



City approves bond to fund construction of fire station

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House of the week

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167th YEAR NO. 4 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021 \$1.00

Health officials urging patience on vaccine

State system causes confusion; no appointment available until second email

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

Be patient and wait for that second email.

That is the advice from Cape May County officials for residents anxiously awaiting their COVID-19 vaccines. Officials say they have the infrastructure in place to deliver many more vaccines but they don't have the supply, which is going to remain limited at least well into February.

The advice about the email is

to clear up the confusion caused by the state's vaccine registration process. The New Jersey Department of Health sends out emails letting people know they are eligible to receive the vaccine, but people who get that notification must wait for a second email that tells them they are now eligible to register for a time and place to actually get the vaccine.

That second email may not be coming for weeks.

On Friday, the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce hosted a

video conference to explain what the county is doing to get its citizens vaccinated against the coronavirus. The conference featured county Health Officer Kevin Thomas, Acting County Administrator Kevin Lare, county Commissioners Leonard Desiderio and Will Morey, and COVID-19 liaison Michael Donohue.

Their main message was asking citizens to be patient because of the limited number of vaccines the county is receiving.

Lare said the county has set am-

bitious goals to get as many people vaccinated by Memorial Day as possible, but that is codependent on the state giving the county the vaccines it needs and on the federal government getting those vaccines to the state.

Desiderio said the county has overcome "great obstacles" during the pandemic and "Giving out of vaccine is another obstacle, but it is something we are going to do."

Morey said he would add his "sense of enthusiasm in this sea of doubt, that the light at the end of the

tunnel isn't a train."

The county is prepared to "issue a significant number of vaccines," Morey said, "but having them is a bit of an obstacle at this point."

Donohue said the county doesn't have all the answers because the state isn't providing the information to the county, and the federal government isn't providing that information to the states.

"Getting the county open for the summer of 2020 is a big task," Dono-

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Shifting sand in Cape May Point

A contractor under the guidance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deposits sand on St. Pete's Beach in Cape May Point on Jan. 22 as part of a back-passing operation that involved removing sand from the Nature Conservancy property.

Conrad rebukes claims of slow response times

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Councilman Tom Conrad, who serves as captain with the Lower Township Rescue Squad, said much of the criticism of response times to emergency calls in Diamond Beach is unfounded.

James Sandford, who has attended multiple Township Council meetings in the past six months, has stated an 80-year-old Diamond Beach resident died Aug. 7 while waiting for Lower Township Rescue Squad to respond to an emergency call. Sandford said a call for medical as-

sistance was made at 9 a.m. and Lower Township Rescue Squad arrived at 9:16 a.m. He has contended Wildwood Crest Rescue can respond within 3 to 4 minutes to emergency calls in Diamond Beach and the township should sign an agreement with Wildwood Crest to provide rescue services.

At issue is the necessity of crossing a bridge from the mainland to reach Diamond Beach. Sanford said some Diamond Beach residents have reported response times of 20 to 24 minutes from Lower Township Rescue Squad.

During a Township Council meeting

Jan. 20, Conrad said there is no mandate for an 8-minute response time. He said a study from the 1970s indicated response time should be under 8 minutes at least 90 percent of the time.

Conrad said the study was conducted before the advent of automated external defibrillators (AED) and their widespread availability.

He added that the U.S. Fire Administration, part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, published an emergency vehicle safety initiative in 2014 that stated

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Councilman hospitalized with COVID

Bezaire joins City Council from Cape Regional bed

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Councilman Chris Bezaire participated in a City Council meeting Jan. 19 from a bed at Cape Regional Medical Center, where he was being treated for COVID-19.

Councilman Shaine Meier said the city's new administration has opened City Hall more to the public. He asked council and City Manager Mike Voll to talk to city employees to ensure they feel safe.

"It's one thing to get a city employee sick and it's another thing that person gets a family member sick," Meier said. "It's huge negligence."

"If they don't feel safe, they should be heard," he continued.

Meier said he works in a supermarket where hundreds of customers and employees walk by him each day and some employees have tested positive for the coronavirus. He said those with COVID still have to shop

for food. "That's why I feel uncomfortable a lot of times going to City Hall because I feel like I could be at risk to the city employees I hold dear to my heart," Meier said.

City employees should be asked about COVID-related actions taken by the city administration because they have a right to feel safe. He said if an employee's rights were violated, they should call the Governor's Office.

Meier said if public meetings are held or City Hall was opened more than its present state, people would be put at risk for contracting COVID.

Voll said the public has the right to enter City Hall to discuss an issue or pay a bill but must wear a mask.

Taxes can be paid by mail and questions can be asked by telephone, Meier said.

Bezaire reported he was feeling better.

Mayor Zack Mullock said he appreciated Bezaire's "can-do attitude" he showed by attending a council meeting from his hospital bed.



BEZAIRE

Cape May elementary temporarily returns to virtual instruction

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's elementary school unexpectedly returned to virtual instruction last week after three students tested positive for the coronavirus.

During a virtual Board of Education meeting Jan. 22, Principal Zack Palombo said the first week after winter break was held as virtual instruction and stu-

dents returned in person the following week. The school returned to a virtual schedule last week due not just to the number of contacts but also due to positive student cases, he said.

As on Jan. 22, the school had three students who tested positive for COVID-19 with 24 students and nine staff members quarantined.

Most students and staff were expected back in the building Monday.

"If you're sick or someone in your household is sick, stay home. There is no reason for you to come in. We can switch everything to virtual," Palombo said.

The school was starting math testing to identify student growth but was interrupted last week, he said.

"We have been able to pick it up virtually, so hopefully we'll get some results," Palombo said.

Superintendent Robert

Garguilo said originally if a student showed two signs of COVID, they should stay home from school. New guidelines from the county Department of Health tell students to stay home if they have one symptom of COVID: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or sense of smell, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

With any one of those symptoms, students or staff must immediately self-quarantine seven to 10 days if able to produce a negative COVID test or 14 days if not tested. According to the health department, those who have had one or two of the COVID vaccinations who come into contact with someone who tests positive must still self-quarantine because it is unknown whether they

can still transmit COVID, Garguilo said.

The board voted to table a request from Erik Simonsen, Lower Cape May Regional High School's athletic director, for the high school's 30-member swim team to use the elementary school's indoor swimming pool five days per week. Garguilo said the team would not use the

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Free Lung Cancer Screening • Saturday, February 27

Shore Medical Center, a proud member of the Penn Cancer Network, Advanced Shore Imaging Associates, and ScreenNJ are hosting a **LUNG CANCER SCREENING EVENT • Saturday, February 27 • 9 am - 12 noon • Shore Cancer Center**

Consultations provided by Dr. Charles Roche of Shore Physicians Group.

IF YOU ARE: 55 to 80 years of age; and a current smoker or have quit smoking in the past 15 year a Low Dose CT screening may be right for you.

Call for more information and/or schedule an appointment at 609-653-3484.

Lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer deaths. Low Dose CT screenings can detect lung cancer early when it is the most treatable. Early detection saves lives. Call today.

