

## Garwood Council Introduces Preliminary Borough Budget

By ANNA GITHENS  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

**GARWOOD** – The Borough Council introduced a \$5.8 million municipal budget last week, an increase over last year's adopted budget of \$300,000.

Councilwoman Kathleen Villaggio said this year's \$4.1 million tax levy represents an increase of 25 tax points over the 2004 spending plan.

Last year's adopted budget number was \$5.5 million.

"In 2004 we introduced a budget with a 34 point increase, the adopted budget after receiving extraordinary aid was 20 points," stated Ms. Villaggio, adding that in 2005 there were "several factors that were beyond the Finance Committee's control, namely a loss of \$235,000 total (broken down into extraordinary income (\$210,000) and Homeland Security (\$25,000))."

According to Councilwoman Villaggio's report, another \$180,000 in expenditures went toward Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority \$60,000; pensions \$40,000; the borough's library, \$19,000; insurance, \$1,000, and sanitation, \$10,000 for a total of \$415,000.

Other items included were public safety, health and welfare and the Department of Public Works for a total of \$71,000.

"Our surplus is up over last year by \$56,000 and for the first time in several years we were able to recoup the surplus used last year," she reported. "Last year we used \$500,000 in surplus, this year we are recommending using \$545,000 in surplus. We will be investigating cutting costs in other areas, such as health insurance."

Councilwoman Villaggio added that the Finance Committee has submitted a proposal to the council for a three-year capital budget plan to replace much needed equipment that has either outlived its use or does not meet code requirements. Some examples include computer technology and fire equipment.

Mayor McCarthy commended Councilwoman Villaggio on the budget report and said, "You can tell a lot of time and effort was put into this budget."

There will be a public hearing on the budget on Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m.

## Five Candidates Seek Seats On Westfield School Board

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for five years.

At the Edison Intermediate School, Ms. Ormsby Cary has served as a chairperson on the eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C. and is currently co-chairing the eighth grade party committee.

Mrs. Hunnicutt and her husband, George Bogato, have lived in Westfield since 1984, although he is a native of Westfield. A former professional musician along with her husband, Mrs. Hunnicutt is currently employed by Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), an organization that educates

parents with children 14 and over who have disabilities transition from the school environment into the real world.

The mother of five children ranging in age from 15 to 25, she currently has two sons attending Westfield High School. One is a freshman and the other, a junior. Her other three children were also the product of the Westfield school system.

Mrs. Hunnicutt currently serves as the Board of Education Facilities Committee Chairwoman, and was involved in the track and field project that recently passed in a bond referendum.

As one of her goals for the school district, the candidate hopes to bring more students back from out-of-district placement, which would require teachers being prepared and educated in order to instruct children with disabilities.

Mr. McCready, a computer systems manager with Sumitomo Mitsui Bank in Jersey City, has lived in Westfield for 10 years. His oldest child attends Roosevelt Intermediate School and his two youngest are students at Wilson Elementary School.

He and his wife, Jane, have three children in Westfield's schools, where they moved from Manhattan in 1994. After a short stint in California in 2000, they returned to Westfield. Their oldest son, Ben, is a sixth grader at Roosevelt. Madeline attends third grade at Wilson, and Charlie is a first grader at Wilson.

The candidate has a bachelor's degree from Columbia College, including coursework at Teachers College. He has volunteered for a variety of roles for the Westfield Public Schools, including the Technology Committee where he coordinated the installation of the first computers and networks in the elementary school libraries.

He has also served on the Strategic Planning Committee in 1998, and served as Co-President of the Advanced Learning Program Parents Association for two years.

Mr. Dorry, a general council with Net2Phone Global Services, has lived in Westfield for nine years and in New Jersey his entire life. He and his wife, Sharon, a registered nurse who now works as a homemaker, have three daughters age nine, seven and five. All three girls attend Tamaques School.

He graduated from Boston College with a bachelor's degree in economics and philosophy. He also earned a law degree from Seton Hall University.

The school election will be held on Tuesday, April 19.

## Authorities Respond to Report Of Altercation Near WHS

By SUZETTE F. STALKER  
Specially Written for The Leader and The Times

**WESTFIELD** – Police responded to a report of a fight involving a group of people near Westfield High School Friday afternoon, but no injuries were reported and no arrests have been made.

Authorities received a call just before 3 p.m. about a group of "five to eight" juveniles fighting on Codding Road, according to Westfield Police Captain John Parizeau.

No one remained at the scene by the time police arrived, he said. However, officers found a male juvenile about a block from Codding Road who admitted having been involved in an altercation.

The youth maintained he was not injured and did not say with whom he had been fighting, said Captain Parizeau. He

confirmed that the boy, who police said showed no signs of injury, was taken to his home in Westfield.

It was not known if the juvenile is a student at the high school or how old he is, but he is believed to be a teenager. No complaints had been filed in connection with the altercation as of press time.

Captain Parizeau confirmed that the Westfield Police Department's Detective Bureau is investigating a report of a woman selling drugs in the area, and that the bureau was advised of the incident involving the juvenile, to determine if there is any connection.

As for the altercation on Codding Road involving juveniles, the captain said the investigation into that matter "is suspended until we get more information or complaints."

## WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14**  
It was reported that someone gained entry to a business on East North Avenue by breaking a window, and once inside stole cash from the establishment.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15**  
A resident of the 1900 block of Grandview Avenue reported the theft of \$4 in loose change from his motor vehicle, which was parked in his driveway.

A resident of the 1600 block of Boulevard reported her registration, insurance card and car owner's manual was stolen from her motor vehicle. The vehicle was parked in front of her house at the time.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17**  
Rafael Moran, 35, and Allan Izaguire, 22, both of New York, were arrested in the 800 block of North Avenue, West, and charged with theft by deception. The men, suspected of attempting to perpetrate a chimney cleaning scam, were each released with a summons.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22**  
After being stopped for motor vehicle violations at Prospect Street and Lincoln Road, Donna Putzer, 26, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated, possession of a controlled dangerous substance (less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana) in a motor vehicle, and possession of drug paraphernalia in a motor vehicle. She was released with summonses.

Putzer was arrested again February 24 on South Avenue and charged with driving while intoxicated and littering from a motor vehicle. She was later released and issued a summons on the littering charge.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24**  
An Edgewood Avenue resident reported that his motor vehicle was broken into and

his car stereo was removed. The incident occurred while the vehicle was parked in front of the victim's home.

A burglary was reported at a home in the 1500 block of Rahway Avenue. A closet door and dresser drawer were found open, but nothing was discovered missing and there were no signs of forced entry.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25**  
A package was reported stolen from a DHL deliveryman on Coolidge Street by an individual posing as a resident of that street who claimed to be waiting for a delivery. After the deliveryman asked for identification, the suspect grabbed the package and fled in an Infiniti SUV west on North Avenue. The suspect was described as a black male, between five feet and 10 inches and six feet and two inches tall, with a thin build, brown eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion.

A Windsor Avenue resident reported the theft of his cellular telephone from his motor vehicle while it was parked in front of his home.

An individual is suspected of having shoplifted eight packages of dried soup and five cans of tuna fish from a South Avenue business. The suspect, described only as a tall black male, fled south on Central Avenue on a bicycle.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26**  
Kelly L. Sheehy, 33, of Scotch Plains was arrested at North and Edgewood Avenues and charged with driving while intoxicated. She was released to a responsible party.

A New Milford resident discovered her 1993 Mazda mini-van, which she had parked in the south side train station lot, missing upon her return nine hours later. The vehicle, reported as stolen, had not been recovered as of press time.

## Y Expansion

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for the current building. With the nursery school program moving out of the main "Y" facility, Mrs. Walsh explained, the "Y" plans to convert the space on the Ferris Street side of the building into an expanded cardiovascular center featuring all new equipment. In addition, the space utilized for babysitting services on the main floor will be renovated and a family center will be added so that parents and their children can workout together. Renovations will be mostly completed over the summer.

The Y also leases space at the First Baptist Church on Elm Street for its all-day childcare program, and also leases space at the First United Methodist Church. Clemens Construction Company of Philadelphia, with offices in Westfield and Princeton, is the construction manager for the project, which is expected to take five to six months.

## Memorial Park Plan Hearing on March 7

**WESTFIELD** – The Westfield Recreation Department will hold an input meeting on Monday, March 7, from 8 to 9 p.m. for the Memorial Park Master Plan.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide a forum for interested citizens and users to express their wishes and concerns in regards to this project that will assist in formulating design plans for the project.

Robert Lynes of Hatch, Mott, MacDonald, the engineering company for the master plan, will be in attendance.

The meeting will be held in the Westfield Municipal Building Community Room at 425 East Broad Street. The entrance to the room faces East Broad Street.

## Carwash

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other carwashes, none has a lube center. Town Planner Blaine Brancheau raised a number of issues with parking, especially an apparent shortage of employee parking in the plans. Mr. Criscuolo maintained that from his experience, many carwash employees take mass transit to work, walk or ride bicycles, "even in winter."

"This is a country where people are unwilling to return a shopping cart to its corral, let alone drive to work," Mr. Brancheau replied, but Mr. Criscuolo explained that many carwash employees are "at the low end of the wage scale" or "do not have driver's licenses."

Mr. Brancheau requested a survey or study, saying he'd prefer an "apples-to-apples comparison" rather than rely on Mr. Criscuolo's opinion on the subject of employee parking.

Mr. Brancheau also took issue with the orientation of the building's signage.

The board agreed to schedule another special meeting so that the remainder of the application could be heard, though Board Chairman William Heimbokel was did not name a specific date at this time.

## McDermott

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Mayor McDermott said First Ward Councilman Andy Skibitsky, who has been selected by the Westfield Town Republican Committee to run for mayor on the party line in the June Primary Election, "is going to be a very good replacement for me."

Democrats have not announced their mayoral candidate.

Mayor McDermott vowed not to be a so-called "lame duck" mayor. He sees a number of major issues ahead this year including municipal parking capacity and Westfield High School parking issues as well as over development in town.

## Board of Education Reviews \$75 Mil. Budget; Tax Levy

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Elementary School has requested funding for one set. Tamaques Elementary School has asked for funds to purchase a new carpet cleaner.

Edison Intermediate School has requested funds in the amount of approximately \$14,000 to pay for the refurbishment of several rows of lockers. The administration at Roosevelt Intermediate School has requested funds for guidance, classroom, and library furniture in the amount of approximately \$15,000.

The technology section of the budget, which includes the purchase of 75 computers for the district's second grade classrooms, the purchase of multimedia carts at all levels, and the purchase of eight Personal Data Accessory (PDA's) for WHS physical education instructors, is up \$45,242, or 2.64 percent.

Superintendent of Westfield Schools Dr. William Foley said that in the technology part of the budget, "we're following what we said we'd do in the Technology Plan."

The Employee Benefits portion of the budget accounts for \$10,589,182, an increase of \$658,941, or 6.64 percent. The district's new contract with Oxford Health Care kept this area of the budget from increasing even further.

Athletics receives \$1,144,272 from the proposed budget, up \$72,070 from this year's current budget. This increase includes the hiring of two junior varsity tennis coaches.

Administration of the schools will cost \$3,411,735, up \$44,644 from the current budget, while general business administration will cost \$2,693,350, an increase of \$121,067.

The cost of library and media services will rise \$50,412 to \$1,246,589, and cost of guidance services will see an increase of \$66,496, bringing it to \$1,941,946.

The total proposed operating budget of \$72,817,471 represents an increase of \$3,368,055 over the current budget. This increase of approximately 4.85 percent is the maximum amount of funding the BOE can seek from the community tax levy under state law. Any further funding

would have to be sought on a second question on the budget ballot.

Adding the debt service from both the 1998 and 2000 bonds as well as the debt service from the recently approved bond allowing for the construction of an artificial turf field and a new track at Kehler Stadium brings the grand total for the budget up to \$75,237,450, which represents an increase of 4.92 percent.

BOE member Julia Walker called it "remarkable to have brought in all our programs at a five percent increase."

The proposed tax levy to fund the 2005 budget is \$68,130,181, or \$3.69 on every \$100 of a Westfield resident's assessed property value. Based on the average assessed home value of \$180,000, the increase to the average Westfield taxpayer is \$324. This is represented as a proposed tax levy increase of 5.12 percent.

The rest of the funding for the proposed 2005-2006 school year budget will come from State Aid, the district's fund balance, and miscellaneous revenues. The final amount of state aid will not be known until today, but it is estimated to stay the same as last year, in the amount of \$4,821,240. The fund balance will account for \$1,898,029, and miscellaneous revenues will account for \$388,000.

Most of the miscellaneous revenues come from pledges received from groups in Westfield to help fund the new turf field and track at Kehler Stadium, officials said. The board's next meeting will be Tuesday, March 8, when the board will vote to adopt a tentative budget. Once adopted, the amount approved will limit what the BOE can seek for the 2005-2006 budget. After that, the board can still choose to remove items from the budget to lower the overall cost.

The district will advertise the full budget in *The Westfield Leader* on Thursday, March 24, and the final budget will be adopted by Tuesday, March 29.

The annual school election will take place Tuesday, April 19, at which time voters will cast their ballots on the proposed school tax levy.

## Codding Rd. Residents Seek Action on Safety, Parking

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Westfield on Friday. She also said the event should be placed on the town's website.

Alan Ginsberg of Prospect Street questioned whether the "town hall" style meeting was open to members of the public.

Mayor McDermott said the office of Rep. Mike Ferguson is handling all ticket requests for the event.

Lincoln Road resident Jim Baker asked if the mayor and council would be attending the visit. The mayor said it was his understanding that the governing body had been extended an invitation to attend and that he would be attending in his capacity as mayor.

Mr. Baker said town residents should not have to pay any taxes for what he described as a "political event" for President Bush.

Robert Ratner of Lamberts Mill Road was critical of Mayor McDermott's comment that the President's visit was a state and not a political visit.

He said the mayor's comment is "terribly unworthy of belief."

"Can we assume that therefore there will be no political issues discussed by the President? That there will be no portion of the Republican legislative agenda that will be discussed?" questioned Mr. Ratner.

First Ward Councilman Sal Caruana said the council does not see the "visit of the President of the United States to our home town as an imposition. We believe it is a great honor."

He said the National Guard Armory is a state facility. He noted that no Presidential events in recent years have allowed members of the public to walk off the street and into such an event with an invitation and security clearance.

In terms of the town having to pick up a portion of the security cost, he said, "We can't give them resources we don't have."

Greg Homer of Harding Street asked who he can contact to get involved with planned protests to the

Presidential visit.

Mr. Gildea said the police department would have information available on any protests events.

Fourth Ward Councilman Larry Goldman said Rep. Ferguson owes it to the town, "to give us the tools so that this doesn't turn into a negative for the Town of Westfield." He said it is important that protesters have the opportunity to demonstrate. He said information should be placed on Channel 36 as well as the town's website on the event and demonstrations.

In other business, the council introduced its 2005 municipal budget of \$32.3 million, representing a \$2.3 million, or 7.8 percent, spending increase over the 2004 budget. A total of \$17.7 million will be raised in property taxes to support the budget.

First Ward Councilman Peter Echausse, Finance Policy Committee Chairman, said this year's budget is in much better shape than last year's spending plan. He said the town's surplus as well as last year's percentage of collected taxes both improved, thus increasing revenues and lowering the increase in the tax levy.

"We are introducing a tax rate of 6.1 cents, which is dramatically lower than the increase (11 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation) we experienced last year," said Councilman Echausse. A public hearing will be held on the budget on Tuesday, March 29, at 8 p.m.

## Sarah Round Awarded Dean's List Recognition

**WESTFIELD** – Sarah Round, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Round of Westfield, received the Dean's Award for academic excellence during the fall 2004 semester at Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y., where she is a member of the Class of 2006.

A 2002 graduate of Westfield High School, Sarah is concentrating in neuroscience at Colgate.

She is a member of the Equestrian Team and is active in many community activities.

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