



Lower Cape May Regional High School sports

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House of the week

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166th YEAR NO. 42 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020 \$1.00

CFO: Cape May great financially despite COVID

Young says city's lost revenue made up via lower expenses

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the city is in great financial shape, according to Chief Financial Officer Neil Young.

During a virtual City Council meeting Oct. 6, he said the city has four funds: the current fund, water/sewer utility, tourism utility and beach utility. The current fund has seen a large increase from 2014 to 2019.

"The city's finances are in a great position in the current fund," Young said.

Most of the increases to the current fund occurred from 2017 to 2019, with small increases in 2014 and 2015, a slight reduction in 2016, and large increases thereafter.

Young said the water/sewer utility is a different story, with funds decreasing. Rates were increased eight to 10 years ago and not dealt with again until 2018, he said.

The 2018 water/sewer rate increase was effective, increasing the utility fund balance from \$766,000 to \$898,000, Young said. The COVID-19 pandemic lessened water consumption in Cape May and revenues.

"We will need a rate increase in the water/sewer

utility to get us back up to some of the 2014 levels that fund balance had," he said.

Young said the superintendent of water recommended a 2 percent to 3 percent rate increase each year for a period of time.

The tourism utility was affected by all events being canceled, he said. The utility had experienced growth of 294 percent over six years, tripling the fund balance, Young said.

He said the beach utility nearly tripled its fund balance from 2014 to 2019.

The city's debt from 2014 to 2019 has been steady with a slight downward trend from \$45 million in 2014 to \$44 million in 2019, Young said.

"A great job to the city for not spending over our means and trying to keep our debt percentage as low as we can," he said.

Young said the city would have seen growth in all of its funds if not for the pandemic. He said the city's tax rate from 2015 to 2020 has increased only 2.4 cents. The increases were tied to a lawsuit and the purchase of two recycling trucks, Young said.

As of Aug. 31, current fund revenues were \$878,000 less

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Benita Battaglia/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Return of the king

Migrating monarch butterflies were gathered in groups last week in Cape May Point as they prepare to cross Delaware Bay during their 3,000-mile journey to their winter grounds in Mexico.

Van Drew, Kennedy go head to head

Cover wide range of topics in congressional debate

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew and his Democratic opponent for Congress, Amy Kennedy, spent an hour last week answering questions in a cordial debate at the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

There were a few notable exchanges, but the way the debate was structured did not provide for much back-and-forth directly between Van Drew, a longtime Democrat who switched to the Republican Party late last year, and Kennedy, a former Northfield school teacher and mental health advocate who lives in Brigantine.

Rather than having one candidate answer a question and then providing time for a rebuttal, most of the time was spent asking alternating questions to Kennedy and Van Drew or posing the same question to each of them. Often only one was asked to respond to a specific issue.

Here are how the candidates re-

sponded to various issues:

Trump irresponsible?

Asked if President Donald Trump was irresponsible for having a fundraising event at his Bedminster golf club after being exposed to a close aide who tested positive for COVID-19, Van Drew said he wasn't sure exactly what the president knew, but if someone has been exposed, they have a responsibility to let a doctor or health professional know. It requires being careful, he said.

Response to pandemic

Asked about the government's response to the pandemic, Kennedy said she would love to say everything is moving forward, "but we're six months in and still struggling." She cited mixed messaging from the administration on how dangerous the virus is and whether to wear masks. She wants to see the government "have a real plan" on fighting the virus and on how to distribute a

vaccine, when it comes, equitably.

Van Drew placed the blame on China, where the virus originated, and said it wasn't clear whether the virus began in a meat market in Wuhan or in a laboratory. He credited the president for imposing travel restrictions from China even though he was called racist and xenophobic for doing so. "Thank God he did," Van Drew said, adding the nation will have a vaccine soon. "We still have to be careful," he said, but there is "light at the end of the tunnel."

Biden's lockdown

Asked if she supported Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden's call for a national lockdown to fight the pandemic, Kennedy said she was hoping that wouldn't be needed and suggested a better approach would be a precise lockdown in places where the virus was raging. She didn't think Biden would call for a national lockdown "unless it were absolutely necessary" and

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Police Chief Marino to retire in February

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Police Chief Tony Marino, 52, will retire Feb. 1 following 30 years of service to the Cape May Police Department.

"It just seems like a natural time to go," he said. "I think for the department, it's a time to allow somebody else to take the reins and keep moving the department forward and follow the direction."



MARINO

For a number of years, Marino has been working toward the goal of City Council approving construction of a new public safety building to house the police and fire departments. He said a new building for the police department did not seem to be a possibility until recently.

The fate of the building is in the hands of voters in a referendum question on the Nov. 3 ballot.

Marino said he would like to see the building approved by voters as part of his legacy as well as leaving behind a police department that is customer-service oriented and cares about

the community.

The police department's section of City Hall continues to be plagued with water leaks that the city has attempted to repair for years. Marino compared the fix to putting a Band-Aid on something that needs stitches.

"I'm hoping the voters will look at all the information and make a decision that they feel is best for not only the taxpayers, but for us, and the fire

department," he said. "We both need new facilities and I just think that the combined building is the best option, in my opinion, and I think in the long run it will be the best option for the taxpayers than attempting to build two different sites."

One of the biggest challenges of Marino's years in law enforcement has been the COVID-19 pandemic. He said it was much different to police an illness and the behavior of people they typically wouldn't attempt to restrict.

Marino said he felt fortunate to work with City

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City extends outdoor dining through December

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted to extend outdoor dining in parking lots, closed streets and sidewalks until Dec. 31 to compensate for limited indoor capacity of restaurants due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a 3-2 vote, council approved extended allowing open public consumption of alcoholic beverages through the end of the year.

At an Oct. 6 virtual City Council meeting, Mayor Chuck Lear said the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cape May requested the extensions in a letter to council.

City Manager Jerry Inderwies said he discussed the extensions with Police Chief Tony Marino

who stated there were no incidents this summer associated with open consumption.

"If we made it through July and August without major problems, we did pretty well," Inderwies said.

Council unanimously to extend outdoor dining but the vote on open consumption of alcohol split 3-2 with Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan and Councilman Zack Mullock voting against the resolution.

Mullock said his family owned a bar and restaurant and he knew what was best for those establishments but he opposed allowing people to walk around town with alcoholic beverages.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks said she concurred with the chamber of commerce. She said the city

allowing outdoor dining and public consumption gave bars and restaurants a chance to survive during a time of crisis.

Lear said the request from the chamber was in keeping with Gov. Murphy's orders and the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Division.

At least one establishment, due to its size, has not reopened the interior to food or beverage service because there is not enough room to operate at 25 percent capacity, Lear said.

He said zones were delineated where open public consumption of alcohol can take place. Mullock insisted no zones existed. Lear said zones were established outside bars and restaurants but not the entire city.

Free Mammograms Saturday, October 24



INDIVIDUAL SCREENINGS IN A COVID-SAFE ENVIRONMENT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 9AM- 2PM | SHORE IMAGING ASSOCIATES | 2605 Shore Road, Northfield, NJ

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Screening mammograms are proven to detect cancer early when it is most treatable. Shore Medical Center, a member of the Penn Medicine Cancer Network, and Advanced Shore Imaging Associates are working together to offer free screening mammograms.

Dr. Vijay Sandilya, Medical Director of Shore Cancer Center, is offering a clinical breast exam and will provide a medical script for those who want to participate. Dr. Alicia Daniels, radiologist with Advanced Shore Imaging Associates, will be reading the reports from the mammograms.

Call 609-653-3484 for your appointment. Light refreshments will be served.

