



Girls track team off to good start right from the gun

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House of the week

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169th YEAR NO. 16 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023 \$1.00

City will replace 33 vehicles with lease agreement

Council expects to save \$500,000 in 10 years, update its aging fleet

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's fleet of vehicles should look much newer by the end of the year.

City Council approved an agreement with Enterprise Fleet Management to lease 33 vehicles. The city has been known to reassign old police cars to limited use in other departments.

Enterprise offered a proposal to council, claiming it could save the city more than \$500,000 during the next 10 years by leasing its vehicles and returning them for resale every five years.

The city participates in the National Joint Power Alliance known as Sourcewell, a public agency that offers cooperative purchase of vehicles and other items.

The resolution notes Sourcewell has entered into a national cooperative purchasing agreement for fleet management services with Enterprise Fleet Management and a cooperative purchasing agreement would result in cost savings to the city.

The agreement stipulates the city will lease 33

vehicles for a term of up to 60 months at a total annual cost of \$393,240 with an estimated first year budget of \$395,740 inclusive of a one-time down payment with the city having an option to purchase the vehicles at the end of the lease for an estimated \$1 per vehicle through Enterprise's auction program.

At an April 4 council meeting, Mayor Zack Mullock thanked Police Chief Dekon Fashaw, Councilman Mike Yeager and Public Works Superintendent Eric Prusinski for their work on the fleet management contract.

Mullock said the contract promises significant savings to the city and safer vehicles.

Yeager said City Manager Mike Voll, Deputy City Manager Lou Belasco and Chief Financial Officer Kevin Hanie were also involved in vetting the fleet management contract.

At a March 21 meeting, Seth Frankel, a fleet management account executive of Enterprise Leasing, said the city has a fleet of 77 vehicles with an average age of 8.7 years old.

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Patty Behrens/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Under her wing

A resident swan of Cape May Point's Lake Lily takes care of her spring-hatched cygnets.

CRC: Cannabis biz financed largely by rich white investors

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON — The state Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC) approved 62 conditional licenses, three conditional to annual licenses and six annual license applications at its April 12 meeting.

Conditional licenses allow preparation for opening a cannabis business but not operation, which requires an annual li-

cence. Two businesses in the lower portion of Cape May County hold licenses. Shorehouse Canna, of West Cape May, received an annual license in March. Sea and Leaf, of North Cape May, received a conditional license last September.

The conditional licenses issued April 12 included 12 cultivators, 11 manufacturers and 39 retailers. Annual licenses included one cultivator, four retail-

ers and one testing lab.

CRC Executive Director Jeff Brown said among the conditional licenses, 11 were social equity businesses, 35 diverselyowned businesses and eight impact zone businesses.

CRC Commissioner Krista Nash said when "following the money, most of the minority-owned businesses are funded by very wealthy, white individuals."

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Cape May invests in pooled fund

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved amending the city's cash management plan to allow investing city funds in the New Jersey Asset and Rebate Management plan (NJ/ARM) in order to earn higher interest.

Two council members had reservations as to whether investments in NJ/ARM would be insured but after discussion, council approved the move April 4 in a unanimous vote.

During public com-

ment, former councilwoman Stacy Sheehan asked what amount the city's chief financial officer (CFO) could invest without informing council.

Councilwoman Maureen McDade said the CFO could invest \$1 million in city funds without informing council.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the \$1 million threshold was the recommendation from city auditor Leon Costello.

McDade said council had to trust the city's CFO and his expertise.

Sheehan said the city's CFO, Kevin Hanie, was not certified in city management. Sheehan said a city-issued paycheck requires two signatures but the transfer of city funds requires only one signature.

"The CFO is well aware of the statutory obligations that pertain to his job," Gillin-Schwartz said. "The cash management plan is in addition to that and provides various instructions for what can and can't be done."

He said wherever

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Dog surrender rate nearly doubles at county animal shelter

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people adopted pets from shelters. Now many are returning to the office and inflation has taken its toll on household budgets.

As a result, animal shelters nationwide are seeing an influx of animals. Cape May County's Animal Shelter is no exception.

Director Judith Davies-Dunhour said there was a significant decrease in the number of animals being surrendered during the height of the pandemic but

the first quarter of 2023 has seen a significant increase.

The shelter cares for stray animals from animal control and the public, as well as surrenders from owners, Davies-Dunhour said. In 2019, before COVID struck, 21 dogs were surrendered at the shelter in the first quarter of the year, she said.

Davies-Dunhour said 21 dogs were surrendered during the first quarter of 2020 before shutdowns began due to COVID.

Another 20 dogs were surrendered in the first quarter of 2021, 17 in the first quarter of 2022. That jumped to 32 dogs in the first quarter of this year.

"In this first quarter, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of surrendered dogs," Davies-Dunhour said.

As of last week, the shelter had about 46 dogs and 280 cats in residence. The shelter has a 60 percent to 65 percent reclaim rate for dogs, which is helped by microchips in the animals, and about 5 percent reclaim rate for cats, she said.

Davies-Dunhour said many dogs that are surrendered have a behavior issue or the owners claim they do not have enough time to spend with their pet due to their work schedule. Other reasons dogs are surrendered

include the owners having financial problems or issues with a landlord, Davies-Dunhour said.

"By the end of 2020, we'd had significantly less dogs surrendered, and I think that is because people were home, so any behavior problems they had they were dealing with," she said. "They didn't have the guilt of leaving a pet because everybody was home."

Davies-Dunhour said overall in 2020, 69 dogs were surrendered when normally about 100 dogs would be surrendered during the year. The inventory of cats at the shelter has remained consistent during the past three

years, she said.

Cats are surrendered due to the owners moving or their inability to find a rental property that will allow cats, allergies, or the birth of a baby, Davies-Dunhour said.

"We have to place eight or nine cats for every one dog," she said noting the shelter consistently houses fewer dogs.

A local myth involves summer residents buying a cat at the beginning of the tourist season and surrendering or abandoning the animals at the end of summer. Davies-Dunhour said that

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