

2011

Continued from page A1

Monday, including a 1.7-cent tax rate increase. With Councilman Glenn Douglass on vacation, Councilmen Tom Conrad and Erik Simonsen said they approved of the budget, while Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare said he would like to see the increase reduced to less than a cent.

West Cape May Borough commissioners disagreed over the volunteer fire company budget at a special budget meeting. Commissioner Ramsey Geyer believed there should be more funding for the fire company, but Mayor Pamela Kaitern and Commissioner Peter Burke disagreed saying a 3.42 percent increase for the fire company would have to suffice.

Engineer Ray Roberts of Remington Vernick and Walberg said the bottom of the Cape May's water tower at Columbia and Madison has become rusty and might need to be replaced.

Roberts said the tower was erected in 1937.

The county installed blinking lights on Beach Avenue at Broadway and Pittsburgh in order to prevent U-turns by people who missed their turn.

It was announced that The Richard M. Teitelman school's seventh and eighth grade choir was selected to sing the national anthem and a patriotic song called, "Stand Up America," at Citi Field in New York, where the Philadelphia Phillies would play the New York Mets on May 28.

Cape May City Council rejected all bids for the Convention Hall project.

March 16, 2011: A vote by members of the Cape May County Regular Republican Organization to choose 2011 candidates was delayed because the State Assembly delayed a redistricting vote.

Lower Township Council passed its ordinance to create a Citizens Advisory Board, which would replace the former Mayor's Advisory Board. The vote went 4-1, with Mayor Mike Beck casting the only no vote. During the public hearing on the ordinance, a request was made that all boards follow the same policy, with equal appointments by council members.

Lower Township Council voted 4-1 to ask the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority for 2.5 percent of the funds in their surplus account. Mayor Mike Beck cast the only no vote in the

council's decision to ask the LTMUA for \$163,500 or half of what the township is allowed to ask under New Jersey law. The LTMUA could accept or reject the request.

March 30, 2011: Caper Tigers Brandon Pascucci and Ernie Harper and Lady Tiger Marisa Staley were all chosen to play in the Cape Atlantic League (CAL) All-Star games on Saturday for the American Conference boys and girls teams.

Joseph Michael Campon, convicted in 2005 for aggravated manslaughter in the death of Christopher Loftus, was arrested Feb. 28 for alleged possession of drugs and a handgun.

April 6, 2011: Lower Township Council agreed to put off adopting the 2011 municipal Budget after reducing a 1.7-cent tax rate increase down to a penny.

According to the 2010 census, Cape May County's population has been shrinking and at 97,265, is the second smallest in the state. Out of the 21 New Jersey counties, only Salem County had fewer people with 66,083.

April 13, 2011: Fishermen's Energy, LLC of New Jersey continued to work vigorously to have wind turbines installed off the coast of Atlantic City, receiving approval from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Cape May Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman put together a "nicotine committee" in an effort to designate non-smoking beaches in the city. Wichterman suggested making every third beach in Cape May a smoking beach.

After two consecutive three-and-a-half hour meetings, the appeal by Frank Investments to the Cape May Zoning Board of Adjustments was continued until May 26.

April 20, 2011: West Cape May Commissioner Ramsey Geyer voted no on adopting the 2011 municipal budget. He did not agree with how the budget had been discussed and developed.

Cape May hotel and motel owners had hoped for more from the visit by Gov. Chris Christie, April 12, hoping the governor would take questions about the seashore lodging bill being discussed in the State Assembly. The governor only accepted seven questions from the 650 to 700 people who attended his town hall meeting at the Naval Air Station Wildwood.

April 27, 2011: Lower Township Council

authorized one-year extensions of labor contracts for two groups of township employees. Council passed Resolution 2011-113 ratifying a one-year contract with no increases for members of the Brotherhood of Teamsters. Similarly, council authorized a one-year contract with no increase for the Lower Township Office Workers Association Local 3779.

Lower Township Police Chief Edward Donohue, who led the Lower Township Police Department in its operation for many years, led a wave of retirements by year's end, including the chief on July 1, Captain Lou Russo (Dec. 1), Lt. Tom Keywood (Sept. 1), and Sgt. Dave Adams (June 1). In addition, the department will lose three patrol officers: Ptl. Art Mason (Aug. 1), Ptl. Ed Dougherty (Dec. 1) and Ptl. Kevin Boyle (Nov. 1).

May 4, 2011: Cape May City council passed a resolution approving a stipulation of settlement with Frank Investments extending their demolition permit for demolition of the Beach Theater until Dec. 31. Frank Investments was forced to reapply to the Historic Preservation Commission a second time for a demolition permit, and was denied by the HPC, leading to an appeal to the Zoning Board.

After going through six bid processes, Cape May City Council has awarded the bid for construction of the new Convention Hall to Ogren Construction of Vineland. Ogren was the lowest bidder coming in at around \$7,523,000, which will keep the city within its budget of \$10.5 million for the project.

Mike Eckert, Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority executive director, told township council there was room for a 500kW solar field, which could provide electricity for the LTMUA, the township municipal building and annex, the Douglass Memorial School, as well as the county library branch and senior center.

May 11, 2011: The West Cape May Board of Commissioners discussed the possibility of amending a borough ordinance to make wind energy more attainable for residents after Mayor Pamela Kaitern and Deputy Mayor Peter Burke attended a Planning Board meeting on the evening of April 26. Green Utility System (GUS) Power Inc., handed out pamphlets at that board meeting showing blue prints and photos of their vertical axis wind tur-

bines, which are claimed to be silent and safe.

Cape May City Council adopted the 2011 budget, which included a six-tenths of a cent tax rate increase, a reduction from the two cents originally proposed by City Manager Bruce MacLeod.

The Lower Cape May Regional baseball team raised the Warrior Classic Tournament championship trophy in triumph after taking down rival Middle Township in back-to-back games. The Caper Tigers advanced to the championship after beating Middle 5-4 in the semifinal game, when James Wood struck out 6 batters and Curtis Gift struck out 5.

A case involving an alleged assault and an anti-gay slur was referred to the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office as a bias crime. Cape May Police Captain Robert Sheehan confirmed they arrested Jesse D. Walker, 24, of 100 Block E. Lincoln Ave., Wildwood, and charged him with simple assault for allegedly smacking a male victim in the back of the head.

May 18, 2011: Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno told attendees at the 2011 Cape May County Tourism Conference the state will help small businesses slice through red tape and maintain tourism funds.

State Sen. Jeff Van Drew, speaking in Cape May Tuesday, said he finds plans to charge fishermen up to \$3,000 for failing to register with the saltwater fishing registry absurd. Van Drew sent a letter, dated May 6, to Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin saying the purpose of creating the free registry was so people wouldn't have to pay a \$15 federal fee.

Cape May's Plan Endorsement Citizens Advisory Committee was trying to find what residents and property owners would like Cape May to look like 20 years down the road, and it's not from mere curiosity. As Cape May sought to obtain Plan Endorsement from the State of New Jersey, one step in the process included the creation of a community vision for the future.

Cape May County Sheriff Gary Schaffer announced the jail was the first in the nation to offer visitation of inmates from anywhere in the world through the use of the Internet.

Fishermen's Energy, LLC, of New Jersey received state permits from the New Jersey State House Commission

for a Green Acres and the Tidelands Council, which were the remaining state permits required to commence construction of the Fishermen's Atlantic City Windfarm.

Neighbors who have been involved in a dispute with the Lower Township Rescue Squad questioned the validity of the operation because it is charging for services, contrary to a stipulation in the deed.

May 25, 2011: The West Cape May Elementary School was officially named a "choice school" by the New Jersey Department of Education on April 29. School Board Vice President Lynn Bowlby and Superintendent Dominick Potena said 10 new students would be joining the school, along with six tuition students who already attend the school and are now automatically choice students.

A closed session for Cape May City Council was held following the public meeting to discuss the injunction filed by the Beach Theatre Foundation, intended to nullify the litigation settlement between the City of Cape May and Frank Investments, Inc.

June 1, 2011: The West Cape May Board of Commissioners went into closed session to discuss the option of consolidating the West Cape May Court with the Cape May Municipal Court. Commissioner Ramsey Geyer, who was spearheading the fact-finding process, said no conclusions or final verdict has been made on the matter, but the board was simply discussing the feasibility and possibility of consolidation.

The Beach Theatre Foundation (BTF) has recently announced a plan to repay their \$100,000 loan to the city of Cape May - a loan given them in 2007 in order to purchase a year's lease for the Beach Theatre.

June 8, 2011: Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (LTMUA) Engineer Marc DeBlasio said around half the 12,000 linear feet of pipe for Phase I of the Town Bank Water Main Improvement project has been laid. DeBlasio said water main work was finished on Wildwood Avenue, Bayshore Road and Breakwater Road. He said around 25 percent of the piping on southbound Bay Drive had also been completed.

The fencing and a large portion of the conduit for the 750kW Solar Array

Project near the Wastewater Treatment Plant was completed according to Executive Director Matt Ecker of the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority.

The Lower Township Rescue Squad's attorney addressed Lower Township Council, saying the not-for-profit service amended its Certificate of Incorporation in 1985. Neighbors of the squad's Georgia Avenue facility recently questioned the rescue squad's fees, saying its 1959 Certificate of Incorporation requires it to offer its services at no charge. Attorney Frank Corrado said he researched the matter and found the squad's bylaws were amended in 1985 to read they would charge no more than cost for their services.

June 15, 2011: At a Lower Township Council meeting, Councilman Glenn Douglass said the township had been cracking down on code violations for properties in the township. Douglass directed the matter to Township Manager Mike Voll, who said yes, the township had recently written about 100 citations.

The Cape May Brewing Company, owned by Ryan Krill, his father Robert Krill and Chris Henke, opened and began producing three different types of beer in its microbrewery located inside the Cape May County Airport Complex.

Cape May Point Mayor Carl Schupp said he wrote to Assemblyman Matt Milam and voiced his strong opposition to a bill aimed at creating a Seaside Tax District.

The bill, A-2657, sponsored by Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (District 15-Mercer), would create a Seaside Lodging and Rental District. The district would include all rentals three-quarters of a mile from the ocean. All rentals would be taxed 7 percent, with 5 percent going to the state and 2 percent going to the municipality. Of that 2 percent, one-third would have to be dedicated to tourism promotion.

Over 140 sharks were caught off the shores of Cape May on Friday and Saturday during the 31st South Jersey Shark Tournament at the South Jersey Marina as fishermen tallied up a total payout of \$238,626 in prize money.

The West Cape May Board of Commissioners continued to discuss the possibility of selling the borough's Class

Please see 2011, page A3

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Cape May Star & Wave (ISSN 519-020), Volume 158 Number 1. Published weekly by Sample Media, Inc., 112 E. 8th St., Ocean City, N.J. 08226. Subscription price in Cape May County \$22; East of the Mississippi \$25; West of the Mississippi \$29. Periodicals Postage at Pleasantville, N.J. and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to the Cape May Star and Wave, 600 Park Ave., #28, West Cape May, N.J. 08204.

BID

Continued from page A1

suggestion by City Manager Bruce MacLeod that the board not discuss the matter publicly.

MacLeod was referring to a complaint filed against then WSMC chairman Steve Smarro and his wife Pam, who took a sign advertising a dinner special from the side of the Ugly Mug Bar and Restaurant. The Smarros' actions were recorded on video and still cameras, and they were charged with criminal mischief and theft. Ugly Mug owner Mike Slawek later asked the court to dismiss the charges, indicating he wished to have a positive relationship with the Smarros and didn't think they would do anything like this again.

Current chairman Joanne Klineberger said, sensing there were unresolved issues, she put discussion of speaking to the press on the agenda as a way of clearing the air.

"The purpose of this is to air out the issue. There has been a considerable bit of discomfort over this," she said.

Tischler said this is a matter of freedom of the press and freedom of speech.

"This is a public board, it's not private," Tischler said. "If you don't want bad press, don't do bad things."

Tischler said she felt the board could embrace Klineberger as a chairman with integrity who would focus on positive issues.

Members polled on the issue generally spoke about wanting the board members to get along. Carol Herforth said she wished Tischler to stay on the board, indicating there was some understanding the board might take action to remove her. Business Improvement District member Dawn DeMayo asked why the agenda included the statement of "and any action to be taken" after the listing of discussion about the press. Klineberger said it was not her intention to call for action, but to simply "air it all out and move on."

Bea Pasagno said she believed all the board members have the best interests of

the BID at heart, but she also believed no one should be condemned or ostracized for exercising First Amendment rights.

"I'm a big proponent of First Amendment rights," Hillary Pritchard said, "but while there were criminal charges pending Bruce asked us not to make comments."

Pritchard said she hoped criminal charges would not be an issue in the future.

Dierdre Heinline said she believed the issue was a personal matter between board members that escalated and the entire board was dragged into the conflict.

"I'm tired of personal conflicts becoming everyone's business," she said.

Cindy Huf said she was disappointed someone spoke to the press about the charges against before the board was notified. She said she thought that was inappropriate, but wanted to see the board move forward from the issue.

When the discussion was opened to the membership for comment, BID member Bruce Lehrer said he would like to see any member resign if they felt they could not speak up at anytime. Another BID member said he wondered why there was so much discussion about this, when there was little or no objection to what Steve Smarro had done.

Barry Tischler said he believed the board should be transparent, and their actions, right or wrong, should be open to the public. He said the press reports both the good and bad.

"If good things happen, the press reports it. If the chairman rips a sign off a building, the press reports that too," he said.

He said Susan Tischler did nothing wrong by speaking to the press and the discussion should not have even been put on the agenda.

Klineberger said she put it on the agenda to be transparent and to have a reasonable discussion on the matter so the board could move on to other business.

DeMayo said there was no discussion of the actual

act, only the speaking to the press. Klineberger said the act was discussed at the previous meeting.

John DeMayo said the only reason the press was involved was because a crime had occurred. He said the board has allowed the public to think they are operating with a criminal on the board.

"We want people who are honest and ethical," he said.

Dawn DeMayo said she was upset at having to hand over her \$1,300 BID assessment to a board with a member she can't trust.

"It's been a bad situation all the way around," Klineberger said. "It's now up to the members and trustees to move forward."

In other business, Klineberger was selected by the board to act as its representative on the city's Tourism Advisory Committee.

The board also discussed ongoing problems with their P.O. Box at the Cape May post office. Klineberger said the post officer either thinks the WSMC box doesn't exist, or is closed, or their mail gets returned to sender, or other people's mail is ending up in their box. Klineberger said the bill for the box was paid.

The board also discussed the suggestion to reduce the number of hospitality nights to one. Tischler said it was tried a number of years ago and turned out to be a public relations disaster. Pritchard said hospitality nights were created as a way to thank their customers, and Thursday night always seemed to be a "locals" night, whereas Friday attracted their out-of-town customers.

Pritchard also asked the membership for input on the street lamps on the Washington Street Mall. She said the firm that installed them said they would be just like gas lamps, but she felt they were not bright enough, and asked the membership for comments in that regard.

Pritchard also said the city was planning to remove the old trees on Carpenter's Lane. She said the removal would net a few more parking spaces.

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