "wide margin."

She also expressed her appreciation to all of the volunteers who were involved in the organization of the bond report and the support at the polls.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. William J. Foley, had previously stated that the board took a hard look

at the enrollment crunch in the elementary schools, which he felt would cripple the academic growth of students district-wide.

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DEMS Charge Politics in GOP Delay in Picking Insurance Rep.

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Westfield Democrats and Republicans on the Town Council are once again at odds over the appointment of the town's risk management consultant, the individual who represents the town in worker's compensation and town property casualty claims.

The Democrats are seeking to reappoint Louis E. Lefevre of Bollinger Fowler. Mr. Lefevre has held the position for years, while his firm, although changing names over the years due to mergers, has represented the town for half a century.

The Republicans' attempt to delay the appointment of Mr. Lefevre last year was defeated when former Republican Councilman Norman N. Greco abstained and First Ward Councilwoman Gail S. Vernick was absent. The end result was a 4-3 vote favoring Bollinger's return. All four Democrats on the 1997 council, including Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, supported the appointment.

Democrats say the battle is really over a desire by Republicans to appoint Amalgamated General Agencies (AGA), a firm run by former Westfield Mayor Ronald Frigerio. AGA once was the town's secondary insurance agent through a brokerage arrangement with Pearsall & Frankenbach Inc., now Bollinger.

"We are going to pull all stops because we feel it is (the possible appointment of AGA) wildly inappropriate," said Mayor Jardim.

The Mayor admitted that, unlike last year, Democrats only have three of the nine votes on the council. Thus, Democrats cannot reappoint Bollinger without at least some Republican support.

Fourth Ward Councilman Lawrence A. Goldman, a Democrat, indicated that he will make a motion for a vote on a resolution re-appointing Bollinger this Tuesday if Finance Committee Chairman and Second Ward Councilman James J. Gruba does not. Mr. Goldman serves on that committee.

Mr. Gruba, the veteran Republican on the council, said Mr. Lefevre's current term could be extended five days until the council organizes in January. This, he indicated, would ensure that the town is adequately represented in insurance claims filed against the town in the interim.

Republican Second Ward Councilman Matthew P. Albano simply wants to "look at all the alternatives that are available out there" for the town's insurance representative so the council can make a "well thought out decision."

In a press release just issued by the Mayor to *The Leader*, Councilman Goldman is quoted to say that Mr.

Frigerio "appears to be willing to stop at nothing in order to get the town business." (The release will be run in next week's paper.)

Anthony M. Laporta of North Chestnut Street, a former councilman, said Mr. Lefevre does not have political ties to either party in Westfield.

"It (the rumored appointment of Mr. Frigerio) is patronage; that's all it is," he said.

Mr. Laporta, employed in the insurance field, served on a special



CHRISTMAS PIPES...Members of the Watson Highlanders Pipe Band perform traditional festive bagpipe music for downtown shoppers. They will perform again this Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



NAUGHTY OR NICE...Little Rebecca Lenox visits with Santa during last Sunday's "Welcome Home to Westfield" festivities. MotoPhoto and Portrait Studio sponsored a "free photo with Santa" for a donation of two non-perishable food items for The Food Bank at Holy Trinity Church.

Westfield Library Celebrates 10th Birthday With Gala

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Many Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library gathered Saturday evening to celebrate the building's 10th birthday — on the very day that it first opened its doors in 1988.



CELEBRATING A DECADE...Barbara McIntyre, President of the Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library, left, lights a candle with Michele Picou as part of the library's ten year anniversary. Mrs. Picou was President of the Friends during the construction of the library. Candles on ten cakes, donated by local bakeries, were lit to mark the event.

The party honored all those who were instrumental in making the \$3.5 million building possible 10 years ago, including local groups and residents who helped move more than 103,000 books from the library's prior location at the Municipal Building to

its current location at 550 East Broad Street.

According to Eva Wiley, Chairwoman of the Birthday Party Planning Committee which organized the celebration, and an active member of the Friends of the Library, stated that the Kolterjahn family "was very active in making the new building a reality."

Ms. Wiley explained that not only did the late Paul Kolterjahn serve as the President of the Library's Board of Trustees and donate a large sum of money to the new library, but he also worked hard to help pass a referendum to attain the present facility.

His wife, Lynn Kolterjahn, who is very active on the Friends committee, stated, "I know he is very proud of this library and he would have loved to be a part of this event tonight."

According to Friends of the Library President Barbara McIntyre, other key people who helped make the new library possible were asked to help celebrate by lighting candles on 10 different cakes, marking the library's success year by year.

According to Ms. McIntyre, the grand cakes which adorned the party's dessert tables were donated by local bakeries and restaurants to mark the special occasion. She noted that a total of 12 cakes had been donated.

The first cake, donated by Lia in Westfield, was lit by former Mayor Ronald Frigerio, who was in office when the town was in need of a new library. Also lighting the first cake was Alex Williams, another former Mayor and Councilman who supported the library project.

The second cake, donated by Cline & Murphy of Westfield, was lit by Mrs. Kolterjahn in honor of her late husband, as well as her own work as a founding member of the Friends Committee that was started 26 years ago.

The third cake, which was donated by Kings of Garwood, was lit by John Malloy, who had served as the Town Administrator at the time the new library was constructed, and Edward A. Gottko, the current Town Administrator.

Lighting the fourth cake — donated by Bovella's Italian Pastry Shop in Westfield and designed to resemble a big stack of books — was Ray Stone. Mr. Stone was Westfield's Mayor during the first two years of the library's construction.

Also lighting this cake was David Rock, who represented the Westfield Board of Education when plans for the library were being made. It was also mentioned by the Friends that Mr. Rock's son, Patrick, organized the book moving effort from the library's old headquarters to the new building as part of his Eagle Scout project.

Harrison "Hap" Watson, the current Library Board of Trustees President, lit the fifth cake, which was donated by Robert Treat Bakery of Westfield. Mr. Watson developed the plan in which townspeople were asked to help move the library books to their new home — an initiative that

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Board of Ed Reviews Intermediate School Mathematics Program

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

During its Monday evening meeting, the Westfield Board of Education examined a presentation by Fran Elson, Mathematics Coordinator for kindergarten through grade 8, regarding the mathematics program at the intermediate school level.

The board had originally intended to analyze recommended revisions on the grading policy at Westfield High School as a part of the Superintendent's Report. However, the scheduled speaker, Dr. Robert G. Petix, Principal of the high school, was unable to attend.

The discussion of revisions was tabled for the board's regular meeting on Tuesday, January 19.

Ms. Elson, who filled the vacancy in the Superintendent's Report at a moment's notice, detailed the programs, or "modules," contained in the mathematics curriculum in grades 6 through 8.

The program includes Pre-Algebra in sixth grade; a choice of Algebra-Prep, Part I; Algebra I, Part I, or Algebra I: Geometry Strand, Part I, in the seventh grade, and Algebra-Prep, Part II, Algebra I, Part II, or Algebra I: Geometry Strand Part II, for eighth-grade students.

"This is a course for those students not succeeding in the advanced algebra program," explained Superintendent of Schools Dr. William J. Foley.

"This is hardly what I would call a slow curriculum, but more of a concrete, hands-on approach," he later stated.

Ms. Elson explained some of the projects included in the modules. In seventh grade, students are introduced to topics such as "The Language of Algebra," which involves

problem-solving projects with equations, tables and graphs.

"From the Ground Up," another seventh-grade module, involves modeling, measuring and constructing model homes from scales, measurements and geographical constructions, according to Ms. Elson.

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New Fire Trucks, Restrooms at Tamaques, Gumbert Included in Proposals by for '99 Municipal Budget

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Westfield Town Council this week began paring down the \$4.7 million in proposed purchases and improvements submitted to the governing body during its capital budget deliberations.

About \$1 million of those funds will be supported by grants and tax assessments.

The council is expected to conclude those discussions and move on to the operational side of the 1999 municipal budget — comprising salaries and wages along with daily expenses involved in running town government — some time in January.

Budget proposals include everything from the purchase of two new pumper trucks for the fire department — each carrying a \$350,000 price tag — to the replacement of restroom/storage facilities in Tamaques Park (located near the tennis courts) at \$157,000, and at Gumbert Park, for a cost of \$121,000.

In addition, Town Engineer Kenneth B. Marsh has proposed \$135,000 in improvements for the Public Works Center on North Avenue.

Fire officials explained that the two pumpers would replace 1975 and 1978 model year trucks, one of which was refurbished at a cost of \$60,000 just three years ago.

"It's unfortunate that we need to look at two trucks at this time," said Fire Chief Paul A. Battiloro, Jr., noting that the two older trucks in the town's fleet are not pumping to capacity.

"We are not asking for anything elaborate," he added.

In addition, the Fire Department is seeking \$135,000 to upgrade its communications system, thus putting it in line with those of surrounding towns. The system, Deputy Fire Chief John Castellano said, will meet with new Federal Communications Commission requirements mandating two-way communication capabilities between fire personnel inside and

outside a burning building. This includes communication between town firefighters and those in other communities to which Westfield provides assistance.

The Public Works Center project includes \$30,000 for an addition, \$50,000 for an emergency generator, and \$15,000 to upgrade the building's

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Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE, Teachers Reach Tentative Pact

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

With the help of a state fact-finder, negotiating teams for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education and the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association (SPFEA) have reached a tentative contract agreement.

The tentative pact, born of late-night bargaining from December 8 to 9, marked the hopeful conclusion of nearly 12 months of negotiations that saw the teachers' union enact a job action and authorize a strike.

The SPFEA's 450 members were presented with the changes to the proposed contract yesterday, Wednesday, December 16.

A ballot vote will be conducted

tomorrow at the individual schools by the building's Professional Improvement Committee member. He or she will, in turn, hand over the votes to the Election Committee for counting.

The board is scheduled to take action at its regular public meeting on Tuesday, December 22.

"I'm happy that we're finally coming down to a settlement," said SPFEA President Barbara McGuane. "I'm hopeful that membership will ratify (the revised contract)."

Details of the agreement will not be released until both sides have ratified the contract in accordance with the "fact-finder's blackout" currently in place.

Board Vice President Theresa

Larkin, who chaired the negotiating team, stated, "I'm glad we finally reached resolution, and I look forward to working with the SPFEA on issues in the district. It's certainly a nice way to start the new year."

Prior to last week's negotiating session, the board's offer stood at annual salary increases of 3.8, 3.6, and 3.6 percent over three years, spanning 1998-2001, for a net value of 11 percent. Under that proposal, there would be no change in medical benefits for union members.

When negotiations were launched last January, both sides were optimistic that a settlement could be reached prior to the expiration of the existing contract. In June, however, the board

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Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE, Teachers Reach Pact

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announced that it had filed for an impasse "in an effort to expedite the negotiating process."

To display the union's dissatisfaction with the contract proposed by the school board, the SPFEA Action Committee recommended pickets before and after school hours, and that association members not decorate bulletin boards or attend Back-to-School Night.

Union leadership retracted its recommendation that teachers not work on Veteran's Day and Election Day in November, an option they are legally entitled to choose, but which would

have forced closure of district schools.

During recent months, Mrs. McGuane criticized the board for "negotiating in public" with its unprecedented release of written statements of its position on contract talks.

As mediation sessions yielded no results, the board called for fact-finding, a process which the district resorted to during previous stalemates in contract negotiations.

While the original fact-finding session was scheduled for Monday, December 21, an opening in the fact-finder's schedule enabled the two sides to come together last week.

Board of Ed Reviews Mathematics Program

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Another module, "Getting Down to Business," enables students to simulate business situations through exercises with functions and spreadsheets.

Among the eighth-grade modules are "Mathematics of Motion," which helps students learn distance, speed and time by utilizing computer software. In "Roads and Ramps," students learn the relationship between slopes and angles by constructing a "slope-o-meter."

Students learn linear functions, graphs, tables and slopes in the module called "Exploring the Unknown." The investigation of cross-sections, three-dimensional concepts, and volume occurs in another module, "Shapes and Space."

Ms. Elson explained that the mathematics program includes a teacher training manual, seven separate and conceptual student workbooks which are used each year, and a "Hot Word, Hot Topics" textbook, which contains mathematics vocabulary and basic topics with exercises.

Ms. Elson has also coordinated parent guides to help illustrate and define each module for parents to aid children in their studies.

Board member Carol Molnar observed that the mathematics program was "a good cross-section."

Dr. Elson concluded that the mathematics program for fifth-grade students is currently being examined and perfected.

Board member Arlene Gardner, who leads the Policies Committee, outlined the 1999-2000 school calendar for approval on first reading.

"We were really very limited as to what we could do," stated Mrs. Gardner.

The calendar will include 181 student contact days plus two "snow days."

Students will report to class on Wednesday, September 8, after Labor Day weekend. On Monday, September 20, schools will be closed for Yom Kippur.

Schools will be closed on Monday, October 11, in observance of Columbus Day. Students will have a half day of classes on Wednesday, October 27, to allow for a four-hour teachers' session.

Elementary school students will attend school for half days on Tuesdays, November 2, and November 16, due to conferences. Teacher Professional Days will be scheduled for Thursday and Friday, November 11 and 12. Thanksgiving recess will begin with a half day on Wednesday, November 24, and continue with a full day recess for Thursday and Friday, November 25 and 26.

The holiday school break, which will include Christmas and Kwanzaa, will

be scheduled from Friday, December 24 to Friday, December 31.

Students will not report to class on Monday, January 17, 2000 due to the observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

Due to President's Weekend, students will not report to school on Monday or Tuesday, February 21 or 22. These days will be considered additional "snow days" if necessary. If further snow days are required, the time will be taken from the end of the spring vacation.

On Wednesday, March 22, students will have a half day due to a four-hour session for teachers.

Students will not report to school on Friday, April 21, due to Good Friday, and will be off from Monday, April 24, to Friday, April 28, for spring vacation.

On Monday, May 29, students will have off from school for Memorial Day.

Schools will close on Tuesday, June 20, for students and Thursday, June 22, for teachers.

Mrs. Gardner asked Dr. Foley to compose a letter of concern to the New Jersey State Department of Education regarding distribution of an auto injector called an Epi-pen for epinephrine to aid students with severe allergic reactions.

School nurses and an alternate designee are permitted to administer the injection. However, if these officials are not available, the medication is not allowed to be distributed and a call must be placed to 911 instead.

Board member Annmarie Puleio reported that the Long Range Planning Committee will convene next week to discuss the enrollment crisis as it begins to move through the intermediate schools.

During their next regular meeting on Tuesday, January 12, board members will formally discuss and prepare a resolution to send to the New Jersey State Department of Education regarding the state-mandated School-to-Work Initiative.

The mandate, which has provoked strong controversy and board discussion, will require students to begin career preparation in the elementary grades, with actual applied employment in the 11th grade.

This employment in high school would keep students in classrooms for four days, with the fifth day spent in a working environment. Students would enter the working world by becoming either a volunteer or a temporary employee.

Board President Danielle Walsh reported that the board discussion will be televised on Channel 36.

Westfield Community Says 'Yes' To School Bond

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"Enrollment will continue to increase and we have no place to put the children," he had noted.

During the meeting to approve the bond for public vote, Dr. Foley had stressed that the state viewed Westfield as a rich district, thus limiting state aid to fund necessary projects. He called the outcome of Tuesday's election "a resounding victory."

He also expressed his thanks to all of the people who "worked so hard" to accomplish passage of the bond and the volunteers who evaluated the projects and needs of the various schools.

With the approval of this bond, the school board has promised that 40 percent of the funds will be applied to the construction of 16 additional elementary classrooms: nine at Franklin School, six at McKinley School, and one at Wilson School.

The board has also stressed that 50 percent of the bond will be applied to capital improvements. These renovations will include roof repair and replacement, lavatory renovations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), floor replacement, four converted classrooms at Westfield High School, and an expansion of the Wilson School library.

Now that the bond has been given the green light, when can taxpayers expect the projects to begin?

Dr. Foley stated that the bulk of the projects necessitated by the bond will begin in the summer in terms of actual

construction. He added that architects for the projects plan to meet with board members as early as January.

Dr. Foley told *The Westfield Leader* that interested construction companies and representatives had asked to be contacted as soon as the bond vote results were calculated. He said that he would be contacting these contractors as early as yesterday morning.

The approved bond will result in an \$18.08 increase in property taxes in 1999-2000 for the average assessed home in Westfield of \$174,000.

Slightly increasing, the bond will tack on \$37.45 in 2000-2001. In 2001-2002, the bond price tag will rise to \$56.59. Taxpayers can expect an increase of \$56.74 in 2002-2003. Finally, the bond will level off in 2003-2004 at a cost of \$56.69.

These figures are based on an average home assessment of \$174,000.

Business Administrator Robert Berman had previously noted that the principal and interest payments on the bond, as included in the school budget, will rise slightly in the first five years before leveling off in the following years through 2011. It would drop dramatically thereafter, he said.

In 1994, the board had proposed a \$7.6 million bond to Westfield citizens to erect 22 new elementary school classrooms. That bond, which was met with more open opposition and controversy, was rejected.

Library Celebrates 10th Birthday With Gala

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saved a great deal of money in moving expenses.

Also lighting this cake was Arnold Resnick, a former Secretary to the Library's Board of Trustees.

The sixth cake, donated by J & M Market in Mountainside, was lit by Jody Melloan, who was a library trustee in the 1980s and, according to the Friends, was Chairwoman of the 1988 fund drive which paid for computers and other needs at the library.

This fundraiser resulted in a total of \$300,000, which was \$100,000 over the group's goal.

Lighting the seventh cake, donated by ShopRite of Clark, was Gaile Boothe. Mrs. Boothe lit the candle on behalf of her husband, former Mayor Bud C. Boothe, who, according to the Friends, was a huge supporter of the new library.

The eighth cake, which was donated by Edwards Super Food Store in Westfield, was lit by Barbara Thiele, who has been the Library Director since 1984. Friends members described how she shared her knowledge and ideas during the planning stages of the library.

Ms. McIntyre lit the ninth cake, donated by Ferraro's in Westfield. Michele Picou, who served as President of the Friends at the time the new library was built, also lit the cake.

The 10th cake, donated by Classic Thyme of Westfield, was lit by Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, who, according to the Friends, is a "supporter of (bringing) the library into the 21st century."

Ms. Wiley announced that the two additional cakes were donated to the

evening's reception by Brick Oven of Westfield and The Green Grocer of Scotch Plains.

The evening's gala was catered by J & M Caterers of Westfield, with music provided by the William Raye Orchestra.

Members of the Birthday Party Planning Committee included Anne Arkel, Linda Guiditta, Jane Curtis, Sadie Schoss, Mrs. Kolterjahn, Jane Stephanski, Mrs. Melloan, Ms. Wiley, Ms. McIntyre, Peggy Bender, Jane Kelly and Letty Hudak.

According to the Friends, all members of the committee were instrumental in helping to put the non-binding referendum for the new library building on the ballot for a vote by Westfield residents back in 1984. The passing of the referendum was the first step in making the new library a reality.

According to Mrs. Melloan, who did a significant portion of the research for the birthday party, the Friends, under then-President Gini Issacson, "worked hard in the early 1980s to educate Westfield residents as to how overcrowded the old library was."

Mrs. Melloan revealed that on any given night, or on a Saturday, the old library was so crowded that there were no empty tables at which to study or read, and no additional shelf space for new books.

"For every new book the library received, an old book had to be removed," remarked Mrs. Melloan, who said the Town Council approved the bond ordinance for the library in 1986. The bond issued for the new library will be paid off this year, the Friends confirmed.

Commuter Fees Jump 50 Percent In Westfield

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — As expected, the Town Council Tuesday night approved an increase in commuter rates for the South Avenue train station parking lot and at the Watterson Street lot by 50 percent.

Rates, effective January 1, will be raised to \$30 a month from \$20 at the South Avenue lot, and \$15 at Watterson for residents with non-residents paying \$22.50. An original 100 percent increase had been proposed but, facing a Council Chambers full of angry commuters earlier this month, the governing body backed off on the original proposal.

Commuters will now pay \$360 a year at the south side train station lot and \$180 at Watterson Street.

Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan has said the intention of the council is to bring the commuter lot rates more in line with what downtown workers pay for their permits.

Despite the lower increase, a few residents did protest the new rate.

Anthony M. Laporta of North Chestnut Street, a former councilman and mayoral contender, said the new rate actually amounts to "a tax on parking" or a user fee on those persons using the lots.

"This is nothing more than a revenue generator," he explained to the council.

Mr. Laporta asked the council to table the ordinance and, instead, come back with a plan to build a parking deck. He said he would support higher permit fees if they were specifically used to build and maintain a parking facility.

Another commuter, Harvey Davidson of Carlton Road, emphasized that the new revenue must be used to generate improvements such as better lighting and town action to stop the placement of flyers on cars in the lots which create litter.

Fourth Ward Councilwoman Janis Fried Weinstein said she would like the council to take action to end the distribution of loose flyers on windshields.

Town Attorney Charles H. Brandt noted that the town has an ordinance prohibiting the distribution of literature in that manner. He said, however, that the town needs to enforce the code.

Councilman Sullivan said the town has included over \$400,000 in its proposed 1999 municipal budget for enhancements at town parking lots, including fixing and improving lighting, repaving and re-striping of the lots.

Another \$125,000 is included to combine the lots on Prospect and Elm Streets. Mr. Sullivan said the project is expected to generate another 30 to 35 spaces after the reconfiguration of the lots is done.

Dems Charge GOP Delay in Picking Insurance

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insurance review committee in 1991 appointed by then Mayor Richard H. Bagger which released a report on how the town could ensure competitive bidding for insurance brokers. Such matters are exempt from the state public contracts law.

Tuesday's discussion began when Republican Fourth Ward Councilwoman Janis Fried Weinstein asked the appointment of a risk manager be removed from the December 22 council agenda to which Democrats cried wolf.

"This position really should be kept out of partisan politics," Councilman Walsh responded.

With Democrats pushing for an answer as to why the matter should be deferred to January, Councilman Albano indicated that he personally believes that Mr. Lefevre may have a conflict of interest.

He indicated that Mr. Lefevre serves both as the risk manager for the town as well as for the Suburban Joint Insurance Fund (JIF), of which Westfield is a member.

Town Administrator Edward A. Gottko said that while Mr. Lefevre does represent the town, another agent represents Westfield in its membership in the JIF. Mr. Lefevre represents Summit, also a member of the JIF, in

both its city insurance matters as well as its interest in the JIF.

The Fund is made up of nine communities which operate as an insurance pool to save the municipalities money on workers compensation and liability insurance. The town is currently assessed \$635,000 annually as a member of the JIF.

The insurance risk manager's fee, 6 percent or more of the municipal assessment, is paid through the JIF.

When asked by Democrats for his opinion of the current risk manager, Mr. Gottko said, "I have no problem" with Mr. Lefevre.

Republican First Ward Councilwoman Gregory S. McDermott said the council has the right to look at the availability of other professionals for the position prior to making a final determination on the appointment.

"You could say that status quo may not be best for the town," he indicated.

Councilwoman Weinstein said her motion to put the matter on hold until the council reorganizes in January was only intended to look at the possibility of changing the insurance risk management consultant. She said this is the same as changing town prosecutors or municipal judges, both of which are part-time paid appointed town positions.

Fire Trucks, Restrooms Included in Budget Proposals

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restrooms in accordance with standards established under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Another \$40,000 has been included in the proposal for the repaving of the Public Works Center parking lot.

As for the addition, Mr. Marsh has said the building is in need of a conference room and a lobby area to conduct business with the general public. Expansion of a garage bay for DPW trucks is included in the budget request.

"We really don't have the facilities to serve the public," he told the council during its December 1 agenda meeting.

Mr. Marsh said \$25,000, budgeted by the council last year, would be used to have an architect draw up construction specifications for the improvements to the restrooms, along with the proposed addition.

Council members asked that the money be used to fund a facilities study of the building to determine its actual needs.

Town Administrator Edward A. Gottko, who served as Town Engineer prior to Mr. Marsh, described the Public Works garage bays as "woefully inadequate" for the type of equipment and trucks currently operated by the town.

The 1999 Public Works budget also includes around \$500,000 for road projects, a portion of which will come from state aid and previously assessed properties.

The department has done \$600,000 in road construction and/or paving projects this year.

Among those roads in this year's proposed budget are Crossway Place, Union Street, Willow Grove Avenue, Prospect Street, Boulevard, Gallows Hill Road, Myrtle Avenue and Ripley Place.

Another \$430,000 is proposed to upgrade the town's municipal parking lots, with an additional \$125,000 slated to combine municipal lots nos. 1 and 8 on Prospect and Elm Streets, respectively, thus creating one lot.

Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, Jr., who represents the Third Ward and chairs the Transportation, Parking and Traffic Committee, said he envisions the new configured lot being divided to provide sections for both long- and short-term meters.

Michael LaPlace, Executive Director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC), said the DWC is proposing \$140,000 in improvements this year.

The proposal includes \$40,000 to install a bricked crosswalk at Elm and East Broad Streets, \$75,000 for downtown trash receptacles, and \$25,000 for new directional signs for the town, as well as the purchase of benches, bicycle racks and other street furniture.

Another \$135,000 is proposed for Central Avenue underpass pedestrian

improvements. The DWC requests would be appropriated within the town budget and not the organization's spending plan.

The DWC also plans to upgrade the Central Avenue entrance to Westfield by installing plantings, better lighting and a fence near the railroad overpass.

The capital budget also includes \$100,000 for a sidewalk repair incentive program as proposed by Mayor Thomas C. Jardim.

The Mayor has said the cost of the program could be split between the town and residents.

Mr. Gottko said the town would solicit bids from contractors after which residents would be contacted to see if they are interested in having the work completed.

Repair of slate sidewalks, which usually involve grading and popping the slate into place, is paid for on the operational side of the budget, the administrator explained.

Recreation Director Glenn Burrell said the Recreation Department is proposing to tear down the existing restroom/storage structure, located near the tennis courts at Tamaques Park, and constructing a similar building.

He said a 1996 study determined the current building to be inadequate. A concession area has been removed from the building proposal, and a mobile facility for the park, operated by a private vendor, has been proposed instead.

Council members, including Finance Committee Chairman James J. Gruba, questioned the need for a heated restroom facility.

The facility will also house storage space, the majority of which would be used by the Westfield Police Athletic League, a football league for kids. Their equipment is currently stored at the police station.

The restrooms at Gumbert Park are based on a plan submitted to the Recreation Commission by the Westfield Baseball League, the primary user of the park, which is located near the Garwood border. A concession area is included in the Gumbert plan.

The council has authorized \$70,000 in its 1998 budget for Gumbert, with half that amount funded through a Union County "Project Pocket Park" grant. The remaining \$51,000 would be funded in the 1999 budget.

The Commission is seeking funding for a number of other projects not funded under the Pocket Park program, such as a touch and scent garden, as proposed by the Rake and Hoe Club of Westfield, and improvements to Clark Memorial Park.

The garden, originally suggested for Shadowlawn Drive and Rahway Avenue, is now proposed for Clark Park.

Meanwhile, Police Chief Anthony J. Scutti has submitted a proposal for several equipment purchases, including seven new radar scanners.

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