

Referendum

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the commissioner, a member of the state Board of Education, the state Treasurer or designee and the director of the Division of Local Government Services, he said.

Wichterman said the board of review would convene a hearing and make a determination within 60 days of receiving the petition. He said holding a referendum is a step the city must take.

"It's not a step that we are confident we are going to win, but we're going to do the best we can and we are very hopeful that the residents of the city of Cape May will give this a lot of thought before they go out and vote on it," Wichterman said.

He said a decision on holding a referendum by a board of re-

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 — Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman

view would occur in mid 2014. Wichterman said the earliest date for a referendum would be September, but possibly as late as December.

Last month, Interim Executive County School Superintendent Robert L. Bumpus recommended keeping the regional school district in its current configuration.

Last week, Lower Township responded positively in an answer to the request for a referendum on the question of Cape May withdrawing from the regional school district.

"Lower Township sees the wisdom of having the voters of the regional school district

decide the issue of Cape May's proposed withdrawal from the Lower Cape May Regional School District pursuant to NJSA 18A:13-72, and it will not oppose that aspect of the petition filed by Cape May."

Lower Township's special counsel Frances Campbell told the Star and Wave that in his opinion, bodies such as the Board of Review and commissioner tend to rule in favor of letting the people decide such questions.

In its answer, Lower Township stated: "In the event that the referendum on the question of withdrawal sought by the city of Cape May is con-

ducted and fails, this respondent will vigorously oppose any request that the petitioner already anticipates having to file with the commissioner, seeking the exercise of an imagined "inherent" power of the commissioner to conduct himself as a "legislature of one" by unilaterally imposing a new tax apportionment formula for the Lower Cape May Regional School District. If the commissioner were to take any such action, it would defy the laws of the state of New Jersey and would violate Article III of the New Jersey Constitution."

During public comment at Cape May's council meeting, resident the Rev. Jo Tolley said only through education would the poverty level be changed in Cape May County.

"We're one of the poorest counties in the state," she said. "We're not poor in this

city, and that's why we are subjected to this tax for the regional school."

Tolley said she felt the attorney the city hired, Vito Gagliardi, would profit the most from fighting the funding formula. She noted that more than 60 percent of homes in Cape May are vacation homes

owned by out-of-towners.

"There are only 30 (percent) to 40 percent of us who live here year round," Tolley said. "This is the reason that I continue to come to you and plead for you to drop this and to pay what we are paying for the welfare of the children of this community."

Dispatch

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"We're looking at an additional 2,000 square-feet," Pagliughi said. "If we go to another facility, we're probably looking at about 6,000 to 8,000 square feet."

To build from scratch, costs are estimated at \$350 per square foot, he said.

There is a 120-foot-tall antenna tower outside the EOC with about 47 radio receiver/transmitters, a microwave antenna and a back-up generator for the entire building, Pagliughi said.

He said if municipalities sign on for central dispatch and they are out of range for radio signals from Cape May Court House to reach their town, a county microwave system is in place.

The microwave system was put in place about eight years ago, designed to transmit information for secondary record storage for municipalities. Pagliughi said only about 10 percent of the capacity of the microwave system is currently in use.

"You can transmit anything across that, radio, television," he said. "If a town that is out of range wanted to come on and have us dispatch, their existing radio system would transmit into their microwave transmitter and then come up to the microwave transmitter on my tower."

Each municipality would continue to use its current radio system, he said.

The total cost of building a central dispatch center would depend on its location, Pagliughi said.

"It's going to be a lot more expensive if we were to build a building compared to renovating some existing space," he said.

Pagliughi said some conceptual space designs have been completed.

A study by Intertech offered methods for municipalities to share the costs of a central communications center. One proposal calls for a .2-cent tax for each municipality.

A second proposal would charge the municipality for each call that is dispatched from the center, he said. An average of \$10 per call would be charged, a figure based on current dispatching costs, Pagliughi said.

Call frequency for barrier-island towns increases 200 percent for July and August, he said, while the call frequency for mainland communities is fairly constant year round.

"At \$10 per call, it would still be a substantial savings to what the towns are paying now," he said.

Two possibilities exist for a central dispatch center. Pagliughi said one proposal is for one dispatch center for the en-

tire county. A second proposal calls for a barrier island/mid-county facility.

He said Sea Isle City, Avalon and Stone Harbor would be a barrier island sub-region, the four Wildwood municipalities another sub-region and Cape May, West Cape May and Cape May Point an additional sub-region.

Pagliughi said it is unknown how Ocean City would be dispatched due to the size of the municipality. He said a sub-region model may be the best way to start a central dispatch center.

The timeframe for opening a center is one-and-a-half to two years, Pagliughi said.

The county fire chiefs association voted unanimously twice in the past 10 years for central dispatch.

"When police are busy with police business and there's a fire incident, the fire incident sort of gets left hanging," he said.

Central dispatch would have a dedicated dispatcher for an event. If there were a fire, a fire communicator would be handling the calls, Pagliughi said. A police dispatcher would handle police calls.

Each town is required to have Emergency Medical Dispatch-certified dispatchers so they can administer medical treatment over the phone, such as instructing a caller in CPR.

"They have to be able to keep the caller on the line if they need medical help until the EMTs get there," Pagliughi said.

On a 911 call for a heart attack, the dispatcher has to give instructions to the person handling the patient while also dealing with other 911 calls or looking up license plates for police officers, he said.

Pagliughi said national standards require two dispatchers and an EMD dispatcher on duty at all times.

"A lot of the time, especially barrier island towns can't afford to do that in the wintertime," he said. "They'll only have one dispatcher in, whereas a county central dispatch would always have multiple dispatchers on duty 24-hours per day."

Some critics of a central dispatch center argue that a dispatcher who knows only one town would not be useful dispatching units to another municipality. Pagliughi said that with today's technology, dispatchers have multiple displays before them, including maps and satellite images.

"You could be sitting in downtown Kansas City and dispatch an ambulance to downtown Stone Harbor," he said.

Pagliughi said that when a 911 call is received, the location of the caller appears on a map.

Lower Township Manager Mike Voll was part of the group that toured the Camden County center. He said their police

radio frequencies are isolated so they are not receivable on scanners or iPhone apps.

Voll described the Camden center as having groups of three dispatchers working in cubicles. The center has broken Camden County into seven districts in which one dispatcher handles five towns and another dispatcher handles on or two large towns. He said a commit-

tee would be assembled in the next two months to determine which municipalities wish to participate in a central dispatch center.

"I just want to see this thing move along," Voll said.

He said the Camden center employs 150 dispatchers with about 30 dispatchers on duty at a given time.

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| 23 | 3:17 | 4:01 | 9:32 | 9:54 |
| 24 | 4:24 | 5:05 | 10:32 | 11:00 |
| 25 | 5:27 | 6:03 | 11:28 | |
| 26 | 6:23 | 6:54 | 12:00 | 12:20 |
| 27 | 7:15 | 7:42 | 12:56 | 1:08 |
| 28 | 8:04 | 8:27 | 1:47 | 1:54 |
| 29 | 8:50 | 9:09 | 2:35 | 2:38 |
| 30 | 9:35 | 9:51 | 3:22 | 3:21 |

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 Full Moon, April 14 • Last Quarter, April 22 • New Moon, April 29

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