

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 4 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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Cape May budget calls for 1.3-cent tax-rate increase

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The preliminary budget presented to Cape May City Council on Jan. 16 calls for a 1.3-cent municipal tax-rate increase.

For the owner of a \$500,000 home, that amounts to a \$65 increase.

The proposed tax rate would be 34.2 cents per \$100 of assessed value. City Manager Bruce MacLeod said 56 percent of the

budget is supported by property taxes.

City Council will examine the budget and may suggest changes before it adopts the spending plan in March.

The general budget totals \$17 million, with salary and wages totaling \$6.3 million. The amount to be collected in local purpose taxes is \$9.5 million, an increase of \$393,000, or 2.3 percent.

Total appropriations for salaries and wages are \$49,975 less than the 2014 budget, MacLeod

said, adding that since 2008, the number of full-time city employees has been reduced by seven through attrition.

MacLeod said this year's budget funds three unfilled city positions: one clerical, one information technology staff and an in-house engineer.

Other expenses in the proposed budget total \$10.6 million, which includes appropriations for debt service, pensions, insurance and capital improvements. Total appropriations for other expenses

are \$454,387 more than 2014.

The budget meets the state tax levy cap, which limits growth of the local purpose tax to 2 percent annually. MacLeod said the budget is \$56,438 below the 2 percent tax levy cap.

The proposed budget for legal costs in 2015 includes \$75,000 for the continued pursuit of the modification of the Lower Cape May Regional School District funding formula, he said. An additional \$350,000 is earmarked in the legal budget for action

related to the design elevation of Convention Hall, MacLeod said. The city's total legal budget for 2015 is \$575,000.

Line items that increased and had a significant impact on the budget included: health insurance, \$154,000; police/fire retirement system, \$58,932; capital improvement fund, \$40,000; debt service, \$43,400; third-party construction office vendor inspections, \$40,000; and a reserve for



MacLEOD

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Wet and wild in Wildwood



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

More than 1,000 people participated in the Polar Bear Plunge on Saturday, Jan. 17, in Wildwood. A number of Cape May and Lower Township residents jumped into the 37-degree ocean to raise funds for Special Olympics New Jersey. The event raised more than \$300,000.

Center for Community Arts marks 20 years with exhibit featuring accomplishments

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Center for Community Arts (CCA) is celebrating its 20th anniversary with an exhibit of its history in the Tom Carroll Gallery at the Emlen Physick Estate.

The walls are lined with photos of its founders and community programs.

At an opening ceremony on the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Cape May Mayor Edward Mahaney said CCA was one of the key organizations in town that bound everyone together. He said he has talked with Stockton College President Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. about the college coming aboard as a third member to assist CCA and the

city in renovating the Franklin Street School. He said initially it was believed the school could be restored for \$750,000 but more than \$1.5 million has been spent on repairs and more work is needed.

"I believe in under a year we will have this under way and we will have the extra funding to put this building back in operation for all the CCA programs and reinvigorate CCA's missions and goals and have them actualized in a much better setting, and at the same time have a college setting in our town for the benefit of our youth and adults who need continuing education," Mahaney said.

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Center for Community Arts founding member Emily Dempsey speaks Monday during the opening of an exhibit highlighting the accomplishments of the organization.

Resident fatally shoots intruder in Lower Twp.

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — The county Prosecutor's Office and Lower Township police are investigating the fatal shooting of a 21-year-old man in the Cold Spring section of the township.

Lower Township police responded at about 3:15 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 18, to the 700 block of Route 109 for a report of a person attempting to gain entry into an occupied home.

Police said that while they were en route to the scene and on the telephone with a female

resident of the home, a male resident, who has limited mobility, got into his wheelchair and armed himself with a handgun.

Police said James P. Weaver Jr., of Cold Spring, smashed through the glass door in an attempt to force his way into the home. The homeowner reportedly warned Weaver that he was armed but Weaver continued to enter the home, at which time the homeowner shot

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Police in Lower to test two types of body cameras

By JACK FICHTER
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ERMA — The Lower Township Police Department is testing two types of cameras to be worn on officers' uniforms.

According to Lower Township Police Chief William Mastriana, temporary guidelines have been established during the testing period to allow the department to evaluate the use and efficiency of the cameras in the field.

The body cameras are manufactured by Taser International. One to two officers per shift will wear the cameras on a rotating basis. Police officer body cameras have been shown to decrease both use-of-force complaints and citizen complaints against officers in the field, according to a news release from Lower Township police.

The goal of the pilot program is to determine which body camera system produces the best video and audio, is easiest to use and holds up best. The program is expected to last 30 to 45 days. At its conclusion, a determination will be made on which style of camera the

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Jack Fichter/STAR AND WAVE

Two types of body cameras are being tested. Above, the one-piece unit that attaches to the officer's chest area. Below, the two-piece model that attaches to the belt and shoulder.





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