

Paul Lachenauer for *The Westfield Leader*

CHS CLASS OF 2018...The Cranford High School Class of 2018 sit during last Thursday's commencement ceremony at Memorial Field.

Cranford Police Promote, Hire Officers, Give Awards

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — The Police Department promoted one officer, hired one officer, and gave awards to two officers and one mechanic who are retiring from the force.

Officer Timothy O'Brien was promoted to the rank of sergeant, effective June 26. He began as a full-time patrolman with the police department in 1999. He has experience as an undercover narcotics officer with the Union County Narcotics Strike Force and currently is in the water rescue unit of the Cranford Police Department. A Cranford High School graduate, he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Rhode Island.

Troy Kettler was hired as a probationary patrol officer, effective Sunday, July 1. Mr. Kettler is a lifelong resident of Cranford, and was a place kicker for the

varsity football team of Cranford High School. He is a student at Kean University, where he is nearing completion of his bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He has been a member of the Police Auxiliary in Cranford since 2015.

Clerk Patricia Donahue gave the oath of office to both police officers.

Patrolman Brian Lopez, Sergeant Frank Williams and Traffic Mechanic Charles Fette were each given a service award by Chief Ryan Greco as they retire from the force after serving more than 25 years in the department.

During the business portion of the meeting, the township committee passed resolutions that would allow for the replacement of the playground equipment at Adams Park, Buchanan Park and Johnson Park. The overhaul is expected to start in mid- to late-July and be completed by the

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Stephanie Bianco Named to Fill Sarno's Garwood Council Seat

By **MICHAEL BONACCORSO**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — Stephanie Bianco was approved and sworn in as a councilwoman to fill Councilman Joseph Sarno's vacated seat at Tuesday night's borough council meeting.

Mr. Sarno stepped down from the council as he has moved to Scotch Plains. He remains a candidate for Union County Freeholder in November's election. Ms. Bianco was nominated by the Garwood Republican Committee as one of three possible candidates, alongside Salvatore Piarulli and Michael Collings, to fill the council vacancy.

Republican Councilwoman Ileen Cuccaro nominated Mr. Piarulli and Republican Councilman Richard McCormack nominated Mr. Collings for the council seat. Nominations have to be seconded and approved by a council vot-

ing-majority but only Ms. Bianco's nomination was seconded.

Democratic Councilwoman Sara Todisco nominated Ms. Bianco, who was approved by a majority of council votes. Ms. Todisco stated that she has known Ms. Bianco for quite some time; however, Ms. Bianco stood out as a nominee because of a conversation Ms. Todisco had with her recently.

Ms. Todisco said Ms. Bianco explained her commitment to bipartisanship with both political parties working together for borough residents.

In other business, in a 4-to-2 vote, the council introduced an ordinance authorizing a financial agreement with South Avenue II Urban Renewal, LLC, a development that will include 298 units. Both Councilwoman Cuccaro and Councilwoman Bianco voted no on the ordinance's approval. The second reading and adoption are

scheduled for Tuesday, July 10.

Ms. Todisco said the ordinance should not be confused with the stipulations in the previously approved financial agreement governing Russo I development, which is to include one three-story building with 73 units. Both developments will be built on the Casale/Petro property on South Avenue.

Acacia Financial Group Managing Director Jennifer G. Edwards said Acacia financial analysts reviewed the financial agreement. Ms. Edwards said the borough currently collects \$35,000 a year in property taxes from the Russo II site.

She said the agreement allows the borough to begin collecting \$152,000 in taxes once the "pilot program begins." In addition to that, Ms. Edwards said the borough will collect a community development fee totaling \$100,000 per the Russo II agreement.

Ms. Edwards said revenue was not negotiated into the Russo I financial agreement. A 2-percent administrative fee will be collected as borough revenue from Russo II development's total gross revenue.

She said the Russo II financial agreement stipulates that the borough collect 10 to 12.5 percent total revenue. Ms. Edwards said Acacia analyzed Russo Development profit margins on the Russo II development, discovering their internal rate of return (IRR) is 8.34 percent. IRR is used in capital budgeting to determine particular investments' profitability.

Ms. Edwards said an 8.34-percent IRR is below industry averages depicting reasonable profit for the developer without borough or resident exploitation for greater investment returns.

She said the borough is pro-

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CLASS PRESIDENT...Cranford High School Class President Anna Kalafatis addresses her fellow graduates at last Thursday's commencement ceremony held at Memorial Field.