



Courtesy of Christine Guerriero

NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS...Ralph Trentacosta, Denise Ridente and Maureen Scepkowski, pictured from left to right, were sworn into office last Thursday, commencing their tenures as Garwood Board of Education members at the board's reorganization meeting.

New Members Sworn In On Garwood School Board

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

GARWOOD – Denise Ridente, Ralph Trentacosta and Maureen Scepkowski were sworn into office at last Thursday's board of education reorganization meeting, commencing three-year terms as board of education members.

Tina Simitz will serve as the board's vice-president this year, having been nominated and approved by her fellow board of education members. After three rounds of voting, the board remained deadlocked on whether Christine Guerriero or Susan Groning would serve as 2019 board president.

Board attorney Hope R. Blackburn said the Union County executive superintendent of schools, Daryl Palmieri, will review both candidates and choose a board president. Ms. Guerriero served as the 2018 board president. A deadlock vote also occurred for the school board presidency at last year's reorganization meeting between Ms. Groning and Ms. Guerriero.

At last week's meeting, the board nominated and approved

board of education representatives and liaisons. Board member Linda Koenig was approved as the Union County Educational Services Commission Board (UCESCB) liaison. Ms. Guerriero and Ms. Scepkowski will serve as (UCESCB) alternate liaisons.

The board approved Ms. Simitz as the 2019 Clark Board of Education liaison. Garwood residents attend Arthur L. Johnson High School. New Jersey School Boards Association delegates include Ms. Koenig and board member Salvatore Piarulli (alternate). The Union County School Boards Association delegates include Ms. Groning and Ms. Scepkowski.

In addition, the board approved individual subcommittee members. Ms. Ridente, Ms. Guerriero, Ms. Simitz and Ms. Scepkowski will serve on the Education, Public Policy, and Public Relations Subcommittee.

Albert DelConte, Ms. Groning, Mr. Piarulli and Mr. Trentacosta will serve on the Finance/Building and Grounds Subcommittee.

Board members whose terms will expire in 2019 are Ms. Groning, Mr. Piarulli and Ms. Simitz.

CF BOE Sworn In

delegate.

Board member Nicole Sherrin Kessler was appointed as the delegate to the Union County Educational Services Commission and Mr. McCarthy was selected as the alternate delegate.

In other board business, the resignation of art teacher Mary Purcell after 26.5 years of service with the district was approved by the board, which also approved Elizabeth Sheehan and Erica Morreale as production managers for the spring musical at Cranford High School.

The board declared January 2019 School Board Recognition Month.

Superintendent of Schools Scott Rubin, Ed.D., commented, "You would never know that this (school board member) is a volunteer position based on the efforts of the board before you," and reiterated that the Cranford BOE was "the hardest-working board."

Discussion continues in regards to the Reimagining Plan in the district. Alternate plans to make full-day kindergarten possible were discussed at the board's meeting on December 17.

The school district is set to hold additional question-and-answer meetings for residents, scheduled for this evening, Thursday, January 10, at Calvary Nursery School; Tuesday, January 22, at Livingston Avenue School; Tuesday, February 5, at Orange Avenue School; Thursday, February 7, at Hillside Avenue School, and Tuesday, February 19, at Brookside Place School.

Jaclyn Winnicki Earns Pharmacy Degree

CRAFORD — Jaclyn Winnicki, of Cranford, a student at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Florham Campus, located in Madison, has graduated with a DPY in Pharmacy as of May 2018.

Cranford Reports Increase In Narcan Deployments

CRAFORD — The Cranford Police Department is reporting an increase in Nasal Naloxone, or "Narcan" deployments for opioid-based overdoses, within the Township of Cranford over the past year.

First Responders deployed Narcan a total of 30 times on 17 victims during 2018. Cranford Police Officers utilized the opioid blocking medication 27 times while the Cranford Fire/EMS administered Narcan on three incidents. Not all of those deployments reversed the overdoses and Cranford experienced three opioid overdose deaths in 2018.

"Any loss of life in the Township of Cranford is tragic, and especially the loss of life due to the national opioid crisis we are exposed to," said Chief Ryan Greco. "Education, outreach, prevention, and awareness are the only means to effectively reduce the frequency of these incidents. We as a community need to help break down the social stigma associated with opioid addiction," he said. In 2017, Chief Greco said there were 15 Narcan deployments. "To reach a figure nearly double that one year later says two things: our officers are ready, willing, and able to handle overdoses, but the public crisis is outpacing recovery."

Chief Greco stated that his officers have modified their approach to handling substance use disorder from reactive to a combination of reactive and proactive.

"We have many partners in the community who handle substance use disorders, which our organization can connect with members of the community with during times of crisis," he said. He stated that his goal is

to continue to break down the barriers that sometimes exist between those who need help with substance abuse and law enforcement. "The majority of our officers are trained in crisis-intervention techniques and are qualified to be the sympathetic facilitator of help for those who are in need."

The police department has offered nasal naloxone as a tool for its officers to use during overdose responses since July 1, 2014. Additionally, the department has placed a permanent "drug take back" mailbox in the front lobby of its headquarters that residents may use to safely discard prescription pills. According to Chief Greco, the drug mailbox results in pounds of unused prescription pills being safely discarded on a monthly basis. The drug takeback mailbox program does not accept sharps or liquids.

Chief Greco announced that residents can attend a free training at the Cranford Community Center for nasal naloxone on Thursday, January 17 at 6 p.m. The program is called, "Union County Fights Back Against the Opioid Crisis" and offers free training for lay people to attend. "The goal of this training is much like CPR training for the public – the more people trained, the more chances we all collectively have in saving a life," Chief Greco said. The event is sponsored by the Union County Opioid Task Force and Prevention Links. The first 25 residents who attend this training will also receive a free Narcan kit.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office official Twitter page for county-wide statistics on Naloxone deployments is <https://twitter.com/UCPONJ>.