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It's Not Over Yet as Towns Face Ongoing Water Crisis

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Elizabethtown Water Company officials are continuing to urge more than 500,000 people in their service area to conserve water use to a bare minimum in response to a water emergency.

All water that is used for such purposes as cooking, washing food and brushing teeth should be boiled a minimum of three minutes. Residents are also urged to use bottled water instead. Health officials have said all ice frozen since last Thursday's floods should be discarded and icemakers turned off.

The emergency remained in effect as of yesterday, Wednesday, September 22, following flooding last Thursday of the company's Raritan-Millstone Water Treatment Plant in Bound Brook from Hurricane-turned-tropical storm Floyd.

The plant was at 10 percent capacity as of 4:30 p.m., according to company spokeswoman Erin Reilly.

She said that although water samples, taken primarily in areas

where there was low water pressure, indicated that no bacteria was present, the order to boil water remains in effect until Elizabethtown's operation can be fully stabilized.

The water treatment plant, which dates back to 1931, was producing between 130 and 140 million gallons of water prior to the storm. In the wake of Floyd's visit, Elizabethtown water supplies dropped to a total capacity of 95 million gallons a day, which were being produced from its Franklin Township plant, as well as the company's wells, according to Andrew M. Chapman, President of Elizabethtown Water Company.

The company serves 213,000 busi-

ness and residential customers in 54 municipalities in Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset and Union Counties. Elizabethtown had a peak capacity earlier this year of 228 million gallons per day for all its facilities. That number was down to 127 million gallons per day as of September 15.

With the Bound Brook plant out of operation, Elizabethtown is getting 65 million gallons daily from its Canal Road facility in Franklin Township, 20 million gallons from the company's wells and another 10 million from a main that is connected to the City of Newark. That 48-inch

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STRANDED...A car becomes stranded on Harrison Avenue in Westfield after Hurricane Floyd dumped a river full of water throughout the neighborhood.

Floyd Pummels Area Communities With Flooding, Power Outages

By FRED ROSSI, KIM KINTER, SUZETTE F. STALKER AND PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

When Hurricane Floyd spun through the state of New Jersey last Thursday, it held nothing back in its attack on Union County and adjacent areas.

Although it rained all day last Wednesday, the storm really let loose on Thursday, when 7.6 inches of rain fell. On Wednesday, a total of 2.42 inches fell, for a two-day total of 10.02 inches, according to Keith Arnesen, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Meteorologist. The measurement was taken at Canoe Brook in Cranford.

Mr. Arnesen explained that a lot of

the early rain was absorbed by the dry ground, but when the rain began to come in torrents, the ground, rivers and creeks became overwhelmed.

Dave Robinson, state climatologist at Rutgers University, added that the weather pattern was the "worst case scenario for central and northern New Jersey." As Hurricane Floyd moved up the eastern seaboard, it met a wet stationary frontal system that, when combined, dumped an unusually large amount of rain water on the area, he said.

The storm, which was expected to pack winds of 70 miles per hour, led Governor Christine Todd Whitman to close all public schools in the state last Thursday. Many schools also remained closed or had delayed openings on Friday as a result of the storm.

The Raritan River in Bound Brook overflowed its banks and flooded the town, causing disaster for residents there and in nearby Manville. The flood also caused the Elizabethtown Water Company's water treatment plant in Bound Brook to shut down. (See related story on this page).

Residents in various communities in Union County suffered damage and heartache as the storm walloped the area.

Westfield Suffers Flooding, Outages

Although Westfield may have fared better than some neighboring towns, many home owners sweated through the evening and into the night with flooded basements and power outages.

Water rose quickly in some front and backyards, and flooded streets resulted in some parked cars being

swamped.

Eleven residents were evacuated to a Red Cross shelter set up at Westfield High School, according to Police Chief Anthony J. Scutti. Of those 11, everyone found shelter elsewhere with relatives or friends except for two elderly people who were placed in the Westfield Inn.

Chief Scutti said that all of the people had high water, but none of the homes were so badly damaged that they had to be condemned, adding that many people probably had already returned.

The police department also had to help one family leave its Lamberts Mill Road residence when water began to enter the main living area, the chief said.

Most of the assists that evening, however, involved motorists who became stuck in their vehicles.

"In my 40 years on the police force, I saw some streets flood last week that I've never seen flood before," Chief Scutti said. "Mountain Avenue was closed off and I've never seen it closed off before."

Chief Scutti said that Mindowaskin Park's pond overflowed onto Park Drive and East Broad Street, and at the height of the storm water came within feet of police headquarters.

Town Administrator Edward A. Gottko placed preliminary estimates on municipal storm damage and overtime staff hours at \$100,000, or half of what last year's severe Labor Day storm cost the town.

Several vehicles were damaged, including a police car that was flooded. Damage to some fire department vehicles was also reported, as well as extensive flooding damage at

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Gail S. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

CLEANING HOUSE...Residents along Glenwood Avenue in Cranford were forced to "clean house" of waterlogged belongings after Hurricane Floyd ripped through their neighborhood. The storm was reportedly the worst ever to hit Cranford. Due to the two-foot rise of the Rahway River above the dike, residents of adjacent streets became swamped.

Late Breaking News On Water Restrictions Available on Web Site

The latest information on the water restrictions for the area due to Hurricane Floyd will be continuously available at www.goleader.com/water.

An emergency minder system, which immediately alerts Web site subscribers of late breaking news, is also available at www.goleader.com. Please sign up for this service to be kept up to date.

Memorial Park, Pool Plans To Be Examined

By KIM KINTER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Westfield Recreation Commission will hold a public meeting this Monday, September 27, to discuss the preliminary plans for the ambitious renovation of Memorial Park and Memorial Pool that carry a combined estimated cost of nearly \$3 million.

The meeting is scheduled for 8 p.m. in the Community Room of the Westfield Municipal Building on East Broad Street. Letters were sent to residents who live 200 feet from the park and pool complex about the meeting, but anyone living in Westfield is welcome to attend.

At the meeting, Recreation Commission members and Director of Recreation Glenn S. Burrell will unveil two separate plans - one for the park complex and one for the pool - that have been worked on during the last year.

Kinsey Associates of Hackettstown, a professional parks study group, was hired by the Recreation Commission to develop preliminary plans for the

two complexes. In 1998, Westfield Town Council allocated \$12,000 to pay for preliminary plans for the park and \$6,200 for the pool renovations.

"The commission has reached a point where they have liked what they saw (from Kinsey Associates), and are seeking input from the community and neighbors," Mr. Burrell said in an interview with *The Westfield Leader*.

Initially, the commission was only going to present plans for the Memorial Park complex at the September 27 meeting, but decided that since the pool plans were done as well that both proposals should be discussed, Mr. Burrell added. This does not mean that the commission intends to combine the two plans or that the projects would be completed at the same time, he stressed.

The plan for Memorial Park carries an estimated total of slightly less than \$2 million, he said. Memorial Park is the area adjacent to the town swimming pool on Scotch Plains Avenue. It has a series of playing fields, which are heavily used for soccer and baseball by both school teams and other leagues, and is surrounded on two sides by a natural wooded area.

"The heart of the park will remain similar in nature to what already exists," said Mr. Burrell.

He explained the original reason the Recreation Commission took a look at the park was because of the "situation that exists with the ballparks." The fields were made over fill that has decayed and the ground has sunk, he said. There are also drainage problems. These conditions, he said, make the fields difficult to maintain and utilize.

So, plans call for all the ball fields to be re-graded and cleaned up, he said. In addition, some of the trees will be cleared and the ball fields expanded so that more than two regulation soccer games can occur at one time.

Plans also call for the lighting of the ball fields and preliminary plans

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Peter Billson for The Westfield Leader

GIVING AN UPDATE...Andrew Chapman, President of the Elizabethtown Water Company, updated the media about water conditions during a press conference last Sunday. Mr. Chapman stressed the importance of the need for "drastic" reduction in water consumption by the public. He stressed the continued need to boil all water used for consumption such as drinking, brushing teeth, making ice or for pet usage.

Lack of Access to TV-36 Station for Emergency Messages Irks Officials, Town Council Members

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Despite the burdens put on Westfield's emergency services, the biggest problem faced by the police department was the inability to gain quick access to TV-36, located at Westfield High School, to post emergency messages.

During Tuesday night's Westfield Town Council meeting, Police Chief Anthony J. Scutti said his department needed to post a message regarding the water shortage due to the closing of Elizabethtown Water Company's major water treatment plant in Bound Brook.

While under normal circumstances the police would have had more time to hand out flyers than they did this past week, officers were stressed to the maximum while responding to emergency calls.

In fact, during one two-hour peak period during the storm, more than 220 emergency 911 calls were received, said Chief Scutti.

The Chief revealed that the current system has forced police to contact the TV-36 station director at his home in Fanwood during hours when the high school is closed so that he can come to the school and output a

new message over the station.

With no access to the station, police drove around town in patrol cars announcing the water emergency.

In addition, the Chief said representatives of the Parent Teacher Organizations at the public schools were

contacted so that they could get the message out to parents. Further information was distributed to school children, at supermarkets, downtown businesses and nursing homes.

Chief Scutti said messages that are placed on TV-36 need to be dated so

residents are alerted that information is current.

Second Ward Councilman Matthew P. Albano said due to the lack of an immediate release of information to residents, many individuals last

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BOE Maintains Water Restrictions; More Computers Needed in District

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

"Truly this is a crisis for many people," stressed Superintendent of Schools Dr. William J. Foley regarding the devastation from Hurricane Floyd. The Westfield Board of Education reported on Tuesday evening that all of the water restrictions are being upheld throughout the district.

According to a statement by County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Francis Lobman, the mandate to boil water for at least three minutes before consumption will be maintained. Sufficient bottled water and juices will also be available to students and brown-bagging lunches are advised.

Food services employees throughout the district are encouraged to prepare meals that do not require water as an ingredient. Regarding the serious need for conservation, water will only be used for the safety and sanitation services of the students.

Dr. Foley added that the ice machines, dishwashers and soda fountains in the district have been turned off, bottled water is being provided to school nurses and water fountains have been "taped over" to prevent consumption. Paper plates, napkins and other disposable utensils are also being utilized.

Board President Darielle Walsh

advised the public to tune into TV-36 for all of the late-breaking news on water restrictions and school activity related to the flood.

Dr. Foley reported that a sprinkler system was tripped on Tuesday at Gary Kehler Stadium, the football field for Westfield High School (WHS). He said that the water valves were shut and all of the timers were fixed in order to prevent another accident.

"It was unfortunate in light of all of the sacrifices people are making," Dr. Foley said, pointing to community-wide efforts to conserve the water supply.

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Floyd Hits Communities With Flooding, Power Loss

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ever, was on the conservative side. Power outages, isolated flooding and downed trees kept emergency personnel and Department of Public Works (DPW) crews hopping. In fact, the borough may have lost two DPW vehicles. One truck was caught in flood waters, while another truck's brakes and parking system apparently failed while workers were using a wood chipper to remove debris on Evergreen Court. The truck plunged down a hill and into a residence. No one was hurt in the accident. Flooding occurred in a number of spots, including sections of Route 22 and in the vicinity of the Springfield border. Mayor Vigilanti emphasized that borough residents should not connect the sump pumps used in their laundry basins into the sanitary sewers. He said this action, which is illegal, adds millions of gallons of water to the sanitary sewer system. These systems, instead, should be connected to a dry well or directed outside and onto the lawn.

Cranford Hardest Hit With Home Flooding

Although Cranford was among the communities hardest hit by the hurricane, the township's efforts to help residents recover from the storm's devastation were well under way this week, officials said.

The northeast and northwest quadrants, which are adjacent to the flood-prone Rahway River, bore the brunt of Floyd's wrath in the municipality, according to Township Engineer and Public Works Director Richard Brown.

Floodwaters rose to the first floor of many homes in the northeast section, Mr. Brown said, adding that the river rose two feet above the dike on Riverside Drive in that area as a result of the storm. Among other streets impacted by flooding was Balmerie Parkway, which is also normally protected by a dike.

Some homes in the vicinity of the river were reported to have been moved off their foundations by floodwaters, according to Union County Manager Michael J. Lapolla.

Residences on the south side also sustained flooding, Mr. Brown confirmed, either because water exceeded the capacity of storm sewers or because of sanitary sewer backups.

He also said between 320 and 350 people had to be evacuated, mostly from the northeast quadrant of the township, via boats and front end loaders.

One woman who was in labor had to be transported from her home in a loader bucket, he confirmed. Shelters were set up at the Walnut Avenue and Orange Avenue schools in Cranford.

Mr. Brown estimated that between 400 and 500 dwelling units in Cranford sustained major or minor flooding problems as a result of Floyd's fury.

He said a preliminary estimate placed storm damage at \$15 million, although he emphasized that both this figure and the projected number of homes affected by flooding were "conservative, on the low side."

Contributing to the high dollar figure was the loss of two footbridges, one of which was lifted off its foundation and left lying against the westerly bank of the river, Mr. Brown said. The other was severely damaged.

He stated that, although the north side of Cranford's downtown came through the storm relatively unscathed, about half a dozen businesses on the south side experienced some flooding. All, however, were reportedly open for business this week.

Assisting Cranford's police, fire, rescue squad and Public Works personnel with storm-related activities were the New Jersey State Police and National Guard, as well as Union County police units and the Union County Office of Management Assistance.

On Sunday, flood packets containing various information about how to cope with storm-related problems were distributed to Cranford residents. These packets are also available at the Cranford Municipal Building on Springfield Avenue, Mr. Brown said.

Advocate Program for Seniors Seeks Volunteers in County

BLOOMFIELD — **Editor's Note:** Due to the confidential nature of the *Friend Advocate* Program, the full names of the individuals in this program have been without by the *Community Health Law Project* which runs the program.

Eighty-six year "Mrs. R," as we will call her, was isolated, lonely, confused and inundated with old bills, late payment notices and bounced checks. With no family to look after her, Mrs. R was not eating well and her health was in decline. That is, until she met Mary S, a volunteer with the Friend Advocate Program.

The program, which is run by the Bloomfield-based Community Health Law Project, trains volunteers to assist and advocate for frail, homebound seniors residing in Essex and Union Counties so they can maintain their independence and dignity. The program receives funding through the Union County Division on Aging.

After completing four hours of training, each volunteer is matched with an elderly client whose needs fit the interests and availability of the

Township officials additionally participated in a conference call that day with Congressman Bob Franks and representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) concerning how residents should deal with property damage as a result of the storm.

Information from FEMA, including the types of assistance available to storm victims, was expected to be sent to residents in affected areas of Cranford through a bulk mailing, Mr. Brown stated.

In addition, he said residents can tune into local access Channel 35 for periodic updates on the storm recovery process, and information is also available at the front desk of the Municipal Building.

The Cranford Office of Flood Relief and Recovery, headed by Cranford Police Lieutenant John Baer, is helping to provide residents with documentation of storm damage.

Township residents are encouraged to photograph all damaged items, record water lines and obtain receipts for any repairs as support for property damage claims.

They are then asked to place storm-damaged items for curbside pickup either by the Cranford or the Union County Department of Public Works. Calls concerning documentation and pickup of damaged items may be directed to Lieutenant Baer at (908) 709-7336.

Cranford residents may also bring yard debris and storm-damaged items to the township's Conservation Center, off Orange Avenue on Birchwood Avenue, which is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. For further information, please call (908) 709-7299.

No-interest, 90-day county loans of up to \$1,000 are available to Cranford homeowners living in areas hit hardest by the flood, as well as storm victims in Rahway, New Providence, Springfield and other municipalities.

Businesses and non-homeowners are not eligible for the loan program due to the extensive need among local families for assistance, according to Mr. Lapolla.

These loans will typically be available within 24 hours, and will be issued with a flexible repayment schedule determined on a case-by-case basis, the Union County Manager confirmed. He noted that if the loans could not be repaid within 90 days, "we certainly will be lenient."

In order to qualify for the loans, residents will need to supply two forms of identification. For more information about the loan program or for an application, please call Union County's Public Information Help Line at (877) 424-1234, Monday through Friday.

Applications are also available at the county administration building at 200 North Avenue in Westfield.

Mr. LaPolla indicated that the county's resources were placed mostly on Cranford and other communities where severe damage occurred.

Officials said county crews will be working from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day until the storm cleanup operation is completed.

Memorial Park Plan Preliminary Highlights:

- Re-grading and expanded playing fields
- Lighted fields
- Construction of restrooms
- Removal of two basketball courts to area of handball courts, which will be demolished
- Construction of roller hockey courts
- Construction of 62-vehicle parking lot in formerly wooded area near Drake Place

Memorial Pool Plan Preliminary Highlights:

- Removal of diving tank
- Construction of "splashdown" pool with two slides
- Construction of permanent competition lap pool
- Construction of adult leisure pool

It's Not Over Yet as Towns Face Ongoing Water Crisis

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main was opened up for the first time in some 20 years.

Thus, Mr. Chapman said, "the conservation (effort) has got to close that gap." To fill in the gap left by the closure of the Bound Brook plant, the Canal Road facility had its capacity more than doubled. The plant has a normal capacity of 29 million gallons a day.

"But because our production capacity is so far short of customers' needs, we have been experiencing very low pressure in our mains and have very little water in our storage tanks," said Mr. Chapman.

Low storage tank levels and low main pressures, he emphasized, "means that our ability to fight fires is in real jeopardy."

Some 40,000 residents in Edison, Piscataway, Montgomery and Elizabeth were without water as of last weekend. Ms. Reilly said all towns serviced by the company now have water.

As part of the emergency, all residents and businesses are asked to minimize non-essential water usage. Individuals are asked to refrain from taking showers or baths, doing laundry or operating dishwashers, and outdoor activities such as watering lawns and washing cars.

Residents are also urged to use toilets "a few times between flushes."

Single service dishware, including paper plates and cups, along with plastic utensils, should be used. If not available, dishes should be washed in either bottled water or tap water that has been boiled for three or more minutes, according to information sent home with school children Tuesday in towns serviced by the Westfield Regional Health Department.

"Dishwashers may be used as a last resort if the water reaches a minimum of 155 degrees Fahrenheit and a full cycle is run," according to the water advisory released by the department.

In addition to these restrictions, some 100 industrial and business customers in the areas most impacted by low water pressure voluntarily shut down their water use after being contacted by Elizabethtown officials.

The company, pursuant to public utility statutes and in order to protect public health and safety, had the authority to shut off water services to commercial and business establishments.

"Now, despite rumors to the contrary, we will not be shutting off (water to) homes or places like hospitals, nursing homes or dormitories," said Mr. Chapman.

Elizabethtown has contacted its wholesale customers, namely other water systems, to request that they purchase water from alternative sources in the interim. Wholesale customers represent 30 to 40 percent of Elizabethtown's capacity.

Mr. Chapman explained that boiling water for three minutes is a precaution due to the possibility of bacteria that may have been drawn into the mains from low or no pressure.

Water company officials have issued a warning that certain individuals should take additional precautions with their drinking water, including those undergoing chemotherapy, those who have undergone organ transplants and persons with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders.

The Westfield Regional Health Department, headed by Health Officer Rob-

ert Sherr, covers Westfield, Mountainside, Fanwood, Roselle Park and Springfield. All of these towns are serviced by Elizabethtown Water, except Springfield, which is serviced by the American Water Company.

American, which has made alternative arrangements to obtain some 20 million daily gallons of water previously purchased through Elizabethtown, has lifted the boiled water restriction order.

Mr. Sherr said his department has been in touch with all food establishments in the towns it serves. These establishments have been instructed to only use bottled water or water that has been boiled for three minutes, both for drinking and for cooking.

Also, soda dispensers connected to tap water lines were ordered disconnected. All ice was ordered to be discarded.

Mr. Sherr also said restaurants must use additional chemical sanitizing agents in dishwashers or manually clean dishes and silverware utilizing disinfectants.

Individuals who were exposed to flood waters and who have open wounds, or those who are immune compromised or who have not had a tetanus vaccination in the past 10 years, should be evaluated by their personal physician, the health department has advised.

Anyone with questions may call the Health Department at (908) 789-4070, during its normal hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or Elizabethtown Water at (800) 272-1325.

A taped message is available after hours at the Health Department number. Also, restaurant personnel who need to speak to a health inspector may do so during off hours by contacting their local police department.

Mr. Sherr said individuals who have well water should also boil their water, although they do not need to take conservation steps.

Mr. Chapman noted that a number of area fire departments assisted Elizabethtown in pumping out flood waters at the Bound Brook plant. The priority in getting the plant back up and running was to air dry the electrical switch gears, in order to get electricity to the pump stations.

Electrical transformers and switches throughout the plant were flooded out Thursday night when the Raritan River overflowed its banks.

"It is very important that this work be done completely. If we put a circuit in too early, we could blow the circuit and then we would have to replace a half mile of heavy cabling and the associated switch gear," said Mr. Chapman, noting that this process could delay the opening of the plant by weeks.

"We are also testing equipment and, frankly, we are finding more damage as we go," he added. The assessment of equipment was completed by Sunday night.

When the plant is brought back online, it will be done in 20- or 40-million-gallon-a-day intervals. He noted that the boiled water order will be the last emergency restriction to be lifted.

"We need to be careful as we add pressure to our pipes," he explained in a press update sent to newspapers. "If we increase the pressure too rapidly, we will see main breaks that will cause more problems."

Memorial Park, Pool Plans To Be Examined Monday

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call for 18 lights. Mr. Burrell explained that Memorial Park is heavily used by various teams and the lights will extend the time the fields can be used.

Other plans for the area include the construction of a "comfort station," or restroom adjacent to the fields and playground. The playground will be cleaned up.

Two basketball courts that exist on the parking lot of the Memorial Park and pool complex will be removed and rebuilt where the existing handball court now stands. The handball court will be demolished.

The parking lot at the complex will be landscaped with trees and redesigned and reconfigured, freeing up some space at the end of the lot closest to the now existing handball court. In that area, a roller hockey court will be constructed.

Mr. Burrell said the town is responding to a need for a roller hockey court as existing tennis courts are now being used by rollerbladers. He added that there are no new plans for the tennis courts at Memorial Park.

Additional parking is also being planned in an area off of Drake Place, which intersects with Scotch Plains Road on the far, undeveloped section of Memorial Park. It is now a wooded tract of land that the town recently purchased. Some of the woods will be cleared and a 62-vehicle parking area will be built.

The additional parking would help with the overflow during games and during the summer at the pool and take some of the cars away from the surrounding neighborhoods, Mr. Burrell explained.

A walking trail also is planned for the remaining wooded area. Access to the new parking lot and walking trail would be made off of Drake Place.

Plans also call for cleaning up and constructing a pedestrian walkway into Memorial Park at Hort and Roosevelt Streets, two side streets that also intersect with Scotch Plains Avenue.

Preliminary plans for the pool complex adjacent to Memorial Park carry an estimated cost of \$1.4 million, Mr. Burrell said.

He explained that the Recreation Commission had been considering changes at the pool for some time, but when memberships to the town pool sold out for the first time this year the commission felt an additional urgency in examining how any alterations could enable the town to make more memberships available.

Concerns began at the pool complex some time ago about the existing diving tank, which is beginning to bow on one wall.

"The structural integrity is a concern," Mr. Burrell commented.

"Those discussions evolved into the

removal of the diving tank and the removal of diving altogether from the pool," he said.

Mr. Burrell added that a diving tank, and the high dive, in particular, are a liability for the town.

"Most communities have done away with diving," he said. "With the change in the population (more families with younger children) of the Westfield community, in particular, we thought it was time to change the diving tank."

In place of the diving tank, the Recreation Commission would like to build two slides that travel into a so-called "splashdown pool." The diving tank, he pointed out, could not be refueled to accommodate the slides as the tank is too deep at 17 feet. The splashdown pool is about three to four feet deep.

Beside the splashdown pool, the plans call for the construction of a permanent competition lap pool, which may also be used for such water sports as water polo, Mr. Burrell said. That would also be built in the same area as where the diving tank is now and would be adjacent to the splashdown pool.

Plans also call for modifications to the main pool, including eliminating the lap lanes and opening them up to everybody and raising a portion of the shallow end and adding spray features that will give the pool "more of a water park feel," he said.

The large and well-used child area will remain the same, although the play equipment will be relocated and will be adjacent to the kiddie pools.

The plans also call for the reclaiming of some town property that presently is being used as backyards by about six residences abutting the complex on West Broad Street. The property is about 150-foot deep by 300-foot long.

In that area, plans call for the construction of a shallow adult leisure pool "where parents and adults can relax" away from the children and youth using the complex. A 30-foot by 60-foot shelter also will be constructed in the reclaimed area.

Mr. Burrell pointed out that the pool plan would "increase fairly significantly" the deck and water space that would allow the Recreation Commission to expand the number of members it could accept.

Although these are just preliminary plans, Mr. Burrell said the hope is that some public consensus about both renovations can occur so that the Recreation Commission can seek the necessary money from Town Council from the 2000 municipal budget to pay for more detailed plans to be developed.

"We want to keep the projects moving," Mr. Burrell said. Construction would not likely begin on either or both projects until 2001, Mr. Burrell added.

Westfield Board of Education Upholds Water Restrictions

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Turning to other business, Dr. Foley welcomed Carolyn Fleder and Ann Philips, members of the Technology Advisory Committee which was established in 1992. Ms. Fleder and Ms. Philips traveled to 10 schools such as Summit High School, Princeton High School and Hunterdon Central High School (HCHS) to witness the commitments they are making to technology.

Their presentation, which was given to the WHS Parent Teacher Organization last Wednesday, (please see related story on page 3) proved that the district is in dire need of putting more computers in the hands of Westfield teachers.

They reported that while the ratio of computers to students at HCHS is 3:1, the goal for the Westfield school district is 4:1. However, they noted that this will not be accomplished unless the board moves ahead with its technology plan that was instituted almost seven years ago.

"Other schools made bold moves," Ms. Fleder said of the technological strides in other districts, "So must Westfield."

"You owe it to yourselves and your constituents to go out to another school and school district and see what we saw," she stated.

Board Member Eileen Satkin stressed the importance of teaching and using computers "not as a co-curricular activity, but as part of the curriculum."

"We really have taken some major steps. Things are moving," Dr. Foley responded.

Board Vice President and Chairwoman of the Policies Committee Arlene Gardner said that she believes the elementary and intermediate schools in Westfield have adequate computer set-ups, but she is more concerned about WHS students.

She believes that there are "not enough computers" and there is "not enough assurance that the Class of 2000 will come out computer literate."

Ms. Fleder said that if the components of the district's technology plan weren't halted due to past budget crunches, the district would have moved forward.

"We've put priorities elsewhere," she said.

Board Member and Chairwoman of the Long Range Planning Committee Annmarie Puleio stressed that during her visit to Princeton High School with Ms. Fleder and Ms. Philips, she discovered that unless computers were put into the hands of teachers and students, education would fall behind.

She urged the board to consider hiring a part-time "grants person" to help the district obtain grants to move the technology plan forward. She also asked that the plan be seriously considered when the district's budget for the next fiscal year is prepared.

Regarding putting computers in the hands of the teachers, Dr. Foley stressed, "We have no lack of plans."

Officials Irked by TV-36 Access for Emergencies

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Friday "had already had their first and second cup of coffee and taken a shower before they realized that there was a water restriction."

He said cable stations in Mountainside and Cranford "were well ahead of us" in getting emergency information out to the public.

Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, Jr. said that in terms of the town's emergency response system, "We didn't live up to what we needed to do."

"I think we really need to take a hard look at our communications plan," he added, noting that the emergency message was placed on TV-36, then taken off the air. He said there needs to be more consistency with future messages broadcast on the station.

The councilman said related emergency messages, such as information concerning the use of the Conservation Center on Lamberts Mill Road for storm yard waste, should also be on the cable station.

Town Administrator Edward A. Gottko explained that the town's purchasing agent is awaiting final quotes from suppliers to purchase computer equipment that will enable emergency messages to be placed on TV-36. This equipment will be located in police headquarters.

Mr. Gottko told *The Westfield Leader* that no final date on the delivery and installation of the equipment has been set. The equipment will be purchased from revenue that the town receives through its cable TV franchise agreement with Comcast Cablevision.

In terms of the storm, Mr. Gottko recommended that the Town Council approve an emergency appropriation by the end of October to pay for overtime and other storm-related costs estimated at \$100,000.

In other business, the council is expected to take action Tuesday, September 28, to approve a contract of \$29,000 with Elam Associates of Franklin Lakes, a private consulting firm, for professional engineering services for repair work on the concrete overlook at Mindowaskin Park.

The contract will include an evaluation of the condition of the structure to determine the type and extent of repairs or reconstruction required for restoration of the overlook.

In addition, Elam will provide plans and specifications for improvements to be made to the overlook, and evaluate construction bids the town receives for the project.

Town Engineer Kenneth B. Marsh noted that the firm will supervise the project. The council included a line item of \$125,000 in the 1999 municipal budget for the project. In 1998, \$50,000 was allocated for a study on improvements to the park's overlook.

On another matter, Mr. Marsh urged the council to support the closing of

It's not a new idea. It's in your plan. It needs to be done."

He added that presentations on the district's technology needs might be presented to the Rotary Club of Westfield and related organizations to seek funding.

Director of Technology Darlene Nowak revealed that a ballpark figure of \$250,000 would be needed to make the district's technology needs a reality.

Dr. Foley turned to a report on how the schools are progressing with the current presence of technology.

"We show significant progress," he stated.

Progress at the elementary schools amazes Dr. Foley, who reported that the teachers are continuously coming up with new and innovative ways to use the computers "that no one else seems to come up with."

Approximately 105 iMac computers have been brought into fourth grade classrooms, according to Dr. Foley.

When the new Language Arts Curriculum was recently rewritten, technology was a key ingredient. This curriculum has made technology an integral part of new Language Writing Labs which are present in both Roosevelt and Edison Intermediate Schools.

Dr. Foley stated that art students are benefiting from the addition of five new multi-media Mac computers. Although this hardware was not included in the technology plan, students are now able to use a color laser printer, scanner and digital camera. These art computers are also being used by other students.

One glitch in the technology plan at WHS remains - the Internet service is wired to the school's library account. Dr. Foley reported that if there are too many "hits" on the Internet, the system crashes. He hopes that the school will be able to obtain Internet service through the county. This service would be imperative because it would in turn provide proper Internet wiring to the intermediate schools.

"When I came to this district there was only one technician and Darlene (Nowak)," said Dr. Foley.

He added that now the elementary schools have two technicians, the intermediate schools have one technician and WHS has one full-time and one part-time technician plus students who are continuously keeping computers clean and up to date.

Ms. Satkin suggested forming new clubs at the high school level to have students who are not athletically inclined, but technically inclined, involved in the maintenance of the computers.

When asked by a member of the audience if the Westfield school district will "always be a step behind" in technology instead of at the "cutting edge," Dr. Foley responded, "The goal is to educate our students. If that's being on the cutting edge, that's where we'll be."

Crossway Place between Tuesday, October 12, and Monday, December 6, for work on the Crossway bridge.

Mr. Marsh said NJ Transit, which is funding work on the bridge, has recommended the closure in order to set up scaffolding for work on bridge abutments.

The bridge is currently undergoing a \$1.4 million renovation, which includes replacement of the current steel structure with one made of concrete. The current bridge dates back to 1915.

Another project soon to get underway, Mr. Gottko said, is the construction of a three-story building on the site of the former Excellent Diner. The work is expected to begin within four months. The bottom floor will contain stores, with the top two floors dedicated to offices.

During the construction phase, 11 parking spaces at the site will be closed off to accommodate equipment and vehicles used by the contractor.

During reports of the council's standing committees, Third Ward Councilman John J. Walsh, as Chairman of the Public Works Committee, said he will draft a letter to Westfield Board of Education President Danielle Walsh about the availability of the district's athletic fields.

Officials have been searching for other fields to utilize in an effort to ease overcrowding at facilities at Tamaques Park, including the parking area.

Mr. Walsh said the committee believes at least a few extra spaces will be needed at the park.

He also noted that there is no "lobby" of sports associations in town coming forth to support a plan by the Recreation Department to construct an athletic field at Brightwood Park, Westfield's sole natural refuge, to help accommodate sports leagues. Residents near the park have strongly opposed the plan.

Officials also noted that a contract has been submitted for review to Town Attorney William S. Jeremia, 2nd by the Michigan-based firm of Rich and Associates. The firm has been hired by the town at \$25,700 to complete a detailed report on the best location in which to build a parking deck in the downtown; how to fund construction and the cost associated with the proposed deck's daily operation.

During his Transportation, Parking and Traffic Committee report, First Ward Councilman Carl A. Salisbury said the committee has recommended that downtown parking spaces located closer to crosswalks than state regulations allow be removed. He specifically cited spaces near the crosswalk at Central Avenue and Quimby Street.

Officials will also be in contact with Public Service Electric and Gas Company to find out the status of the placement of street lighting on East Broad Street adjacent to Temple Emanu-El and the Westfield Memorial Library.