

## Mayor Mahr, Huegel Begin New Terms As Boris Begins Tenure

By PETER GRIESMER  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD – Mayor Colleen Mahr and Councilman Russell Huegel were sworn into new terms of office while Councilman Kevin Boris began his first term during the borough's reorganization meeting held Sunday at Borough Hall.

Mayor Mahr is entering her third four-year term, while Mr. Huegel beginning his second term.

As Democrats, Mr. Huegel and Mr. Boris' victory in the General Election in November ensured that the six-person council will remain evenly

divided between Democrats and Republicans for at least one more year. Mayor Mahr, also a Democrat, holds the deciding vote on propositions put before the council in the event of a split vote.

Former Governor Brendan Byrne, remembered for having introduced the New Jersey state income tax in 1976, administered the oath of office to all three individuals. At 87, Mr. Byrne has now sworn Mayor Mahr into all three of her mayoral terms. He quipped that he hoped he would be able to do the same for the Mayor Mahr at the end of her term in four

more years. Mayor Mahr's mother, Nancy Yewaisis, was in attendance and had been on Governor Byrne's staff.

Councilman Huegel was elected council president for 2012, while Mr. Boris was named the council representative to the Fanwood Planning Board. Mr. Boris was president of the planning board in 2011.

Mayor Mahr spoke at the end of the council session about relishing her re-election to her position in November.

She said, "The outpouring of generosity and support I received has truly taken my breath away."

At the same time, council members Katherine Mitchell, Anthony Parenti, and Mike Szuch, noted that they were saddened by former councilwoman Joan Wheeler's decision not to run for re-election for the 2012 year. Ms. Wheeler was elevated to the top administrative post of the Union County run Runnells Specialized Hospital.

The former Democratic councilwoman's vacated seat was filled Sunday by Mr. Boris.

The mayor concluded Sunday's meeting by discussing her initiatives for the new year. Among other goal, she noted that she would be open to discussions of how the borough might save taxpayer money.

Furthermore, Mayor Mahr discussed plans to oversee the Recreation Commission's refurbishing of the borough's basketball courts as well as the creation of new park paths and added that she would remain committed to the development of Fanwood's downtown with an eye to how current developments would affect the future of the town.

"We want to know that we each had a hand in making this town just a little better than when we found it," she said.

The governing body appointed borough officials as well as residents to boards, commissions, and committees. The council's standing committees were also approved for 2012.

In addition, Mayor Mahr administered the oath of office to Public Defender Michael Doran as well as

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## Former WF Resident Killed Serving as Park Ranger

WESTFIELD—Mount Rainier Park Ranger Margaret Kritsch Anderson, 34, the daughter of a Westfield pastor and Scotch Plains resident, was shot and killed in the line of duty on New Year's Day by a gunman who drove his vehicle through a park checkpoint.

According to national news accounts, Mrs. Anderson blocked the road in the Washington State park with her patrol vehicle to stop the vehicle driven by Benjamin Colton Barnes, 24, identified as an Iraq War veteran. At that point, Barnes reportedly jumped from his car and opened fire on the armed ranger before she had a chance to react.

Barnes' body was later found in the park face down in an icy creek following a massive police manhunt involving over 150 officers. He was wearing only a T-shirt, jeans and one sneaker, according to news reports. Barnes reportedly was given a misconduct discharge from the Army after he had been charged with driving under the influence, as well as improperly transporting privately owned weapons. He is also a suspect in shootings that critically wounded four people at a Seattle, Wash., party.

Mrs. Anderson was the daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. Paul Kritsch of Scotch Plains. Rev. Kritsch is the pastor of the Redeemer Lutheran Church in Westfield.

According to her wedding announcement, published in *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* in



PLANNING THE FUTURE... The Scotch Plains Township Council met on Tuesday night to reorganize the governing body and discuss the upcoming year. Pictured, left to right, are: Union County Republican Chairman Phil Morin, Scotch Plains Councilman William Vastine, Scotch Plains Mayor Nancy Malool and former Governor Donald DiFrancesco.

## Malool Backs Study to Look Into Consolidation of SP and FW

By FRED T. ROSSI  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Mayor Nancy Malool said on Tuesday she supports — and urged her township council colleagues to do likewise — a study to look into the pros and cons of a full consolidation between Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

Saying that after more than three years of efforts to merging various municipal departments and service, "nothing has really happened," the mayor said the council later this month would be considering a resolution backing a full consolidation study. "And why shouldn't we? Why shouldn't our residents be fully informed as to the pros and cons? What is everyone so afraid of?"

The mayor made her remarks at the council's annual reorganization meeting. She said shared services and the merging of departments, par-

ticularly the two towns' police departments, have been studied "to death, but how have our taxpayers been impacted? Have they saved money? Has their quality of life been enhanced? Has efficiency of services improved? The answer to all these questions is undoubtedly, no."

She said the proposed merger of the two police departments is being held up by three factors: how dispatch services will be handled, the fact that Scotch Plains police are governed by state civil service rules and Fanwood's is not, and how a merged department will be governed.

"All three of these issues would be resolved if we were ever to merge," Mayor Malool said. She said she regretted not pursuing such an avenue after she was elected mayor in 2008. At the time, both towns agreed to discuss merged departments rather than outright consolidation. Had the latter route been pursued, the mayor said on Tuesday, "by now we would have known whether it made sense to merge towns and our residents might have had the opportunity to vote on whether to join the towns."

At the council's earlier conference meeting on Tuesday, the two council Democrats, Kevin Glover and Michael Marcus, expressed skepticism about what Mr. Glover termed "yet another study," preferring that the two towns redouble their efforts to merge departments.

During her remarks, the mayor defended the council's actions last year regarding the sale of the Shackamaxon Country Club, which included declaring the property as an area in need of rehabilitation as a way to block the sale of the entire property to a developer.

"If we hadn't acted," Mayor Malool said, "I can practically guarantee there would be 100 homes there within the year." She said the recently completed sale of the property (please see related story on page 3), which will include the development of a limited number of condos, contained township-imposed conditions that resulted from the earlier designation of the property.

"Because of our declaration [of the property as an area in need of rehabilitation], we were able to put conditions on the builder," the mayor said. "We were able to control the process, to influence the future."

In other business, at the 30-minute reorganization meeting, Councilwoman Mary DePaola was selected to serve as deputy mayor for 2012. Mayor Malool said Mrs. DePaola, who served in that role last year, had "done an admirable job" last year. Mrs. DePaola was appointed as a Class III Member of the planning board while Thomas Russo as named as an alternate member. Chris Abeel was appointed to the zoning board of adjustment and Dan Sullivan was named as an alternate member.



ANOTHER TERM... Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr takes the oath of office from former Governor Brendan Byrne to begin her third term as mayor as her children look on during Sunday's reorganization ceremony at Borough Hall.

## WF BOE Interviews Seven Candidates for Open Seat

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD – Westfield Board of Education members interviewed seven candidates Tuesday evening during a special meeting aimed at finding a replacement for the open seat on the board. The appointment will be from January 2012 until the board of education elections in April, where a total of four seats will be open. The four-month term is being filled after ex-Board President Julia Walker resigned in November.

Each candidate was asked to make an opening statement, including why he or she wanted to be on the board and what they thought the vision of the Westfield school system should be. In addition, each candidate was asked the same three questions, including what their thoughts are on achieving success for all students, what could be done to help the schools in a time of limited resources, and

how they have resolved conflict between committee members on any previous jobs, boards or assignments.

The first to be interviewed was Robert Whitehead, who stated that he was a partner in the Westfield-based construction firm Cornerstone Associates. Mr. Whitehead noted that he had 34 years of management development experience. He told board members that he has a degree in chemical engineering and that he and his wife moved to Westfield 19 years ago. He said his two sons graduated from Westfield High School and that his daughter received a diploma from Mount Saint Mary Academy.

Mr. Whitehead said he was drawn to the position because he wanted to "be a good citizen and step forward to help." He also stated, "I am so happy to see so many like-minded individuals who also came forth." He noted that he has been a scout leader

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NEW COUNCIL LEADERSHIP... Newly installed Fanwood Council President Russell Huegel, left, comments during Sunday's reorganization meeting as his daughter enjoys the festivities. Mr. Huegel was sworn in for his second term, while Councilman Kevin Boris, right, took the oath for his first term.



NEW YEAR'S DAY TRADITION... The 30th annual Hangover Run at Tamaques Park in Westfield, hosted by the Cranford-based Central Jersey Road Runners Club, had a record number of runners on New Year's Day. There were over 1,000 runners from the region. The first runner crossed the finish line in just over 15 minutes.

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