

Superintendent Foley Announces Retirement Effective August 31

By CAROLINE KOELLHOFFER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Superintendent William Foley announced his retirement, effective August 31, Tuesday night to the board of education after 11 years of leading the district.

Mr. Foley, 60, began his role as superintendent in October 1996 and had previously served as assistant superintendent from 1984 to 1992. He was superintendent in Marlboro from 1992 to 1996 before coming back to Westfield where he replaced Mark Smith who left the district. His career in education spans 35 years.

"It has been a privilege to work as the superintendent in one of the finest communities in the state," said Mr. Foley, a Westfield resident since 1984.

"I want to thank the parents and the community at large for the privilege

of serving their children. And I want to thank the members of this board of education, who work so hard for Westfield students," he said.

Board president Anne Riegel said, "After 11 years in the district as superintendent, plus his earlier time as business administrator, Dr. Foley's leadership has had a tremendous impact on the district. It is hard to think of an area that has not benefited from his efforts."

Mrs. Riegel said the process of appointing a new superintendent would begin immediately, noting that there would be an open community meeting on Wednesday, March 14, at

Westfield Intermediate School so that the public may provide input in compiling a list of characteristics of a prospective candidate.

The board hopes to secure a new superintendent by the end of June.

"Once we have a superintendent in place, we will start the search for a new high-school principal," Mrs. Riegel said. Dennis Fyffe currently serves as interim principal following the retirement of Robert Petix last year.

"We are of course concerned about having to conduct two important searches in the near future. We are going to work hard to get this accomplished. Hiring a superintendent is one of the most important jobs for a board of education. It is one this board is certainly taking very seriously," Mrs. Riegel said.

Business administrator Bob Berman announced that the district received a 3-percent increase in state aid for the 2007-2008 school year, raising the amount of aid to \$4,700,587, a \$136,910 increase from the present aid allotment. Mr. Berman said the increased state aid is to be appropriated for tax relief. This, along with the expected fund balance, would lower the taxpayer impact from 14 cents to 13 cents for next year per \$100 of assessed valuation, he said.

Mrs. Riegel said, "This state-aid increase is great news. Two or three weeks ago, we would have been out of our seats jumping for joy, but Mr. Foley's news has us a little shell shocked."

In other business, supervisor of athletics Edward Tranchina, who presented the budget for the athletic department along with Mr. Berman,



William Foley



LET IT SNOW...Snow fell in the area on Sunday night, prompting Westfield school officials to make a nighttime decision to cancel school on Monday. Above, Mindowaskin Park provides a view to the Presbyterian Church steeple.

Council Approves Demolition Definition, Notification

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The town council on Tuesday night conducted an advertised hearing and subsequently passed an ordinance creating a new definition for demolitions and outlining a subsequent notification procedure.

Code Review and Town Property Chairman Jim Foerst said the ordinance "codifies changes my committee recommended with regards to the demolition-permit process — in particular, the notice requirement. As we all know, it's very traumatic for neighborhoods to change."

He said, "Hopefully, by notifying neighbors of particular changes, they'll not only be able to protect their family, but they'll be a little less shocked when people do some work in the neighborhood."

At earlier meetings in February, the fourth ward councilman said the ordinance would change the town code's definition of a demolition to the "removal of more than 75 percent of a structure."

If a project falls under these parameters, the planned demolition-notification process would be "triggered." According to the ordinance, "adjoining properties," or those that touch or abut, will be notified; however, homes across the street from a demolition site will not be notified.

Public Works Committee Chairwoman Jo Ann Neylan said the "White Paper Team" will give an update to the council on March 27 concerning

phases one and two of its plan to improve efficiency at the Department of Public Works (DPW).

The second ward councilwoman reiterated that the town would continue with its field-maintenance pilot project, whereby DPW members would assist the recreation commission "since the results are so positive."

Last week, she said the project enabled the two groups to "(communicate) when fields were open and closed, and they could clearly maintain them. It made sense and both departments were cooperative. This year, we're doing it again."

The mayor and council made presentations to both the rescue squad and girl scouts before general business began.

The mayor first honored the local girl scouts, part of the Westfield's Washington Rock Council, as they celebrated their 50th anniversary. The honor coincides with the upcoming Girl Scout Week, to be held from March 11 to 17.

The mayor also paid tribute to the rescue squad, in its 56th year, "providing service to the Town of Westfield...entirely by volunteers, who work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

The mayor "personally thanked" the squad, who "work basically 100 percent on donations."

The mayor recounted, "This past year, our family has witnessed the professionalism and compassion of our rescue squad. We had an elderly

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BUDGET TALK...Westfield Town Administrator Jim Gilda and Councilman Sal Caruana join Westfield Leader Assignment Editor Paul Peyton to discuss the Westfield municipal budget. The video can be seen at goleader.com/video.



RESCUE ME...Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky extends a hand to Rescue Squad President Reid Edles as the town council squad on Tuesday night before March's Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad Month. Pictured, from left to right, are: Mayor Skibitsky, Rescue Squad Vice President Scott Messey, Mr. Edles, Rescue Squad Treasurer Carol Carson, Captain Kristin Wanca and Deputy Captain Bob Billson. The squad responds to roughly 2,500 emergency calls a year.

GW Council OK's Sex-Offender Ordinance Revision

By KATHY MARQUES
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — The borough council on Tuesday night approved an ordinance amending the borough ordinance on registered-sex-offender prohibition zones that was approved last year.

The registered-sex-offender prohibition zones, which were adopted in January 2006, prohibit "registered sex offenders from residing or loitering within the Borough of Garwood within 2,500 feet of any school, park, playground, recreation area, day-care facility or school bus stop located within the borough of adjacent municipalities."

At its December 5, 2006, meeting, the council considered adding "exceptions" in the ordinance to "any person who established a residence in a prohibited area prior to the adoption of this chapter," which would have allowed the person to live within the "prohibited zones." The amendment was introduced and defeated because of a 2-2 council tie, the first time in council history that an ordinance was met with a tie, officials said.

At that time, Councilwoman Kathleen Villaggio and Councilman Victor DeFilippo voted against the ordinance, and Councilmen Charles Lombardo and Damien Mitchell, who



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS...The Westfield High School girls swim team poses outside of the high school on Sunday afternoon after winning the Public A NJSIAA State Championship, beating West Windsor-Plainsboro South, 96-74.

3 Westfield Incumbents to Run Unopposed for School Board

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — In Westfield, board of education incumbents Ginny Leiz, the board's vice president, Richard Soloman and Julia Walker, an attorney, have all filed for re-election and will run unopposed. Board members since 2001, Mrs. Leiz and Mr. Soloman seek their third terms. Mrs. Walker joined the board when she was elected to an unexpired term in 2003.

Before joining the board, Mrs. Leiz

was active with the Westfield High School Parent-Teacher-Student Organization.

Four Scotch Plains residents will battle for two seats on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE. Fanwood resident Rob O'Connor will run unopposed for re-election to his seat.

Two incumbents — current BOE President Tom Russo, a local attorney who has served nine years on the board, and Craig Nowlin — will not seek re-election.

The candidates for election are:

Jane Costello of Elizabeth Avenue, vice president of the McGinn Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA); Nancy Bauer of Canterbury Drive, president of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School ice hockey association; John Kubie of Shirwood Drive and David Gorbunoff of Algonquin Drive.

Mr. Kubie and Mr. Gorbunoff ran unsuccessfully last year for BOE seats, receiving 630 and 690 votes, respectively, in a race that involved

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DWC Approves Sign Grant For Just Bead Yourself

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Downtown Westfield Corporation approved a sign grant for Just Bead Yourself at its meeting Monday night. The pathway for the sign was cleared when Judith Thornton, town planner, and Kathleen Neville, the zoning official, rendered a decision that a variance moves with the property, not with the resident.

This decision meant that Just Bead Yourself could replace the Gecko Kids sign with a similar sign without the need for a new variance. The decision also eliminated both the delays and costs associated with the variance process, officials said.

The replacement is a carved wooden sign on a bracket mounting and is located on the Central Avenue side of the Rialto Building. Sherry Cronin, DWC executive director, said the sign is one of two in town in a style that the DWC plans to lobby the town to permit the next time signage regulations are rewritten.

Mrs. Cronin said the façade work at Bovella's Pastry Shoppe on East Broad Street was continuing to progress and that the installation of new windows on the Prospect Street

side was a milestone. The DWC helped fund the façade work, partly in order to help bring the building back to its former appearance.

This evening is the grand opening of Così restaurant in the site formerly occupied by Wild Noodles and China Light at 102-108 East Broad Street. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at 6 p.m.

The board updated members on plans for future promotional activities. Mrs. Cronin said the Sweet Sounds Downtown jazz concerts would be held on nine Tuesdays in July and August and would require a booking of 40 bands total. She said movie nights would be moved forward to September from October in the hope that warmer evenings would improve viewer comfort.

Mrs. Cronin informed the board that sponsorship packages for the Downtown Westfield 5K Run, called the Pizza Run, were now available. The race is slated for Wednesday, July 25. The DWC is also working with the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce regarding the September car show. Mrs. Cronin said the Chamber wants to return the show to downtown.

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SPECIAL-ED SHORTFALL...During its review of the school budget, the Mountainside Board of Education discussed its dissolution funds. Based on records of two years ago, the district faced \$750,000 special-education shortfall, according to BOE President John Perrin, left. At right is Roderic McLaughlin, business administrator and board secretary. See story on page 10.

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