

Cell Tower Hearing Addresses Public Safety at UCC Campus

By JENNIFER GLACKIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Improving safety communications for students and staff is a top priority for Joseph Hines, the director of public safety for Union County College (UCC)'s Cranford campus. Mr. Hines testified at Monday's board of adjustment meeting that there are "major gaps in cell phone service" throughout the campus, including his office, which makes communication in an emergency situation difficult.

Mr. Hines said he and other security personnel have experienced

dropped calls and text message failures as examples. However, other than his office, he was not able to pinpoint specific locations around campus or dates of these incidents when asked by residents.

A Wireless Communications Needs Assessment was done on May 9 and 17 of 2012 by RCC Consultants Inc., which found "outdoor service to be fair (-85 to -95 dBm)" and "indoor service to be marginal to poor for ground and basement levels of all buildings," according to a UCC PowerPoint presentation offered as evidence of the "major gaps" referred to by Mr. Hines.

Mr. Hines said UCC recently installed an Indoor Digital Antennae System (IDAS), which has made cell service better for Verizon customers within school buildings. Verizon is the sole cell provider currently using the IDAS. Mr. Hines added that security personnel who have other carriers continue to have difficulty receiving messages and calls. When asked by a resident why Verizon was the only carrier allowed to use the IDAS system, Mr. Hines replied that he did not know. No assessment, like the one conducted in 2012, has been done since the installation of the IDAS.

Mr. Hines testified that UCC utilizes a system to electronically communicate with students via text, email or voicemail to alert them to a variety of situations, such as emergency school closings. He said that the system is tested annually, but had no data to present, nor did he know if data is collected on the percentage of people who did or did not receive the messages.

Along with Mr. Hines, Gregory Meese, attorney for the applicants, stated that the cell tower is meant to address the college's requirements under the Clery Act. According to clerycenter.org, "The Clery Act requires colleges and universities that receive federal funding to disseminate a public annual security report (ASR) to employees and students every October 1. This ASR must include statistics of campus crime for the preceding three calendar years, plus details about efforts taken to improve campus safety."

Board member Justin Quinn asked Mr. Hines, "What percentage (of people receiving the messages) is acceptable to meet requirements (of the Clery Act)?" Mr. Hines responded that there is no "hard percentage" to meet the federal guidelines, but that

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Freeholders, Dept. Heads To Get Raises In 2020

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders introduced an ordinance last week to give themselves and department directors raises effective January 1, 2020.

The freeholder chair's salary will go from \$35,034 to \$35,734; the vice-chairman from \$33,922 to \$34,600, and the six remaining freeholders from \$32,810 to \$33,466.

County Manager Ed Oatman's salary will increase from \$173,648 to \$182,330. He has been manager since March 1, 2018 when he replaced Al Faella, who retired. Mr. Oatman was paid \$169,000 when he was hired.

Other salaries are as follows: County Counsel, from \$173,648 to \$179,996; Director of Economic Development/Deputy County Manager, from \$157,396 to \$160,543; Director of Finance/County Treasurer and CCFO, from \$153,551 to \$156,622; Director of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities, from \$150,151 to \$153,154; Director of Administrative Services, from \$139,224 to \$142,272; Director of Public Safety, from \$139,483 to \$142,272; Director of Human Services, from \$136,658 to \$139,391; Director of Parks and Recreation, from \$137,051 to \$139,792; and Director of Corrections, from \$133,000 to \$135,660.

The second reading and adoption vote are scheduled for Thursday, December 19.

In other business, the board approved a \$70,000 settlement in litigation brought by Valerie Donofrio against the county dealing with an employment issue for "failure to accommodate" under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as allegations of a hostile work



Courtesy of Carol Goggi/Mountainside Restoration Committee
ALL DECKED OUT...Mountainside's Levi Cory House Village Shop, located adjacent to the Mountainside Public Library, is all decorated for Christmas. The shop will be open again Friday through Sunday, December 13, 14 and 15, and Friday and Saturday, December 20 and 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All proceeds benefit historic restoration in Mountainside.

Town Council Approves Deer Hunt To Commence in January

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The town approved on Tuesday a deer hunt to take place on town property come the new year. In a majority vote, with Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan and Councilman Doug Stokes voting against, the town will have Union County begin a deer-management program with crossbow hunters to kill white-tailed

deer in Brightwood Park and at the wooded area of the Conservation Center during January and February.

The area around Grandview Avenue that was originally proposed two weeks ago was removed from the list due to "issues" the county had seen with hunting there. The town had approached the county about a deer hunt after residents complained about deer on their property, as well as vehicular accidents involving deer, Councilman David Contract said.

Residents came out to the town council meeting to voice their opposition to the hunt, with most having safety concerns since the town prop-

erty abuts residential property. Resident Jim Block said he finds the bow hunt "cruel" to the deer.

Tina Jacobs, who lives adjacent to the Conservation Center, said, "You are putting people at risk and in harm's way." She said that deer would flee onto her property after being shot with the arrow.

Julia Collins, a resident of Clark who lives near the Grandview Avenue area, said that bow hunters are not "held accountable" for the razors of the arrows should they fall to the ground, nor the cleanup of the blood left from the slain animal.

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Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader
THREESAY FAREWELL...Councilman Doug Stokes, left, Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan and Councilman Frank Arena are wrapping up their tenures on Westfield's governing body this year. During Tuesday's town council meeting, they were thanked for their service by their colleagues and residents in attendance.

DWC Discusses Town's 300th Anniversary, Sign Awards

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) will begin focusing efforts and resources on the celebration of Westfield's 300th anniversary next year, stated DWC Chairwoman Patricia Hanigan at Monday's meeting. Additionally that evening, the DWC board of directors approved three business sign grants.

The "Westfield's 300th" anniversary celebration will include year-long special events, a speaker series, plus a special celebration on Tuesday, June 20, 2020, stated Ms. Hanigan.

The DWC approved a \$500 sign grant for Lavash Mediterranean Grill at 114 Quimby Street. Lavash, which opened November 12, is running a promotion in which 100 free meals were given to the restaurant's first customers, stated Ms. Hanigan. Lavash is owned by Spice Bazaar's owners. Spice Bazaar relocated to 39 Elm Street earlier this year.

A second \$500 sign grant was approved for ViaNutrition, located at 138 Elmer Street. ViaNutrition offers the "best monthly" health tips, products and recipes, stated Ms. Hanigan, describing the business' mission. A \$100 sign grant also was awarded to Elements Interior Design Studio at 138 Elmer Street.

Each sign is reviewed by a DWC committee, stated board member Peggy Lockwood. The grants are given on a refund basis, explained Town Administrator Jim Gildea, who serves as a DWC board member. He said the "reimbursement basis" allows the DWC to review each sign, assuring the sign fits a "desired downtown aesthetic" before the money is awarded.

Artist Ricardo Roig will continue working on a mural to be displayed under the South Avenue bridge, stated Ms. Hanigan. The mural will depict Westfield history while maintaining a "progressive execution" in the way it

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A WESTFIELD TRADITION...The Westfield Area Y Men's Club Annual Christmas Tree Sale, a community tradition since 1947, is underway at the Elm Street Athletic Field across from Stop & Shop. All proceeds benefit local charities and organizations. See article on Page 7.

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Sports -- Depth in Lineup Could Benefit Cougar Matmen; Blue Devil Lady Cagers Return Bulk of Team; Cougar Cagers Look to Turn Close Losses to Wins; Raiders Return Experienced Group of Wrestlers; Raiders Battled Consistency; Finish 12-8-3 in Boys Soccer.



OPEN HOUSE...Westfield Historical Society members and their guests enjoy refreshments and conversation during the Society's Member Open House at the Reeve History and Cultural Resource Center last Saturday.

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