

GW BOE Hints of Budget Cuts; Teachers Pact Near

By AMY O'BRIEN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD—The Garwood Board of Education on February 15 hinted at budget cuts, announced a tentative salary agreement with teachers and unveiled plans for new playground and gym equipment.

The board also was given an update on curriculum changes, the registration process and the ongoing building project at Arthur L. Johnson High School from Clark Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian Zychowski, curriculum supervisor Susan Miksza and guidance supervisor Barbara Russ.

Garwood Superintendent Dr. William Murphy said the district would receive \$1,281 in new playground and gym equipment from U.S. Games.

The equipment — including balls, scooters, cones, hula-hoops, jump ropes, floor hockey equipment and other items — is a reward for money raised in the recent School Walk for the American Diabetes Association.

"Kudos to Janelle MacDougall and the entire Lincoln School for a job well done," said Dr. Murphy.

"School children should be exercising 60 minutes each day to prevent disease and obesity. Hopefully, this reward will encourage students to do just that," he noted.

Board Finance Committee Chairman James Matheson discussed ongoing budget talks, noting, "There will be cuts to meet the budget."

"We're waiting for state figures — given at the State of the State address — that will give the cap level," he added. "Until then, all construction payments have been suspended."

There will be a special meeting on Wednesday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m. to approve the tentative budget, Mr. Matheson said. The annual budget hearing is slated for Thursday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m., to be followed by the regularly scheduled board meeting.

In other news, the board has reached a tentative agreement with the Garwood teachers union and is working on a salary guide. Board and union officials will then be given an official agreement to ratify.

Meanwhile, board member Gary Maher, in a reference to Chechnyan rebels, expressed his displeasure with security measures as the board moved to approve the Lincoln School gym as one of three polling places for the Tuesday, April 18 school election.

"In this day and age, particularly given situations like Breslan—in Russia where the terrorists took over the school—I'm concerned about doors remaining open to the public during elections without a security guard," Mr. Maher said.

When board member Christine Guerriero asked if there were past incidents that might be cause for concern, Dr. Murphy said there were

none.

After Dr. Murphy explained where security gates are in the building and how they worked, the board moved to ensure sufficient security at the polls.

The board also announced there will be a ribbon cutting and open house at Lincoln School on Wednesday, March 8, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The ceremony will be followed by a Parent-Teacher Association meeting that will feature a presentation on the new Local Wellness/Nutrition policy, as well as a talk on Internet safety — and use of the website myspace.com by Officer James Wright of the Garwood Police Department.

Dr. Petix

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admitted "I like to do sthick on the loudspeaker. Why not make those 10 minutes of announcements and human and fun. I like people to laugh. Part of my visibility has been through the PA, interestingly enough."

He wouldn't divulge his wife's plans, but said he will remain in Scotch Plains. Having time to devote to hobbies and personal interests starting July 1, Dr. Petix said he is starting with a "clean slate and do whatever I want. I love music. I have a CD collection I want to continue to catalogue and relax and listen to. I want to play the guitar again, maybe play the trombone again; I used to do that when I was a kid. I want to do community service. I was not called for Vietnam. I always felt indebted to the men and women who served there. I don't know what I can do at this point, but I want to help."

Some of the academic programs he has supported behind the scenes will begin in his absence. He spoke fondly of the "Hi's Eye of the Air," in which students will decide whether they want to pursue print or electronic journalism. In addition, the school will work on solving the Middle Student issue and introduce "virtual high school," whereby students can take online courses. Dr. Petix will see his ideas come to fruition, only in a different capacity, as he transitions to what comes next.

"When I had my heart bypass at 39 years of age, the doctor told me I wouldn't live past 60," he said. "You adjust to what is. A lot of people have a lot tougher things to adjust to. It's a fun adjustment. I can do what I can until June 30 and then I wish my successor more success than I have. Will it be tough? Yeah, but I think I'll be able to adjust to a change."

No matter how he chooses to fill his days, Dr. Petix will take the advice he offers daily to his students — "have a pleasant and rewarding day."



PAY (STATION) TO PLAY...Captain John Morgan, shown above in April 2004, submitted his letter of resignation Tuesday as parking director, with two weeks notice, effective Friday, March 3. Captain Morgan will now become the national sales manager for the Metric Group, the company the town purchased the pay stations from for downtown parking lots.

Green Meadows Farm

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highlighted earlier instances in which farm discussion arose with Scotch Plains. The most recent discussion occurred on January 17, when the county manager and the freeholder chairman met with Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks. During that meeting, according to Mr. Devanney, "the mayor said he hadn't heard significant opposition to the project."

Mr. Devanney said that, "contrary to rumors in the press," the facility would be an "interactive recreational farm for children," not a petting zoo. According to Mr. Devanney, the project had "not expanded from when we began briefing the mayor. Nothing has changed." The farm, he said, would operate from May through October, seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mr. Devanney said that he had committed a "tactical error on behalf of the county that our communication was solely with the administration and the town council."

Scotch Plains Deputy Mayor Nancy Malool "clarified" that the county's plan "has been expanded or kept from us." Ms. Malool, who attended the meetings, said Mr. Key gave a "conceptual outline."

"We were given a sketch," she said. "To say that we have been apprised of this is to imply we were in favor of it is disingenuous at best." Ms. Malool said she had suggested holding a public forum to gauge the neighbors' level of commitment. "We have come out in opposition because the scope and the magnitude far exceed what we were led to believe. To imply we have been in on this is the furthest thing from the truth," she said.

Scotch Plains resident Marc Rogoff, an attorney, said the farm was a "horrendous idea." He said the contingent is not opposed to petting zoos or animals; "we're opposed to dropping a farm in the middle of an R1 zone bounded by a narrow road with no sidewalks, no shoulders. It's ludicrous to place this profit-making operation under the guise of open space and drop it in the middle of Cooper Road."

Eric Smith, speaking on the economic impact of the project, said that the county spent \$10 million on the project and the proposed rent is \$50,000, leaving a ".5 percent return to the taxpayers. That's a pathetic rate of return on our investment as taxpayers for this type of application."

Eric Parker, who said he grew up on a farm in North Carolina, said he was "qualified to recognize a farm. This is not a farm. It's an amusement park or a tourist attraction." Jeff Mayerson, a veteran of Wall Street, said the county and Scotch Plains were being "duped" by a "snake oil salesman."

John Reilly said the "mayor and council are in for a rough day tomorrow (last Friday). That lawyer (William Butler) set the tone (during the aborted Scotch Plains Planning Board meeting). He muscled us. I felt it. I'm from New York. I know where he's coming from. You should fire him."

After a half hour of deliberation in executive session, the freeholders re-emerged shortly after 9:45 p.m. and jettisoned the proposal. Freeholder Mirabella said, "we will not be moving forward with the farm. After taking a good hard look at it tonight, and listening to residents, we decided this was not the best fit for the commu-

nity. We do have the intention to use the facility for recreational purposes." Upon hearing the statement, the crowd stood and applauded the freeholders' position reversal.

Freeholder Adrian Mapp, who indicated he attended the terminated Scotch Plains meeting, said, "the concerns you shared (health concerns, quality of life) had an impact. We made the right decision and we do listen to you," he said.

Freeholder Rick Proctor, the board's chairman last year, apologized, saying, "we should have had this type of public meeting last year. We thought there would be an opportunity before tonight to discuss this with the community. I failed to bring that back to the administration. I dropped the ball on that regard."

Freeholder Dan Sullivan summarized the evening as "an exercise in democracy" and anticipated seeing a "lot of young boys and girls hitting baseballs or kicking soccer balls" in the future.

Following the meeting, Freeholder Mirabella told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that living in Fanwood had impacted his decision. "It (living in Fanwood) probably did (impact my decision). I drive on Martine Avenue every day. I know the neighborhoods. It's close to home. Saying it was 'way too early,' he did indicate the space would fulfill a recreational use but the board would "find a use that makes sense."

Port Security

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Union County Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella said the board would draft a resolution to oppose the sale of the ports. Noting that the county is home to the Port of Elizabeth, he added, "We obviously have considerable concerns."

He said the freeholders would support joint opposition by Democrats and Republicans, "to fight back against the Bush Administration and to let him know this is unacceptable." He said allowing the sale to go through would "invite terrorism" into the port.

De Jesus to Replace Osty As MS Borough Clerk

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE—After 16 years of service to Mountainside, Borough Clerk Judy Osty has announced her retirement effective Friday, March 31. She will be replaced by Martha De Jesus.

In addition to serving as borough clerk, she holds the positions of deputy tax collector, recording secretary for the Mountainside Board of Health and the Registrar of Vital Statistics. Ms. Osty noted that for her first six months of employment for the borough, she served as the receptionist/administrative secretary.

"It was the most pleasant working experience," stated Ms. Osty. "The governing body was wonderful to work with. I'll miss all the people that I worked with over the last 16 years."

Before working for Mountainside, Ms. Osty worked for five years in the Roselle clerk's office. Prior to that, she worked for a Roselle Park printing company as sales associate and as assistant to the president of the company.

She currently is a member of the New Jersey Municipal Clerks' Association, the Municipal Clerks' Association of Union County, the New Jersey Registrars' Association and the

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield
Friday, February 10, a 17-year-old male student was charged with aggravated assault after he allegedly tried to wipe blood on a teacher at a Westfield Avenue school. Police said the student had poked himself with a pen prior to the incident. The youth was turned over to a responsible adult.

Friday, February 10, a Union resident reported that someone scratched her car on Elm Street.

Friday, February 10, a Westfield resident reported that one or more unknown individuals spray-painted obscenities on her motor vehicle in the 700 block of North Avenue, West.

Friday, February 10, an employee of a business in the 400 block of South Avenue, East, reported a drop box outside the establishment was pried open. It was uncertain how much money had been taken from the box.

Friday, February 10, a cellular telephone and \$10 in cash was reported stolen from a locker at a local intermediate school.

Friday, February 10, several people were arrested following a motor vehicle stop at South and Central Avenues. Khalif Bell, 23, of Elizabeth was charged with unlawful possession of a handgun, possession of hollow point bullets and possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. He was held pending bail.

Akbar Mickens, 21, of Roselle and Aminah Coage, 21, of Linden each were charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. Both were issued summonses and released.

Saturday, February 11, a Pierson Street

resident reported the unlawful use of her bank check/debit card — \$1,309 in unauthorized withdrawals and purchases was transacted.

Tuesday, February 14, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation, Byron Collier, 39, of Highland Park was arrested at South Avenue and Hort Street on an outstanding traffic warrant for \$114 issued by the Linden Municipal Court. Collier was released after posting bail.

Wednesday, February 15, Vincene Elliott, 56, of Plainfield was arrested in the 600 block of North Avenue, East, on an outstanding traffic warrant for \$46 from North Plainfield. He was released after posting bail.

Wednesday, February 15, a resident of the 300 block of First Street reported an incident of credit card fraud. The victim said she received a call from her bank about her bank VISA card having been used outside New Jersey to make \$1,000 worth of purchases.

Thursday, February 16, Ryjon Burke, 33, of Westfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Mountain and Lawrence Avenues on an outstanding traffic warrant for \$1,614 issued by Watchung Borough Municipal Court. He did not post bail and was turned over to Watchung authorities.

Thursday, February 16, Roberto Gonzalez, 29, of Raleigh, N.C. was arrested at Central Avenue and Cacciola Place and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI), DWI with a minor as a passenger and refusal to submit to chemical testing. He was released to a responsible individual.

Friday, February 17, Justine Quartararo, 30, of Westfield was arrested in the 700 block of Central Avenue on an outstanding traffic warrant for \$250. Quartararo was released after posting bail.

Friday, February 17, a local resident reported that one or more unknown persons caused damage to a concrete wall on East Gate Square.

Friday, February 17, a Kenilworth resident reported her motor vehicle was damaged by having eggs thrown at it while it was parked behind a business in the 100 block of East Broad Street.

Saturday, February 18, Andrea Hester, 24, of Westfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Harrow Road and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. She was released with a summons.

Fanwood
Wednesday, February 15, Thomas Napier, Jr., 46, of Barnegat was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue revealed there were outstanding warrants for him.

Wednesday, February 15, Duquan Randolph, 21, of Plainfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road at Stewart Place revealed numerous outstanding warrants for him. Randolph, who also was charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance, was held on \$10,000 bail.

Wednesday, February 15, India James, 32, of Plainfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue revealed outstanding warrants.

Wednesday, February 15, Michael Roberson, 40, of Plainfield was arrested on outstanding warrants following a motor vehicle stop at Terrill Road and South Avenue.

Thursday, February 16, Roland Simeon, Jr., 26, of Edison was arrested on a no-bail warrant following a field investigation.

Saturday, February 18, Jeanpaul Longueil, 23, of Annandale was arrested and charged with DWI at Martine and South Avenues.

Saturday, February 18, Edison Solis, 34, of North Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop and charged with hindering and providing false information. He also was arrested on outstanding warrants.

Sunday, February 19, Ashley Pekios, 23, of Warren was arrested and charged with DWI at Hatfield and Princeton Avenues.

Sunday, February 19, Christopher Koltzan, 24, of Lodi was arrested following a motor vehicle stop at South and Old South Avenues on an outstanding warrant.

Sunday, February 19, Hugo Camino, 36, of Piscataway was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue at First Street, which revealed there were outstanding warrants for him.

Monday, February 20, Dwayne Dennard, 41, of Hillside was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road at Front Street on outstanding warrants. William Burwell, 60, of Newark, a passenger, also was arrested on outstanding warrants.

Monday, February 20, Brian Bullied, 30, of Scotch Plains was arrested on Westfield Road following a motor vehicle stop, which revealed outstanding warrants.

Scotch Plains
Monday, February 13, a Country Club Lane resident reported being the victim of harassment. The victim stated his son's friend called him several times and yelled at him. It is unknown why the friend was making the calls.

Wednesday, February 15, a student at the Magnet School reported being the victim of a theft. The victim stated that one or more unknown persons removed her MP3 player, valued at \$120, from her purse during lunch.

Thursday, February 16, a student at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School reported being the victim of theft. The victim stated that one or more unknown persons removed money from his gym bag during class.

Thursday, February 16, a student of the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools reported being the victim of assault. The victim stated that a classmate struck him on the side of his head after they got into a heated argument. Police are investigating the matter.

Friday, February 17, Tieshone Andrews, 30, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and obstruction. According to police, Andrews refused to answer questions or provide identification after police arrived on the scene of the incident.

Mountainside
Saturday, February 18, Isaac Graves, 30, of Plainfield was arrested on contempt of court charges. He was held on \$332 bail.

Monday, February 20, Randolph Newell, 38, of Elizabeth was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Route 22, West, for excessive smoke. The stop revealed he was driving with a suspended license.

PERSONAL INJURY LAW

Call
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1827 East Second Street, Scotch Plains
908-322-7000

Please note the following changes/updates:

- Belly Dancing for Fun and Fitness starts March 6th!
- Knit & Crochet for Beginners and Beyond starts March 6th!

westfield adult school

Spring Semester Begins March 6th!

Classes Start Throughout the Semester
Most Classes Held Monday Evenings
at Westfield High School
(908) 232-4050

Continuing registration by mail
or in-person 7:00 – 9:00 pm Mondays
beginning February 27
at Westfield High School

- Dance & Fitness
- Business & Computing
- Arts & Crafts
- Personal Growth, Health & Safety
- Financial Strategies
- Culinary Arts
- Music, Creative & Performing Arts
- Languages
- Landscaping & Home Improvement
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- Travelogues
- Trips & Excursions
- Great Decisions 2006
- ...and more!

Catalogs (with registration forms) are available at local libraries and online at www.westfieldnj.com/adultschool.

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