

# Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 15 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2015 75¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



## LCMR GIRLS LACROSSE TEAM BATTLES OCHS

Page B6



# County proposes \$6.2M. fix of public safety building

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — County officials are proposing a partnership with Lower Township to renovate the public safety building at the county airport at a cost of \$6.2 million to include headquarters for the county Office of Emergency Management (OEM), a centralized county 911 dispatch center and a Lower Township police station.

County Emergency Management Director Martin Pagliughi

presented a conceptual plan to Lower Township Council at an April 6 meeting. He said the purpose of his presentation was to open up discussion between the county and township. The county OEM is located in the basement of the county library in Cape May Court House. Pagliughi said his office also houses a joint dispatch area for the county Sheriff's Office, the county Prosecutor's Office and pilot program to dispatch for fire and emergency medical services for Avalon and Stone Har-

bor. He said Avalon police have taken over dispatch services for Stone Harbor, which has worked "extremely well," saving Stone Harbor \$187,000 per year and Avalon \$184,000 per year.

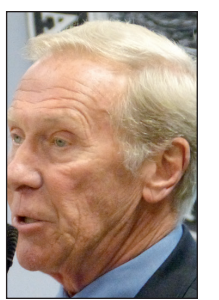
Pagliughi said the dispatch area in the county OEM Operations Center is below grade, with two sump pumps running 24 hours a day. He said the OEM is going to move out of the library's basement.

His proposal was for a shared services agreement with the town-

ship for the public safety building, which is owned by the township but is located on county land. Pagliughi proposed a state-of-the-art facility with space for Lower Township police, Lower Township Office of Emergency Management, township Office of Fire Safety and Lower Township Rescue Squad EMS.

"It would include the rehabilitation of the building with a long-term lease for Lower Township

'It would include the rehabilitation of the building with a long-term lease for Lower Township and it would reduce substantially the amount of money it would be for a new facility.'



—County Emergency Management Director Martin Pagliughi

See Proposal, Page A3

## MUA OKs transfer of \$205,000 to Lower Twp.

By BETTY WUND  
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — The Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA) approved a resolution in a 4-1 vote to transfer \$205,000 from unrestricted funds to the Lower Township government.

Commissioner Bill Murphy cast the only dissenting vote. He said he was opposed to the transfer because he was concerned there would not be enough money for emergencies.

There was little comment from the public. The only concern expressed was why funds could not be used to lower the water and sewer rates for the benefit of the rate payers. The resolution came after talks between the MUA and Lower Township Council.

Council voted 3-2 at a March 23 special meeting to ask the MUA for the funds to pay the salaries of four new police officers to be hired in 2015.

LTMUA Board of Commissioners Chairman Brian O'Connor said they agreed there will be increased sharing of services. Without the agreement, the township would be able to use the funds as they wished, he said.

The shared services agreed upon go beyond acquiring funds for hiring four police officers originally proposed. The Lower Township transfer request was initiated by Township Manager Jim Ridgway and a resolution presented by Councilman Eric Simonsen. The funds transfer would help bring a proposed township tax rate increase below 2 cents per \$100 of assessed value, according to Ridgway. The tax rate increase is now estimated at 2.5 cents. Simonsen, present at the MUA Commission meeting, said the transfer is considerably less than the maximum 5 percent allowed by law.

Increased shared services and new ones the MUA and township agreed upon include: township police providing traffic control when required by

See LTMUA, Page A2



Frank Scott/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Gwynnie Fox takes part in Cape May's annual Easter Fashion Stroll on April 5. The Washington Street Mall served as the runway, where contestants modeled their Easter finery. Merchants handed out ribbons, treats and gift certificates. Below, clockwise from top left, Atali and Jeron Jackson, Leah Fedorchak and Julianna Polanco. See results on A2.

## Cape May holds Easter Fashion Stroll



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE  
Cape May City Clerk Louise Cummiskey administers the oath of office to Jack Wichterman on April 2 at City Hall.

## Wichterman sworn in to seat vacated by Inderwies

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted unanimously at a special meeting April 1 to appoint former Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman to fill a vacant seat created by the resignation of Jerry Inderwies Jr. last month.

Wichterman was concluding a vacation in Florida and was not present at the meeting. He served on council from 2002-04 and from 2010-14.

At the start of the meeting, City Solicitor Tony Monzo said according to state statute, if a governing body in a nonpartisan municipality chooses to fill a vacant council seat, the appointment to council is only until the next general election. He said council's timeframe to fill the seat runs 30 days from the date the seat becomes vacant.

If the seat was not filled within the 30-day period, the seat would remain vacant until the election and qualification of a successor, Monzo said.

"Whatever happens today, somebody will still have to run in November for that seat," he said. "That seat will then be filled by the voters for the remainder of the unexpired term and immediately after the election, that person would take office."

Councilwoman Bea Pessagno said she had a short list of possible candidates including Tom Carroll and Bill Bezaire but they said they were not interested in serv-

See Wichterman, Page A2



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