

Pelissier Removes Motion To Name Brinker RVSA Exec. Dir.

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

RAHWAY — A delay in action to appoint Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) interim executive director Michael Brinker to the position permanently and an effort to seek proposals for a regulatory compliance-services professional topped last Thursday's RVSA meeting.

Some two dozen RVSA employees attended the commission meeting. Kenilworth Commissioner Gregg David, who also serves as the borough's mayor, asked why interim executive director Michael Brinker's upgrade to executive director was not on the agenda. Rahway Commissioner Peter Pelissier, who serves as Rahway administrator, said he had requested the motion be removed.

"I don't see how one commissioner can unilaterally remove it from the agenda," Mr. David said. The personnel committee had approved the motion to appoint Mr. Brinker permanently as director and, thus, even though Mr. Pelissier had made the original motion, its sponsorship was no longer his alone, but now the committee's.

Officials said it was unclear whether

removal of the item from the agenda was a procedural breach.

During an engineering committee report, Mr. Pelissier asked to add a "regulatory compliance" line item to requests for contract proposals for 2008.

Commissioner Frank Mazzarella of Clark asked a question, but Mr. Pelissier deemed him procedurally out of order.

Anthony Gencarelli, the authority's current manager of regulatory compliance, has been a regular critic of attempts to privatize the authority.

Regarding privatization, John Marquardt of Fanwood urged commissioners to be cautious in their actions and said "rosy predictions" of cost savings made at the time of privatization are often not realized.

James Wancho of the Warren-based engineering/architecture firm Paulus, Sokolowski and Sartor reported on the authority's slip-lining project, installing a plastic pipe inside an existing concrete pipe that sewage is chemically attacking.

Mr. Wancho said the "as-built drawing showed only one bend in the line" and the extreme nature of the bend would not allow slip lining — the process of inserting a semi-flexible liner pipe into a larger existing pipe.

He said additional bends had been found and posed installation difficulties. Commission questioning revealed that the pipe had recently been examined for bends with a TV camera; a previous viewing had been done earlier, while sewage was in the line.

Mr. Wancho said sewage within the pipe limited examination to above the liquid. He said, "I can't stand here today and tell you we're not going to need additional money."

The RVSA approved a motion accepting the recommendation of engineering firm Hatch, Mott, MacDonald of Millburn that RVSA use an enhanced version of the current user charge system in the future.

Commissioners discussed but did not make a decision regarding adding a fire-alarm system to the new cogeneration- and sludge-drying building. The authority's insurance carrier reviewed plans without comment; the agent recently expressed concern that the building was unalarmed, officials said.

Mr. Brinker displayed a plastic bottle with a dark substance, identified as dried sludge, and announced that testing of the sludge-drying facility was under way. The sludge is to be used as fertilizer by farmers.

Health Dept. to Sponsor Flu-Inoculation Program.

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Regional Health Department will sponsor a flu-inoculation program on Tuesday, October 2, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Westfield Municipal Building courtroom at 425 East Broad Street.

This program is exclusively for residents of Westfield, Summit, Springfield, Roselle Park, Mountainside, New Providence, Garwood and Fanwood.

Flu inoculation is recommended for everyone 50 years of age or older; anyone with long-term health problems with heart, kidney, lung or metabolic disease (eg. diabetes), asthma, anemia or blood disorders; anyone with a weakened immune system due to HIV/AIDS or other diseases, long-term treatment with drugs such as steroids, cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs, or anyone in close contact with people at risk of serious influenza.

Participants will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. People covered by Medicare-Part B must bring their insurance cards.

For additional information, contact the health department at (908) 789-4070, extension 4070 or 4071.



LAYING DOWN THE LAW...Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich, right, a candidate for re-election, discusses county initiatives and personal accomplishments from his 30 years in office with *Leader/Times* assignment editor Paul Peyton in the newspaper offices last Friday. View the exclusive interview at goleader.com/video.

Ferguson Discusses Safe Toys At House Committee Hearing

WASHINGTON — Rep. Mike Ferguson (R-7th), delivered a statement last Thursday to the House Energy and Commerce Consumer Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee hearing regarding titled: "Lead In Imported Children's Products."

"In recent weeks we have been bombarded with reports of toy recalls from well-known toy manufacturers across the country. In recent months, Mattel has recalled millions of toys representing popular and beloved children's characters such as Dora the Explorer, Barbie, Elmo, Thomas the Tank and toys just like this one.

"In the past six months, nearly 21 million Chinese made toys have been recalled, and 86 percent of all toy and game imports come from China. I'm sure every parent in the country had the same reaction that my wife, Maureen and I did — We've had toys like these, and our kids have put toys like these in their mouths all the time. No parent in the country should ever have to worry about whether their children's toys are toxic.

"If toy companies choose to manufacture their products in China, they need to take every precaution that those toys meet U.S. safety standards. If they don't, I believe Congress must give federal regulators the authority to ensure that our kids' toys won't actually harm them.

"America's moms and dads should not be worried that the health of their children could be at risk when they play with something so simple as a Thomas the Tank engine or a Dora the

Explorer backpack...

"It is our responsibility, as lawmakers, parents, educators, and law enforcement, to do everything possible to protect our children at all costs. We will not settle for un-enforced standards and lax inspections when our children's safety is at stake.

"That is why I, along with my friend from New York, Mr. Towns, have introduced HR 3477, 'The Safe Toys for Kids Act.' This bipartisan legislation would ban uncertified imports from entering the United States by requiring that all imported children's products be tested and certified by an independent group...

"Currently, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission allows manufacturers to inspect their own children's products. However, this is clearly not enough. This bill would require an independent group to test both imported and domestic toys geared towards children 5 years and younger.

"This legislation will go far in ensuring that parents can buy toys for their children with the peace of mind that what they are bringing into their home is only of the highest-quality... "While this is not a cure-all, I believe it is a good framework to begin the discussion on what we can do to prevent these dangerous, and sometimes even deadly, toys from falling into the hands of our nation's children. I look forward to hearing our witness' testimony and am anxious to hear their ideas on how we can work together to solve this problem."

UC Sheriff Points to Work To Combat Terrorism in NJ

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

COUNTY — Sheriff Ralph Froehlich seeks his 11th term as county sheriff this year, saying there is still unfinished business to do. Now in his 30th year in office, he says he is the "longest sitting sheriff" in county and state history, and possibly the nation.

A former 20-year Elizabeth police officer, the sheriff said he seeks re-election because he wants to continue programs helping the young, elderly and animals as well.

Sheriff Froehlich has been involved in highlighting for federal authorities potential terrorism targets in Union and Essex Counties, including the shipping lanes and storage areas in the Ports of Newark and Elizabeth, Newark Liberty International Airport, Goethals Bridge into Staten Island, the area of exit 13 off the New Jersey Turnpike and a refinery.

Law-enforcement officials have called the area the most dangerous two miles of highway in the nation in terms of its potential for terrorism. The sheriff submitted a detailed book to Congress detailing potential targets, including pictures and descriptions.

"That's an awesome, awesome area to be utilized by the terrorists," said Sheriff Froehlich. "Fortunately, our law-enforcement agencies from the federal government down to the local people have taken us very, very seriously, and there is great interaction to protect our communities."

He said the locations of key highways and waterways puts Union County in "the top 10 and sometimes the top three" potential targets in the nation.

On the issue of school safety, Sheriff Froehlich said an incident like last week's bomb scare in Bergen County, which caused the closure of 50 schools, is "very difficult" to handle.

"Fortunately for us, the Union County Sheriff's Office and my K-9 unit is one of the regional training areas for the State of New Jersey. We have 14 dogs of our own that can respond to the scene along with the county police and their bomb technicians," he said. He said based on his office's "constant interaction" with other agencies, Union County could call the state police, as well as other counties such as Bergen and Hudson "with their resources and their K-9's."

Over his years in office, the sheriff and his staff have produced a booklet and assisted victims of domestic violence, helping them sign complaints and working with victims in court. For 20 years, he also has run a fingerprint program aimed at children.

"New Jersey is the only state that I know of that has legislation mandating that fingerprint programs be available," he said. "We fingerprint them, we photograph them. We give you (parents) the record so if that child is

ever lost you have important information to bring right out to the agency and you're in good hands."

The sheriff said one million people a year pass through the doors of the county courthouse in Elizabeth. His agency is in charge of courthouse security, as well as "responding to all the homicides in Union County, [including doing] the crime scene work."

Sheriff officers are also involved in assisting federal marshals, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and FBI.

He said his office also handles sheriff sales, whereby a property owner failed to pay their mortgage, causing the bank to foreclose on the loan. The sheriff's office is responsible for serving foreclosure papers and evicting the owner when called upon by the bank.

"It's not a pleasant part of our work, but it exists and it's the law, and I have to be a supporter of the law," he said. He said sheriff sales are held every Wednesday in his department's office in Elizabeth.

On the issue of gun safety, Sheriff Froehlich said he often gets "angry with the lack of cooperation from some other states" on the issue of use of firearms in crimes. Sheriff Froehlich said 10 years ago he produced a few books on the dangers of gun violence for children and adults.

"We lose so many people that we should not lose, especially our juveniles, our teenagers. This shouldn't happen... If it's not working with our laws we have to approach it through education," Sheriff Froehlich.

He also said gang violence is a problem in the county, saying for some teenagers "it's almost a matter of self preservation" that they feel compelled to join a gang.

"We have to find a way to combat that... showing the negativity of the existing gang and the positive side of a gang like the PAL (Police Athletic League) football or the Boy Scouts," he said.

The sheriff said he wants to see the county take over animal-control services for municipalities. He said a study a few years ago looked at feasibility of such a service, and he said veterinarians, municipal health officers and the general public have come out in favor of such a facility.

The county program would focus on animal control, as well as education on how to properly care for animals.

Looking to another term, Sheriff Froehlich said he has a simple philosophy on politics: "Do your job first and the politics will fall into place."

"I don't get all my votes from one party... I represent the County of Union, not a party," he said.

Watch the complete exclusive *Leader/Times* interview with the sheriff and read up on him and other election candidates at goleader.com/video and goleader.com/07election.

To our patrons,
The Northside Trattoria is undergoing renovations. We hope to be complete and reopen in a couple of weeks. Thank you for your patience. Until then,

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