

Police Chief Mason Named Cranford Administrator

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Mayor David Robinson announced on Tuesday that Police Chief Eric Mason, who has also been serving as acting township administrator since last summer, would assume that position permanently.

Mr. Mason, a 34-year veteran of the police department and its chief since 2003, "has earned the right" to the administrator's position, the mayor said at the end of Tuesday's township committee meeting. Township officials have praised Mr. Mason's performance as acting administrator, especially his role in the recovery from Hurricane Irene last summer. He took on the duties as acting administrator when former administrator Marlena Schmid was placed on involuntary administrative leave last September. Mr. Mason will officially retire from the police force on May 31, thus necessitating a search for a new police chief.

In other business, the committee approved ordinances setting salary ranges for several dozen township employees and raising — "very minimally," in the words of Deputy Mayor Andis Kalnins — the fees for the township swimming pools. The committee also introduced an ordinance that will prohibit the feeding of wildlife in Cranford. Commissioner Lisa Adubato-Nesi said the ordinance is aimed primarily at curbing the feeding of deer on both public and private property. She said this practice has led to other wildlife, including foxes, coming into residential neighborhoods. The public hearing on the ordinance will be held on Tuesday, March 27.

Another ordinance was introduced that lowers the minimal usage for sewer fee assessments from 75,000 gallons to 25,000 gallons. Deputy Mayor Kalnins said this was being done in an effort to make the sewer fee "more equitable." He noted that the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority's (RVSA) fees charged to

Cranford are going up 20 percent this year. Mayor Robinson said "the goal is to incent conservation," and pointed out that those who use the least water will see an average decrease in their sewer fees of about 28 percent. The public hearing on the ordinance will also be held on March 27.

The committee approved, with two abstentions, a resolution backing a bill in the state Legislature that would scrap the current formula for disbursing state aid to local boards of education and replace it with a system of equal assistance for every student in New Jersey, namely \$7,481 per student, regardless of where the school district is located. Mayor Robinson said such a change would result in more than \$20 million in additional state aid to the local board of education. Commissioner Edward O'Malley abstained, saying the township committee was "looking to vent some frustration" without having adequately analyzed the proposal. Commissioner Adubato-Nesi also abstained, saying that while she supported the "concept," the proposed legislation had "not been vetted enough."

The committee also approved a resolution naming the new park at the former site of Roosevelt School as Theodore Roosevelt Park.

The township committee is completing its work on the 2012 municipal budget, and Commissioner Kevin Campbell said the five members would go over the budget "line by line" at their conference meeting on Monday night. Mr. Kalnins said the budget was ready for introduction, but that committee members still wanted to review it to look for additional ways to lower expenditures and keep the tax rate from rising too much. And Mayor Robinson said that even after the budget is formally introduced in the next several weeks, there would still be time for changes to be made before the budget is voted on later in June.

Mathieu Recall Effort Launched in Garwood

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — A recall petition may be circulated throughout the borough to unseat Councilman Jim Mathieu, resident Bruce Paterson told *The Westfield Leader* Tuesday night. Borough Clerk Christina Ariemma filed a lawsuit January 31 against Councilman Mathieu. Mr. Paterson told the council and mayor, in a statement signed by him and resident Rosemary Snow, "...we are again at a crossroads that many residents of Garwood feel that good governance has been compromised by the actions of Councilman Mathieu." They asked Mr. Mathieu to step down, of which he did not comply. Mr. Paterson said the petition would have to go out before the June Primary Election to seek out 700 signatures.

In a separate request to the council, Mr. Paterson stated why the council must form a resolution to the County of Union stating

that Freeholder Dan Sullivan also being the chair of the freeholders' finance committee, as well as the director of the Union County Utilities Authority is a conflict of interest, and asked that it be "immediately resolved to the favor of the taxpayers."

The council unanimously approved changing engineering firms to clean up the Department of Public Works site on South Avenue that experienced an oil tank leak in 2005, and has since been undergoing cleanup efforts. Hatch Mott MacDonald was awarded the contract for the next phase of the project that would cost \$17,500, 50 percent more than the proposal submitted by T. Slack Environmental Services, Inc. of Kenilworth, Borough Engineer Donald Guariello said. "We have had problems getting things done," Mr. Guariello said of Slack's previous work on the job, and is why he recommended awarding the

contract to Hatch Mott MacDonald of Millburn.

Following Councilwoman Sara Todisco's recent announcement of her request to install an employee evaluation policy for non-union employees, she said the council's finance committee has reached a decision and would like to move forward with putting a resolution on the agenda in the near future that would make employee evaluations part of the borough's policy. She also said the state will give the borough the same amount of state aid it received last year.

Athletic Field Complex representative Louis Petruzzelli said the rebid documents are still under review. He noted that he and the council "don't expect to award this before the summer is over." Ms. Ariemma said it could be possible to award in August.

The hiring of William Pervarnik's replacement on the DPW was deleted from the consent agenda at Council President Keith Sluka's request. "I think positions should be advertised," Mr. Sluka said. The resolution is expected to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Representative of Garwood for the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA), Steven Greet, gave an update on the RVSA, stating the RVSA reduced staff from 60 to 52 employees to date and the 2010 to 2011 savings is \$285,000. Labor negotiations were completed in August, he said. An electrical supply contract that was switched to Hess that occurred in June has seen a 50 percent savings over 2010, which resulted in a \$230,000 savings from 2010 to 2011. Garwood's assessment to the RVSA has seen a reduction of \$63,000 from 2010 to 2011.

People attending the meeting were required to walk through the new metal detector that was authorized by the council two weeks ago. Mayor Patricia Quattrocchi told *The Westfield Leader* that the detector cost some \$2,700.

Library to Welcome Speaker On Healthy Foods March 5

GARWOOD — The Garwood Public Library will host a presentation entitled "The Natural Foodbasket" on Monday, March 5, at 7 p.m., featuring Lorraine Harwelik of Natural Therapeutics for Health.

Ms. Harwelik will discuss good diet planning that leads to good health and wellbeing. She will explain how to fill one's shopping basket with healthful foods that are commonly found in local supermarkets, health food stores and outdoor markets. Her presentation also will include suggestions for diet improvement.

Ms. Harwelik is a dual certified clinical herbalist, licensed New Jersey educator and registered yoga teacher. For more than 25

years, she has been helping people of all ages get well and stay well, through the use of natural foods, herbs and exercise. She is the founder of Natural Therapeutics for Health, located in Cranford.

Registration for this event may be done in person at the Garwood Public Library, by calling (908) 789-1670 or via the library's interactive calendar page found on its website, youseemore.com/garwood. The library is located at the corner of Third Avenue and Walnut Street, at the back of the Lincoln School complex. Library hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.