



RAISING FUNDS FOR KATRINA...As part of the "Washington Kids Care" program, children from Washington School raised funds to help Hurricane Katrina victims last week. The children donated their own money to the cause. Matching funds will be provided by the employer of one child's parents.

DPW White Paper Reports

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and communication; streamlining or combining operations; and reviewing whether the current division budget is sufficient to meet DPW expectations.

Committee Chairman Matthew Albano, a former councilman and attorney, said the report focuses on customer service, efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, external communications (dealing with the public and town organizations) and internal communications (how the division processes information among themselves).

Mayor Skibitsky said the goal of the report was to highlight changes that can be implemented to save money, while enhancing the division's efficiency. The mayor said the citizen's committee will analyze building and zoning operations, followed by engineering—the other two divisions of the DPW.

The mayor said the chief objective of the report is "to make sure we are spending our tax dollars as (efficiently) as possible."

"The ultimate goal is to develop a customer-friendly division that will serve as a model of efficiency and effectiveness in managing and maintaining the infrastructure and properties of the Town of Westfield," according to a summary statement released by town officials to *The Westfield Leader* on Monday.

Town Administrator Jim Gildea explained that the division's \$1.2 million budget and 41 employees, makes the operation the largest division within the municipal operation. The division's salaries and wages are the third largest behind the police and fire departments in the municipal budget. The DPW maintenance and construction division has a capital budget of \$2.4 million, which is spent mostly on road improvements.

Mr. Albano noted that while the demands on the division's staff have increased, the number of employees has dropped from 55 to 41.

The division is responsible for maintaining sewer lines, paving roads, fixing potholes, street plowing, maintaining town parks and cleaning up after downtown events such as FestiFall, Spring Fling and the summer jazz festival.

The division maintains 110 miles of roadway, 187 acres of parkland and 1,500 parking spaces in nine municipal lots, while maintaining the town's fleet of vehicles, including the DPW, police and fire departments, according to the report.

"We spend a lot of money in that

department," said Mr. Gildea during a meeting with *The Leader* on Monday. He said the division is the "most visible" division, with the exception of police and fire departments, in town.

Also attending Monday's meeting were committee members Matthew Albano, a former councilman and attorney who chaired the committee; John Ryan, a retired senior vice president of global human resources with Schering Plough; and Pam Wiazczek, an engineer and consultant in the area of customer service.

"They (committee members) gave up their time and talent at no expense to the town," said Second Ward Councilwoman Jo Ann Neylan, Chairperson of the town council's public works committee.

The citizen's committee met about 20 times since it began deliberations this past January. Mr. Albano said the committee met with DPW staff, as well as municipal DPW officials in Summit and Berkeley Heights. The panel also met with the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) and the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

"We felt Summit was good (to compare with Westfield) because of the size and the demographics," said Mr. Albano.

Officials said some of the 20 recommendations in the report involve physical changes, while others revolve around amending division processes.

The report will be presented to the public at the Tuesday, September 27, meeting.

FestiFall

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donating 10 percent of all proceeds to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

"Norman and I feel very strongly that by coming together as a country and doing our part, no matter how big or how small, we will overcome this grave tragedy. Donating to the Red Cross is our way of saying to the entire Gulf Coast, we will not face this struggle as individuals but, as one," Carol Greco added.

The Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) will be selling merchandise at its table with all proceeds going to the town's Katrina relief fund. The local Red Cross chapter will also have a table where donations for victims will be accepted, according to First Ward Councilman Sal Caruana.

Festifall will take place rain or shine.

MS Ratifies Send-Receive Pact with Gov. Livingston

By BETSEY BURGENDORF
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — When Mountainside Business Administrator Roderic McLaughlin took over the business side of the Board of Education (BOE) on July 1, he faced the task of ratifying the send/receive agreement the district maintains with Governor Livingston High School (GL) in Berkeley Heights.

By law, the ten-year agreement has to be negotiated two years prior to the ending date of the contract, which is June 2007.

Mountainside was affected by the de-regionalization of four area high schools, which took place in 1996, requiring the BOE come up with a plan for the district's students in grades 9 through 12.

Mountainside students previously chose between attending GL, Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield, David Brearley High School in Kenilworth or Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark. Prior to de-regionalization of the districts in November 1996, one regional school board was responsible for the four area high schools.

Shortly after the de-regionalization took place, making each municipality responsible for its own schools and school budget, Mountainside filed a successful lawsuit in January of 1997.

The lawsuit resulted in the district receiving \$6 million paid over the next five years. Mountainside agreed to be responsible for 76 percent of the consultation fees encountered, with Garwood responsible for the other 24 percent.

Mountainside then ratified a send/receive contract with GL for the district's high school students. Mountainside students have been bused over the mountain for the past eight years. Currently, Mountainside has 271 students attending high school in Berkeley Heights at a cost to the district of \$3,138,180, a per pupil cost of \$11,580.

The contract is now up for renewal and the BOE has negotiated behind closed doors since June. Residents

became concerned that high school students might no longer attend GL. Board President John Perrin told *The Westfield Leader* that the BOE was concerned with some "language" in the contract relating to the cost per pupil.

"The board is interested, in its entirety, in sending students to GL," Mr. Perrin said in May, hoping to put any rumors to rest. "The board has every intention of renewing its contract with GL," he added.

Mr. McLaughlin explained that, by law, the tuition must be calculated by state statute. This statute deals with the calculation of tuition in all send/receive agreements based on the Department of Education's defined enrollment calculation.

When Mountainside's district school budget is approved, a budgetary calculation is included based on this defined enrollment number.

"The purpose is to give the district the ability to build a budget," Mr. McLaughlin said. "You analyze it for what you get and what you pay, and then adjust it for actuality."

A yearly audit of the budget calculates the number of pupils qualified to attend GL against the number of those who actually attended. If the actual amount falls below the estimated number, the district is eligible for reimbursement.

"It is a complex process involving a lot of accounting," Mr. McLaughlin said. "The contract process didn't delineate it (the reimbursement formula). It alluded to it."

According to Mr. Laughlin, once "a few sentences" were changed, the contract was unanimously approved by the BOE last Tuesday night at the regularly scheduled board meeting. It was then sent to Berkeley Heights BOE President Helen Kirsch for approval by her board.

By changing the wording, "I was able to explain each of the steps and pieces of the document (to the BOE) even the abstract references to the statute," Mr. McLaughlin concluded. "It makes it easier for the reader to get their arms around the process."

Westfield Council Tackles McMansions

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were to raise the grade by a foot, one can only build up 34 feet.

Councilman Goldman, referring to the three tear-downs proposed in the agenda for next week, asked Mr. Marsh, "The practical question is, before these tear-downs take place and the excavators come in, is someone out there measuring the existing grade?"

First Ward Councilman Sal Caruana was adamant that all demolitions "should have a submission of grade." Mayor Andrew Skibitsky said, ultimately, that the proposed changes, for the time being, would go back to its respective committee to "encompass all of these suggestions."

The council discussed the 2005 improvement of the Rahway Avenue grade crossing. Town Administrator Jim Gildea said that the bid is in conjunction with the quiet zone specifications and is "our (Westfield's) piece of the puzzle."

Mr. Marsh explained, "The physical improvements allow them (CSX, Conrail) to stop the whistle." He informed the council that at the Rahway Avenue stop near Houlihan field, there is a "two quadrant system, where cars can sneak around." He said that to alleviate the danger of cars sneaking around, the town would construct an island.

Mr. Gildea presented two "dedication by rider requests" — when the town asks for the state approval to have a fund set up for specific purposes. The town attempted, last year, to create a tree preservation fund. The state denied that request because of miscommunication about what was going to be in that fund.

"We're going to put together another resolution and answer all their questions about the fund," Mr. Gildea said. He added that the town would make another request for the park improvement fund, which will handle money from the recreation field users, go into a dedicated account and be put back into the parks, mostly for field issues.

Monday night, at the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) meet-

ing, Mr. Gildea noted that discussion surrounded a \$75,000 request for proposal (RFP) for streetscape improvements. The council allotted funds in last year's capital budget for the DWC to solicit companies to bid and ultimately provide new updated plans and specifications based on the RFP. The DWC would like to have approval from the town council in order to include it in construction documents for 2006.

Mr. Gildea explained that some aspects of the plan have been initiated, including the Rialto Theatre walkway. He said that the plans call for intersection improvements, colorizing crosswalks, improving walkways behind the Town Book Store and "improving other common areas with new trees, lighting, sidewalk."

Mr. Gildea said that the new RFP "doesn't necessarily qualify" the DWC for grants. "But this will help them," Mr. Gildea said.

"A new updated plan with updated processes would be a major assistance to them and to us as far as the grant process," he added.

Fire Chief Dan Kelly gave an update on the firefighters serving in the Gulf region.

"Captain Michael Brennan and Firefighter Thomas Ryan returned Saturday evening. The six, eight-man teams they were assigned with completed their mission in Arkansas and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) released them, which they may regret when (Hurricane) Rita hits," Chief Kelly said.

Councilman Caruana said that the local Red Cross has raised over \$58,000 in donations to Hurricane Katrina relief. Councilman Goldman said that as the town becomes aware of community-oriented relief efforts, "we will pass them onto *The Westfield Leader*."

Third Councilman Mark Ciarrocca said that by the end of the week, the public safety, transportation and parking committee hopes to unveil a new feature on the town's parking meters—a free 10-minute courtesy to shoppers and lot users on all 275 street meters.



GRETCHEN'S TREE...The memorial tree sits in front of Westfield High School, commemorating the life of Greta Schoenemann. Nine students were injured on September 11, 2002 when wind gusts caused an oak tree branch to fall to the ground. Greta died from her injuries following the accident.

Garwood Students Applauded at Clark HS

By ANNA GITHENS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — The newly appointed Clark Superintendent of Schools, Brian Zychowski, was present at the Garwood Board of Education (BOE) meeting Tuesday evening. He received a warm introduction from Garwood Mayor Dennis McCarthy and Garwood Superintendent William Murphy.

Mr. Zychowski told the board that Garwood's presence has positively influenced Arthur L. Johnson High School (ALJ). Currently, ALJ has 862 students, 180 of them are from Garwood.

"I think it's a good relationship," Dr. Zychowski said in reference to the send-receive program that currently exists with Garwood students to Clark at ALJ. "You're children have been excellent."

Dr. Zychowski, previously the Principal and Superintendent of Henry Hudson Regional High School in Monmouth County, began his new position in Clark on September 1. The position of assistant superintendent, previously held by Susan Miksza, has been eliminated. She has become the supervisor of curriculum.

"We'll make sure that the Clark and Garwood taxpayers are well served," assured Dr. Zychowski in reference to the renovations that are currently taking place at ALJ. "More importantly that what we're supposed to get for the children we'll get, because it's long overdue," he added.

During public questioning, Garwood citizens spoke of their concerns for the criteria used for scholarship eligibility because it appears as though more are being given to Clark students. Dr. Zychowski said that coming from a regional background, using student's social security number was the best way to handle those procedures and that any concerns should be immediately brought to Dr. Murphy's attention.

Construction Manager James Philbin brought the board up to date on the construction project at Lincoln School. They are currently one to two

Westfield Police Blotter

Thursday, September 15, Kelly Marshman, 27, of Jersey City was arrested at Westfield police headquarters and charged with contempt of court. He was released after posting \$500 bail.

Friday, September 16, Chiuweze Ebere, 19, of Plainfield was arrested at Elm and East Broad Streets and charged with an outstanding motor vehicle warrant out of Watching for \$106. Ebere was released after posting bail.

Saturday, September 17, an employee of an East Broad Street restaurant reported being assaulted by a co-worker at their place of business. No arrests had been made in the case at press time.

The victim, who was reportedly struck in the head with a wine bottle opener, required three stitches. He was treated at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield and released.

Saturday, September 17, a wallet containing personal identification was reported stolen from an employee of a religious facility on East Broad Street.

Sunday, September 18, Matthew Tibbals, 37, of Scotch Plains was arrested at Dudley Avenue and Elm Street and charged with an outstanding traffic warrant issued by the Westfield Municipal Court. He was released after posting \$245 bail.

weeks ahead of schedule. "The exterior brick facade is going up rapidly and the electricians are making good progress," he said.

Dr. Murphy reported that, "We had a very smooth opening of school. I was very pleased with the way things went."

Dr. Murphy spoke about the new Language Arts Literacy Program and the district's implementation of Guided Reading. He said that its purpose is to enable children to read for meaning at all times and that the emphasis is on reading increasingly challenging books over time.

"There will be a constant ongoing assessment of what the children are doing," informed Mr. Murphy, "There is quite a bit of flexibility compared to the traditional approach."

Dr. Murphy also spoke about some changes in the Crisis Response Manual, one of which is exterior door locks on classrooms. An update was also made on certain phone numbers of resource people to call in the area during an emergency situation, i.e. Trinitas Hospital and Overlook Hospital.

During the committee updates, it was noted that detectives are coming in to speak to students at the middle school on Thursday about the dangers of the Internet.

Back to School Night is scheduled for tonight at 6:45 at Washington and Lincoln School.

DWC

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Star Ledger.

Ms. Cronin also reported on feedback received regarding the hiring of an off-duty police officer by the DWC. She said the business community has been very positive. She stated that \$5,000 has been spent on the program to date.

The board briefly discussed the vacant business owner seat. "We have received (an indication that) several other people are interested," Chairman David Martone stated. He indicated that a Westfield-based architect, a proprietor of a travel agency, an optician and a restaurant owner have expressed interest in the position.

"That will be settled in the next few weeks," Mr. Martone said.

A brief discussion ensued about the possibility of changing the bylaws to allow a property owner who is also a business owner to hold the seat of the business owner. Currently, the bylaws do not allow for dual ownership.

The bylaws were changed several years ago to allow for a board member to hold a seat for more than one, three-year term. The town council approved a second term for board member Joe Spector after his first three-year term expired.

It was also suggested that if changes were to be made, the board might want to consider any other changes they would like to make to the bylaws at the same time. Councilman Goldman also suggested that if an amendment was going to be made regarding the business/property owner to the bylaws, the board might want to consider including the South Avenue corridor and parts of Central Avenue currently not already included in the SID be added to the district at the same time. These changes would require the ordinance be adjusted to incorporate these areas into the SID. If the DWC pursued the businesses in these areas, businesses owners would have to be receptive to the assessment fee required in order to be part of the SID. All changes must be approved by town council.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for an engineering firm to make recommendations for the streetscape program has been narrowed down from four to one final candidate. Although the firm chosen was not announced, the RFP must now be sent to town council before a decision can be made.

"I have been assured by (Town Administrator) Jim Gildea this recommendation will not be delayed," Mr. Martone announced. Ms. Cronin reported that the Harry Potter Promotion that took place this past summer was highlighted in the Downtown Promotion Reporter, a subscriber based informational magazine geared towards special event. The magazine was quoted as saying that Westfield, "shrewdly rode the wave of a pop-culture phenomenon."

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DWC is Monday, October 17, at 7:30 at the board office located at 105 Elm Street.

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