

Cranford Continues Town Budget Hearings

By DELL SIMEONE

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD – The Cranford Township Committee held its third round of public budget hearings Tuesday evening. The session lasted three and a half hours before it adjourned to go into executive session.

Business Administrator Terence Hall said was to present the final budget proposal to the committee last night after this newspaper's press deadline.

"Some deductions in some departments will have to be made," he said, but declined to release any figures on Tuesday evening. Last year's budget was \$34,303,953.

Warren Korecky and Bill Swisher, auditors with the firm of Suplee, Clooney and Co., of Westfield, told the committee that, this year the mandated cap for appropriations is at one half of one percent. In last year's budget it was 2 percent. "The cost of living adjustment (COLA) for appropriations is the lowest I have ever seen," Mr. Korecky said.

Monika Jencik, who is a registered environmental health spe-

cialist with the township's health department, said her budget for this year is \$214,745 lower than last year's figure of \$272,308. She said the lower number is due to the loss of an employee.

"This year the department is operating with one full-time and one part-time employee," she said.

Ms. Jencik also said the department has a contract with Westfield, which costs \$79,117 to provide services such as shots and health clinics.

Presenting budget requests from the police department in a power point presentation were new Police Chief James Wozniak, Lieutenant Ed Davenport and Captain Joseph Van Bergen. The department has 46 police officers and 10 dispatchers.

The presentation was quite extensive and included salaries and wages, which was the bulk of the budget, also maintenance, firearms, uniforms, professional development and many other allocations. The proposed department budget for this year is \$5,063,246 compared to last year's budget of \$5,168,792.

Chief Wozniak said the department expects to promote two patrolmen to sergeant in May and to hire two recruits in July.

"Within this budget we'll have a surplus of \$15,003.89," Chief Wozniak said.

The chief added, "We are an aggressive and proactive department."

Township Engineer and Director of Public Works Richard Marsden requested \$386,864 for this year. Last year's amount was \$237,284. He urged the committee to allow the engineering department to return to the full staff level it had in 2010. He said he wants the department to have, beside himself, an engineering aid, a part-time engineer, a secretary and a part-time sanitary sewer operator. He also said, "We may have to replace a 1986 truck." He said public works operates on a separate budget.

The committee then continued to ask questions about line items in the budget, which were explained by officials. Mr. Hall said, "We've tracked what could be deducted by the March 25 public meeting."

Residents Can Recycle Electronics on March 29 in CR

CRANFORD – The County of Union will sponsor a recycling event for electronic equipment on Saturday, March 29, so Union County residents can get rid of unwanted computers, televisions and other electronic equipment in an environmentally proper manner.

The special E-cycling event will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the campus of Union County College, located at 1033 Springfield Avenue in Cranford.

All residents of Union County are eligible to participate at no cost. There is a limit of six electronic items per car.

"Computer monitors, old tele-

visions and other electronic devices are the source of a considerable amount of dangerous material, including lead, mercury, cadmium and PCBs – and it is unlawful to dispose of them with the regular garbage," said Freeholder Chairman Christopher Hudak, liaison to the Union County Solid Waste Advisory Board. "Up to 95 percent of most electronic appliances can be recycled. This is a responsible way to keep hazardous heavy metals out of our environment."

Electronic equipment that will be accepted on March 29 includes computer monitors, hard drives, modems, keyboards,

CPU's, mice, printers, scanners, speakers, televisions, tablets and e-readers, VCR's, fax machines, telephones, circuit boards, CD's, DVD's and video cassettes.

All that residents need to do is drive to the site with their unwanted electronic equipment. Workers at the site will unload the vehicles.

Pre-registration is not required for this special Saturday collection.

Refrigerators, washers and dryers, microwaves, and air conditioners will not be accepted, but they are accepted at Union County's Scrap Metal Recycling

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Garwood BOE Discusses Budget For 2014-2015

By BRIAN TRUSDELL

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD – Garwood's preliminary school budget would see general expenditures decrease by about \$8,000, or about one-tenth of a percent, for the next fiscal year, but see a tax levy increase of about \$228,000, according to estimates unveiled at Tuesday's board of education (BOE) meeting.

Michael Donow, the BOE's interim business administrator, who disclosed the numbers devised by the board's finance committee, did not have available an initial tax impact for the average household but said he would have it when a hearing on the full budget is held on Tuesday, April 29. He said the full budget, which is for the fiscal year beginning July 1, will be published the week of April 15.

"The budget is due for submission to the county office on Thursday," Mr. Donow said, referring to the requirement that the executive county superintendent of schools review the document. "We're pushing where we need to be for that. The county will review over the course for a month or so. They have to be done by [Thursday] April 24.

"We will advertise the budget in a user-friendly form in the local paper," he stated.

Saying the budget was "99 percent ready," Mr. Donow revealed few specific numbers.

The "general fund" expenditures for the next fiscal year were estimated to be \$7,866,245, down from the previous year's \$7.874 million. "Special revenue" expenditures were listed at \$153,000 and debt service was estimated at \$510,641 for a total budget of \$8,529,886. Last year's total budget listed on the Garwood BOE website was \$8,506,667.

The tax levy will jump to

\$7,645,688, which includes about an \$85,000 increase in debt service payments from \$303,196 to \$388,710.

Mr. Donow pointed out to the board that the biggest changes in the budget included a reduction of about \$90,000 in payments to Clark's school district for the borough's high-school students. The BOE will enter into the eighth year of a 10-year contract with Clark, which after paying a flat fee for sending the borough's ninth- to 12th-grade students to its neighboring town, will pay a per-pupil rate.

Although there will be a slight increase in enrollment, Mr. Donow said, Garwood will pay under \$11,000 per pupil. That figure is what Garwood spends on its students in grades 1 through 8, and is about \$1,000 less than Clark's per-pupil rate. But the contract with Clark allows Garwood to pay the lower rate certified by state officials in the final three years of the pact.

Among the biggest increases was a 20-percent rise in health-care insurance costs, money for a third bus to send students to Clark, a return of most of the cuts to custodial maintenance and the addition of one-and-a-half staff members, including one teaching position which was removed from last year's budget. Mr. Donow did not give figures.

The announcement comes nearly two weeks after the Garwood Borough Council's finance committee released its preliminary spending plan, which proposed an increase of \$154,433 as part of a \$7.612-million budget. The council's proposed plan would raise taxes by approximately \$44 for a home assessed at \$100,000.

Additionally, the board approved a services agreement with

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