

# Firehouse takes on water amid Tropical Storm Fay

## City clerk approves petition to put public safety building financing on ballot

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Heavy rain from Tropical Storm Fay caused water to pour inside the engine bays of the city's firehouse July 10.

Fire Chief Alex Coulter said water was entering the engine bays through a ventilation cupola and through an exhaust fan installed to provide air to the building. Water was coming in from

the roof and along pipes in the ambulance bay, he added.

"We had so much water coming in here, we were tripping breakers on the trucks," he said.

Coulter said water was also leaking along a wall in the volunteers room, by his office next to an exhaust system vent and in the basement.

"I have water inside the wall of my office," he said.

"It never ends."

On July 8, City Clerk Erin Burke certified a petition from a citizen's group to get an initiative on the Nov. 3 general election ballot for voters to approve or reject a bond to construct a new public safety building. The ballot question would allow residents to vote on city ordinance 392-2020, authorizing the issuance of \$14.2 million in bonds or notes.

Burke said the petition was

submitted June 12 and she completed her examination June 30. She said the petition was legally correct and signed by 155 qualified voters, more than the required 88 signatures.

The petition was submitted to City Council, which has 20 days to pass an ordinance in substantially the same form. Council plans to vote on ordinance 392-2020 at its meeting July 21 after holding a public hearing.

Burke said if council fails to pass the ordinance or a substantially similar ordinance, she will submit the ordinance to voters in the Nov. 3 election unless at least four of the five members of the committee of petitioners sign a paper requesting the petition be withdrawn submitted within 10 days of adverse action of council.

City solicitor Frank Corrado said the certification by the city clerk and submission

to council constitutes the introduction and first reading of the bond ordinance.

On May 19, council members Zack Mullock and Stacy Sheehan voted against the ordinance to finance construction of a public safety building. Mayor Chuck Lear, Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks and Councilman Shaine Meier voted in favor of the bond, which required the vote of four council members to pass.

## Report: Solid plan, state help needed to open schools

Continued from Page A1

Association (NJEA), said it can cost as much as \$4,000 to retrofit a bus to reach health and safety guidelines for distancing students.

"That's a major problem that really I see yet to be addressed in a way that's going to give any comfort to how that will come off successfully for opening schools in September," he

said. Federal and state agencies and Congress need to provide adequate funds to assist schools in meeting the demands for PPE, cleaning supplies, enhancements to ventilation and related steps that will help ensure a healthful school year, states the report.

In developing these plans, public health agencies must be advised by state education and labor agencies, as well as a task force of stakeholders at the state level: parents, school boards, administrators, nurses, facility directors and personnel, teachers, support staff, transportation, special education professionals, according to the report.

The report recommends establishing a local infection prevention and health and safety committee and communicate the plan to all personnel and other stakeholders.

Schools need to:

- Educate personnel, parents and community on elements
- Train staff on any new elements of work
- Stock supplies for

cleaning and maintenance, replacement filters for water and air handling as needed

— Use appropriate PPE for staff and loose face coverings or masks for children and teachers as required in plan

The report suggests there may be an increased need for substitute employees in all positions to ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to meet cleanliness, physical distancing, student learning, and health and safety needs. Schools should consider employing more nurses, health care aides and full-time substitute employees.

On a question of the impact of teachers resigning their positions and whether there would be enough educators to provide an education for all the children, Beatty said he was hearing more from educators and parents asking whether children would be sent back to school and educators return to their positions. He said the state faces a shortage of teachers under normal circumstances and that would be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Claire Barnett, executive director of the New York-based Healthy Schools Network, said the report makes the point the teaching staff is aging. She said as people age they become more vulnerable to the coronavirus.

"You think of a fourth-grade class with a 55-year-old teacher, perhaps," she said. "Fourth-graders are not known for being neat — messy hands, wheezing, coughing, spitting on their desks, anything goes."

She said whether or not the droplets or the aerosolized particles travel up to

the teacher's desk, there's going to be a lot of virus in the air as well as on the desks.

The report advises before a school reopens it should determine how many seats, classrooms, facilities and buses are available to maintain recommended social distancing.

Schools should consider conducting an on-site walk-through of the facility using Walk-through Inspection Checklist from EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools kit.

The report recommends: — If the state plan recommends masks or face coverings in Phases 1, 2 or 3 for all staff and all children, the state should provide masks in sufficient quantity

— Face coverings or masks must be available to staff and students who do not have them

— Complaints about masks/face coverings include difficult breathing and irritation: refer to health provider or consider different masks/face coverings

— Make a clear distinction for students, staff and the community between loose face coverings for source control and PPE such as face-fitting respirators, face shields, gloves, gowns, etc.

— PPE for nursing suite and/or custodial workers for cleaning: consider potential for aerosolized particles, ensure adequate outside venting

— PPE and sneeze guards for administration, front desk/reception

— All occupants and visitors sanitize/wash hands prior to gaining entry to building and on exit

— Hand-washing breaks/

recesses, before and after breakfast and lunch, after school snacks

— Disconnect and tape off hand dryers in lavatories

Also recommended is staggering arrival and drop-off times by group, limiting cohort movement and mixing between groups, and socially distancing class seats with alternating seating, back-to-back seating or cubicle-style seating.

School schedules can be accomplished in split sessions, alternating schedules such as grades one and two on Monday and grades three and four on Tuesday.

Rotating teachers to classrooms is suggested to minimize exposure in hallways and reducing mixing of students. The report advises staggering arrivals and departures for the school day, avoiding communal space and staggering breakfast and lunch times.

Laurie Combe, president of the National Association of School Nurses, said federal guidance and in some cases state guidance fail to recognize the need for school nurses to have access to a full range of personal protective equipment, specifically N95 masks. She said N95 masks are difficult to obtain and exam gloves are also in short supply.

McFadden said parents have to make the decision of whether the school is a safe environment.

"In this environment when you're in a pandemic, just to state the obvious, there is no such thing as a no-risk environment," she said. "All we can do is put good control measures in place to ensure that we lower the risk."

## Hours extended

Continued from Page A1

being changed with the bandstand now located near the rear of the building with bigger bands. He said the problem has been addressed and no further noise calls have been received.

Under municipal violations, police had 67 calls for service, 25 of which were beach curfew violations and 14 bicycle violations, an issue with juveniles for helmet violations and ob-

structing traffic violations. "We've only had five open container violations this year," Marino said.

In 2019, police had 27 calls of which six were beach curfew violations, 10 open alcohol violations with two resulting in a resisting arrest charge. Of the 10 alcohol violations, all but one occurred after midnight, he said.

Marino said those were persons inside an establishment who went outside with an open container of

alcohol. He said the biggest issue has been the inconsistency between the closing time of the bars and the open alcohol times, which has caused confusion with police personnel with the ability to consistently enforce the rules.

The city has not had any noise complaints from the Washington Street Mall or beachfront related to outdoor consumption or bars being open until midnight, Marino said.

"We've not seen much activity after midnight in town at all on any given evening," he said.

Marino said the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down the issues the police department would normally encounter between midnight and 3 or 4 a.m. Marino said he had no issue with extending the hours for open containers of alcohol from 10 p.m. to midnight.

Mullock said Cape May already had the loosest alcohol laws in the state.

"I just find this to be so absurd to extend these hours during this crisis," he said.

"To sell out the community and make this less safe for people, just for a handful of businesses, I just find it outrageous," Mullock continued.

He said he saw persons in front of bars not wearing masks.

Hendricks said she did not think changing the hours for open consumption would send the city "down the tubes." Mullock said open consumption of alcohol should be eliminated.

Indervies said he was not for or against open consumption of alcohol in public but was reacting to the guidelines set by the majority of council regarding enforcement procedures. He said he and the chief, given the ruling of council, thought it was the best option to manage and enforce the situation.

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
15	4:22	4:59	10:09	11:14
16	5:17	5:47	10:56	
17	6:09	6:32	12:05	11:42
18	6:58	7:17	12:52	12:29
19	7:44	8:01	1:37	1:16
20	8:29	8:44	2:21	2:02
21	9:15	9:28	3:04	2:50
22	10:00	10:13	3:48	3:39

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