

## Town Council Allocates More Money Toward Tamaques Study

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—Councilman Frank Arena and Councilwoman Jo Ann Neylan voted against a resolution at the November 6 council meeting that would appropriate \$99,500 to retain professional services for the development of a parks and recreation strategic plan, making the total amount spent on considering a plan for two lighted turf fields proposed at Tamaques Park and park improvements close to \$180,000.

The council had a majority vote to approve a contract with Brandstetter

Carroll, Inc., of Lexington, Ky., for a fee not to exceed \$99,500. The funds are to be charged to the recreation department, \$40,000; pool, \$30,000, and park improvement fund, \$29,500.

Earlier this year, Mayor Shelley Brindle, shortly after being elected to office, had decided to halt a Tamaques Park improvement plan to add turf fields for the town's sports leagues in order to find a "better solution," she said in February.

"It's redundant spending," said Councilwoman Neylan, referring to funds already spent on the previous plan.

Councilman Arena said the town had already spent \$80,000 on the plan, and it would have helped thousands of youth players in the spring of 2019 when the fields were anticipated to be open. Mr. Arena said the recreation commission had been on board with the plan.

"I didn't make this decision in a vacuum," Mayor Brindle said. She said she spoke with the recreation commission and many of the sports league representatives.

"I can tell you who was not spoken to, those were residents who use the park for things that are not league related," Mayor Brindle said, referring to the previous plan.

"I spoke to plenty of residents who were worried about impact of parking and traffic on their ability to use the park for other recreational uses," said Mayor Brindle. She said the process should be "thoroughly vetted by all users of the park."

"I'd rather be smart, strategic and thoughtful and take another year to do it, then cram something that is a limited proposition," Mayor Brindle said.

"We are going to let the recreation commission and the consultant...drive the outcome," Mayor Brindle said.

She said the previous plan had all parking placed inside the park, and "would ruin the park" for users who walk, jog and use strollers.

Ms. Neylan responded, "I take exception to the characterization that it was ruining the park for pedestrians and other user groups because that is not true."

"In no way was this plan going to sail through," said Councilwoman Dawn Mackey, because she said she received emails from residents who would have fought against the plan.

Lorraine Derick, a resident of Westfield who has sons involved in

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Courtesy of Robert Petix for The Westfield Leader  
LOCAL VETERAN...Alex Urankar and his wife, Kelley, stand under a gigantic American flag they hung in front of their house in Scotch Plains on Veterans Day. A United States Marine captain, Mr. Urankar served in Afghanistan.

## Westfield School Upgrades Set for Summer 2019

By SARAH McGRAIL  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Summer 2019 will see major improvements to Westfield schools, the board of education announced Tuesday.

"The money for all of these projects is coming from our capital reserves, savings that we have been able to incur by being more fiscally responsible in the district over the past years," Board President Gretchan Ohlig told board members.

District architect George Duthie told the board of education this week that several big projects would be carried out over the summer to avoid disruption to students.

Mr. Duthie said the television studio at Westfield High School (WHS) would be renovated to provide a modern, improved studio within the existing space.

Two of the intermediate schools' oldest bathrooms would be completely renovated. These include the bathroom near the gym at Roosevelt and the bathroom near the auditorium at Edison.

The lobbies of the middle schools would be upgraded, with improve-

ments to ceilings and walls, to provide a "gateway" into the auditoriums that were completely renovated two years ago.

A district-wide generator would be installed to enable schools to keep their networks up and running in the event of a power outage.

"As you know, nowadays many things rely on an IT infrastructure. Your security devices, your network, your telephone system, your communication systems, all of those things," Mr. Duthie stated. "We will also have things like boilers and pumps connected to that."

"So you will have the ability to keep the schools running for a short period of time after the power goes out."

In a major security overhaul, every interior door is to be replaced with doors with security glass and wireless interface to enable lockdowns. It also would be possible to limit access to certain parts of the building.

The project will start with the several hundred doors at the high school and the intermediate schools, which are to be replaced between June and

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Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader  
THE PLACING OF WREATHS...At a service held on Monday, Martin Wallberg American Legion Post No. 3 in Westfield honored veterans by placing wreaths at the base of the town's World War I monument. Pictured is World War II PFC Army veteran, 100-year-old Theodore G. Androwsky, seated, who proudly assisted in the wreath ceremony.

## Freeholders Get Update on 2018 Election, New Machines

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Union County Freeholders heard an update on this year's General Election Thursday at their mobile meeting in Westfield. The board also became the first county government in the nation to pass a resolution calling for a ban on assault weapons.

Nicole DiRado, administrator for the Union County Board of Elections, said 182,831 of the county's 338,107 registered voters turned out to vote in the county's 431 election districts spread out among 169 polling places. She said another 18,954 cast their ballots by mail compared to 60,773 in the 2016 General Election. She said turnout, including vote-by-mail ballots, exceeded 54 percent, compared to 36 percent in the 2014 mid-term election, 38 percent for the gubernatorial election and 68 percent for the 2016 Presidential election.

As of Thursday night, 4,851 traditional ballots and 1,377 vote-by-mail ballots still had to be counted. County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi added that 5,000 provisional ballots were to be counted this past Saturday.

A total of 30,000 mail-in ballots were mailed out with 20,000 returned.

"All in all, our pilot in Westfield went very well," Ms. DiRado said. She said 11,107 voters cast ballots on the county's new voting machines in Westfield. "No one expects a pilot program for any project to go perfectly; otherwise, we would have just rolled out the project completely county-wide to all districts," she stated.

Next week's issue will arrive Friday, November 23. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

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Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader  
SINGING FOR THE CENTENNIAL...Kerry Stubbs leads the crowd in "God Bless America" at the Veterans Day ceremony Monday in Westfield, which this year commemorated the 100th anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended World War I in 1918. The armistice occurred at the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of the year.

## Verizon 130-Ft. Cell Tower at UCC Opposed By Cranford Residents

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD—Union County College (UCC) has signed a land lease with Verizon Wireless to erect a 130-foot monopole on its Cranford campus.

According to the resolution approving the lease passed by the board of trustees of Union County College on June 26, "The safety of students, faculty, staff, visitors and the surrounding community is paramount. Since there is limited to no cellular cover-

age in the Cranford campus buildings and surrounding areas, it is Union County College's responsibility to seek out a comprehensive solution that ensures reliable communication in emergencies, as well as during day-to-day operations to all locations on the Cranford campus..."

"They are claiming to help the surrounding areas," Cranford resident Christine Licata, who lives about 700 feet from the proposed location of the cell tower, told The Westfield Leader. She questioned why UCC would need to provide cell service to the surrounding community. She also said she and residents near the campus have reported cellular service has performed well in the surrounding community.

As of Friday, "No application has been submitted for a cell tower on the UCC campus," according to Cranford Zoning Officer Ron Johnson. A site plan application for a monopole would need to be filed with the township, according to Mr. Johnson.

UCC had first submitted a request for proposals from cellular carriers for a cell tower last year. Then, after UCC student Eric Jacobs, 20, of Millburn, had been arrested and charged with bringing imitation firearms into a classroom on the college's main campus in Cranford on the morn-

ing of February 26, 2018, UCC said in Building and Grounds Committee meeting minutes in March that there was an "urgency" for improved cellular service. "Upon debriefing with the police, they noted they were unable to email a screen shot of the student to officers on the second floor of the Student Development Building because there was no cell reception on the second floor. They asked why we didn't put up a cell tower on the hill in the back of the property," the minutes reported.

Seven months later, "In September 2018, when Governor (Phil) Murphy was on campus, the New Jersey State Police commented on the poor cellular service and resulting communication issues," stated UCC in a statement to The Leader provided from Jaime Segal, director of college relations and spokesperson for the college.

"Improved communications on college campuses was recommended by the New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, Infrastructure Advisory Committee, formed under the Domestic Security Preparedness Act. In today's climate with the proliferation of tragic events in public spaces, the safety of students, faculty, staff, visitors, and the sur-

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Courtesy of Peter Vogt  
WESTFIELD REMEMBERS WWI VETS...In this historic picture, Westfield prepares to welcome home its returning servicemen after the victory in World War I in 1918. The photo is a copy of a photo from the Westfield Historical Society's collection. It shows Arcanum Hall in the center.

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