

# Lower OKs contracts for full slate of professionals

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council held its annual reorganization meeting Jan. 3, when it approved contracts with professionals ranging from solicitors to engineering firms.

Council approved a contract for solicitor with the firm of Stefankiewicz and Belasco at a cost of \$40,000 for attendance at meetings. Other services are to be billed at \$190 per hour, \$220 per hour if two or more attorneys simultaneously are required to col-

laborate for a total price not to exceed \$150,000 for the year.

Mayor Frank Sippel thanked the law firm for its work in 2023 which included the preparation of 424 resolutions and 24 ordinances that were passed by council.

The firm of Blaney Donohue and Weinberg was approved as labor attorney for a cost of \$150 per hour, not to exceed \$40,000 for the year. The firm was also appointed as the municipal prosecutor at a cost not to exceed \$45,000. An additional charge of \$10,000

will be levied as Lower Township has become the court for Wildwood Crest.

Seth Fuscellaro was appointed as municipal public defender for a salary of \$16,500 plus an additional \$13,500 for work associated with Wildwood Crest.

Council approved a contract with DeBlasio and Associates as municipal engineers at a cost not to exceed \$450,000.

The firm of Ford Scott and Associates was appointed as municipal auditor at a fee not to exceed \$42,000.

The Cape May Star and

Wave was approved as the official newspaper for legal advertising.

Council approved debt service payments for 2024 which total \$4.5 million, a total of \$3.6 million principal and \$939,739 in interest.

A payment of \$169,651 to the county was approved for the township's debt service for the joint Public Safety Building. Also approved was \$125,000 for dispatch services from the county for Lower Township.

Shore Veterinarian Animal Control Services was approved for an annual contract with an annual cost of \$62,000 plus \$75 for each emergency call after 5 p.m. and Sundays.

Council approved a \$22,500 contract with

Lower Township Fire District 3 to provide additional fire services to Diamond Beach.

A \$7,960 contribution to Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) of Cape May County was approved by council. According to VIM, 500 local persons consider the organization as their primary care doctor.

Marcus Karavan was appointed as tax appeal attorney for 2024 at a rate of \$125 per hour not to exceed \$10,000.

Council awarded a \$65,000 contract to S. Vitale Pyrotechnico Fireworks Inc. to supply fireworks and a barge for the July 3 Independence Day event.

The township approved assigning two full time school resource police officers to the Lower Cape

May Regional School District. The township will pay 50% of each officer's salary which totals \$78,298. The officers must have three years of law enforcement experience and are required to complete a 40-hour basic course for school resource officers.

Council tabled a resolution awarding a \$1.2 million contract for improvements to Diamond Beach Park from Command Company Inc., of Egg Harbor City.

The proposed work included fencing, a shade structure, picnic table, a single-use restroom building, exercise and playground equipment, an asphalt surface, pickleball courts, sidewalks, a drinking fountain, lighting and a bicycle repair station.

## MLK Day

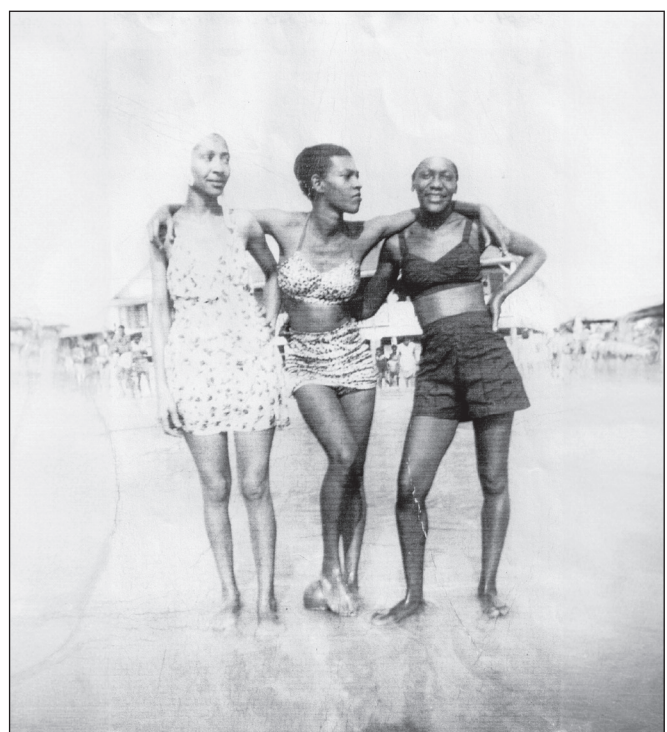
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The Chicken Bone Beach Historical Foundation, Inc. (CBB), is a non-profit organization formed and titled in homage to the historical segregation of African Americans on Atlantic City's world-famous beaches. Use of the beach was limited to the area surrounding Missouri Avenue. Visit chickenbonebeach.org for more information.

René is an award-winning New Jersey contemporary figurative painter and mural artist. Her use of vibrant colors and painterly brushstrokes in oils and mixed media often celebrates the feminine figure to create narrative and engaging works, from original canvases to large-scale murals.

René has exhibited nationally and internationally with works held in private and public collections. Visit chanelleerene.com for more information.

Cape May MAC is a multifaceted not-for-profit organization com-



Courtesy of Center for Community Arts

Shown here, circa 1955, waitresses and other workers had Sundays off and would often take time to enjoy the beach.

mitted to promoting the preservation, interpretation and cultural enrichment of the Cape May region for its residents and visitors. Membership

is open to all. Visit capemaymac.org or call (609) 884-5404 for information about its year-round schedule of tours, festivals and events.

## West Cape May

Continued from Page A1

of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

An ordinance to fine-tune language in the borough's shade tree ordinance states an approved removal of a tree may be undertaken by someone who has an ownership interest in the property, including an LLC.

Sabo said some homeowners do not want to hire a contractor but instead remove a tree themselves, which is permissible if they comply with the rest of the ordinance. She said a homeowner or contractor is required to sign a tree removal permit for private property.

For tree removal in the borough right of way, an adjacent homeowner may sign the application, she said. Adjacent homeowners are responsible for trees in the right of way.

Violation of the ordinance is subject to a municipal court citation.

Sabo said a stop work order may be issued by the borough's code enforcement office to preserve root structure of a tree.

In other business, Commissioner Giacomo "Jack" Antonicello questioned Dick being appointed to oversee the Office of Emergency Management. Antonicello oversees the De-

partment of Public Affairs and Public Safety, while Dick oversees the Department of Public Works and Public Property.

Antonicello said he believed the Office of Emergency Management would fall under his Department of Public Affairs and Public Safety.

Sabo said Public Works is an integral part of emergency management. She said Borough Commission decided who would supervise emergency management.

Dick said Greg Basile, who heads the Department of Public Works, is also the borough's emergency management director. Dick said it made sense that he oversees emergency management since he oversees the Department of Public Works.

"I graduated from the police and fire academy, was involved in OEM (Office of Emergency Management) for many years during many instances, during 9/11, many tragedies and many storms," Antonicello said.

He said emergency management should fall under police and fire.

Sabo said the previous deputy mayor oversaw emergency management.

Borough Commission ap-

proved contracts during the reorganization for Animal Control of South Jersey; auditor Leon Costello of Ford, Scott and Associates; the firm of Barry, Corrado and Grassi as solicitor; Heyers, Gruel and Associates as affordable housing administrative agents;

Jeffrey Surenian as Council on Affordable Housing counsel; Kyle Weinberg as municipal prosecutor; Michael Sorensen as public defender; Anthony Chadwel of Remington Vernick as borough engineer and Planning/Zoning Board engineer; and Richard King as Planning/Zoning Board solicitor.

**TIDES: Jan. 10-17, 2024**

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
10	6:42	7:08		1:03
11	7:30	7:55	12:44	1:48
12	8:18	8:44	1:36	2:35
13	9:07	9:35	2:28	3:23
14	9:56	10:28	3:21	4:11
15	10:47	11:23	4:18	5:01
16	11:41		5:17	5:52
17	12:22	12:39	6:21	6:45

**MOON PHASES**  
New moon, Jan. 11 • first quarter, Jan. 18

167 YEARS OLD • 1854-2022

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