

Process

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Republican Party.

Beck cited reasons for his objection to Donohue, saying he is the brother of Police Chief Edward Donohue.

“When we talk about an appointment like this, the thought of a conflict – even the appearance of a conflict – is something to be concerned about,” Beck said. “Why would we put ourselves in this position?”

Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare said the police chief has already filed retirement paperwork, and contract negotiations with the police union would be handled by someone else in the Gruccio, Pepper DeSanto and Ruth law firm.

Beck said if one member of the law firm is conflicted, the entire firm is conflicted.

“In my opinion (Donohue’s appointment) is enhancing our legal position. Mike Donohue is highly qualified,” Lare said.

Beck said he did not challenge Donohue’s qualifications, but there were other factors that he considered a conflict, such as Donohue’s position as chairman of the county Republican committee.

“He wears two hats. One hat obligates him to helping people get elected and getting them funds,” Beck said.

According to Beck, Donohue might find himself soliciting campaign funds

from individuals or firms that might want to do business with the township. He said one of the biggest contributors to the Republican part is the Remington, Vernick and Walberg engineering firm, with which the township is currently engaged in a lawsuit.

Beck also said he would have a hard time voting for a guy who called for a change in GOP leadership based in part upon Beck being elected.

“Why would I vote for someone who lies awake at night crying in his pillow because I was elected mayor?” Beck said.

Township resident Ed Butler passed out to the council members copies of the code of ethics they are to follow, highlighting the section on making appointments.

Butler said appointments are to be made impartially and independent of political affiliation.

“Public office is not to be used for personal gain. I don’t see that happening here tonight,” he said.

Butler said he objected to council making an appointment without a meeting, without public notice, and with out an official meeting for the full council to discuss the appointment.

Resident Joe Winters, when he asked who drew up the solicitor’s contract, was told that Donohue did it. The contract calls for a \$50,000 retainer, \$150 per hour for

work outside what is covered in the retainer, and \$125 per hour for litigation services.

Lare said Donohue’s contract would actually save the township money, but Beck said no one would know until the end of the year.

Lare challenged Beck’s objections saying, “You could write a thesis on your style of leadership. It’s do as I say not do as I do.”

Lare said there was no search when the township hired Anthony Monzo as township solicitor two years ago, or when they hired Kathy McPherson as township manager. Beck said there was agreement two years ago on the appointments, and the entire council was included in the decision process. He said he was left out of this year’s appointment process.

“The last I heard we were going to come back with a number of names and sit down and look them over,” Beck said.

Conrad said he didn’t recall that being the case. Conrad said a search committee was formed and it came back with its recommendation.

“But you didn’t do a good job,” Beck said.

“That’s your opinion,” Conrad said.

The process was repeated with the hiring of the township manager, Beck said.

Beck said he had no problem with Voll, who served as the mayor of Middle

Township as a Democrat, but who is now a Republican. He said he hoped Voll turned out to be a great manager, but he also characterized the search process as a sham.

“My favorite part was reading about it on the Herald website – they even had the score,” Beck said, referring to a 4-1 vote mentioned in an interview with Voll posted on the website.

“We never discussed what we were going to do,” Beck said. “We never discussed as a council how we were going to make the appointment. Who drew up the contract?”

Lare said Monzo drew up the contract, which calls for an \$85,000 a year salary with yearly raises of \$7,500 per year for the next two years. Lare said he was the one who negotiated the terms of the contract.

“I negotiated with Mike Voll for \$85,000 a year with no health benefits, 20 vacation days and five sick days,” Lare said.

“What about the rules of government?” Beck said. “I was not involved. Did anyone meet with any of these other people?”

Beck said one of the applicants said he was not contacted by the township regarding his application. Former Cape May City Manager Lou Corea stepped forward during public comment saying he has 17 years in municipal government administration and applied for the job, and

objected to the process the council took.

“There is no way an appointment should be made using the method this council made it,” Corea said.

Corea said council had four votes and could have hired anyone they wanted. He said they instead violated the Faulkner Act and New Jersey law regarding local government.

Beck suggested council table Voll’s appointment until filling the position could be discussed. He said the township still has a manager until March 4, and he recommended having a meeting where council could discuss the top five candidates for the job.

“No single member of council can negotiate a contract,” Beck said. “You’re trampling all over the Faulkner Act.”

Lare said he was the one who nominated Voll, and he said council was not voting on a contract, but on a resolution. In the end, the resolution was amended to make the salary requirements adhere to the line item in the budget. Only \$25,000 to \$30,000 was earmarked in the budget for the manager’s salary, and the resolution called for paying Voll \$85,000. Donohue, who was just appointed township solicitor, was asked for an interpretation. He said council could not pass the resolution unless it was amended. Lare offered the amendment adding that the amount would be increased when the new

budget was adopted.

Resident Fred Long commented that, since Voll’s appointment was to take effect immediately, the township would be paying two managers until March 4, McPherson’s official stop work date. Her official retirement date is Dec. 31. Lare said the Voll’s proposed salary combined with what McPherson is being paid during that time, would be less than what McPherson would have earned if she worked until year’s end.

Council voted 4-1 to approve Voll as township manager, with Beck casting the no vote.

Beck said he would not have objected to the hirings if the other council members had been upfront.

“Would have been better off if they had said we want to get rid of Tony Monzo and hire Mike Donohue, and we want to get rid of Kathy McPherson and hire Mike Voll. I wouldn’t have liked it, but I could have accepted it. Then we wouldn’t have been in this three-penny charade they had going on. All they did is insult the people who put in applications and insult the intelligence of the average Lower Township resident,” Beck said.

Won’t

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Beyel served as Upper Township mayor and commissioner and fire commissioner.

“I got elected when I was 29. Before that I was an elected fire commissioner. I’ve been involved since 1975,” Beyel said. “This will be my 24th year as a member of the freeholder board.”

Beyel said he’s calculated how many times he won elections and his winning streak stood at 29-0.

“I think it’s been a great accomplishment,” Beyel said. “I’ve never lost to a Republican or a Democrat

and I’m very proud of that.”

He said he decided to announce his intention not to seek re-election at the meeting.

Asked what he would do in a year when he’s no longer on the county freeholder board, Beyel said, “There’s life after politics.”

Sheets, 79, of Middle Township, has served on the freeholder board since 1990. He is the longtime director of Public Safety for Cape May County.

“I’ll be 80 years old. It’s time,” Sheets said. “I was going to quit two times before but each time I reconsidered and ran. But here I am. I

thought ‘I’m going to be 80 years old’ and it’s time to quit.”

Sheets said his career spanned law enforcement, municipal and county politics. He was a police officer, mayor of Wildwood and county freeholder.

“I want to let everybody know ahead of time that I’m not going to run,” Sheets said of the announcement.

Cape May County Regular Republican Organization Chairman Michael Donohue commended on the way Beyel and Sheets announced their intentions.

“I think it was a very statesmanlike step for Dan and

Ralph to take. We have seen since June many people in our ranks make selfless gestures to advance our common cause as Republicans,” Donohue said.

Donohue said the announcement provides an opportunity for an open contest for potential Republican freeholder candidates to campaign.

He recognized Beyel and Sheets for having “unmatched records of public service to the people of Cape May County.”

“It really is a positive thing that they did for all of us in helping us move forward together,” Donohue said.

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Beach replenishment to start soon

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said he attended a meeting on the current beach replenishment project, which will place about 160,000 cubic yards of sand on Cape May beaches. The project, which runs from the Cove Beach to Cape May Point, is expected to start in 7 to 10 days, MacLeod said on Tuesday. The project is expected to be completed in mid-February, although the contractual end date is March 1.

“The project is on schedule and expected to complete on time,” MacLeod said.

MacLeod said the cost of the additional sand was already worked into the city’s share of the project.

2011 budget

MacLeod said the budget notebooks for city council members are being prepared in time for the Jan. 12 budget meeting. The public meeting will be held at 10 a.m. in the City Hall auditorium. At that time, two ordinances will be the subject of a second reading and public. The first raises the cost of a weekly beach tag from \$13 to \$15, and the second established an \$8 per mile charge for ambulance services.

A temporary budget will be adopted on Jan. 12. Mahaney said the temporary budget is normally about 25 percent of the annual budget.

City council also appointed Joe Bogle as an alternate member to the Historic Preservation Commission.



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also escaped the fire unharmed.

He said the fire broke out at approximately 7:20 a.m. on Dec. 23. The fire departments of Cape May, West Cape May, Cape May Point, Town Bank, Villas and Erma all responded to the fire along with members of the U.S. Coast Guard, Cape May Police and Fire Police. The source of the fire is believed to be a lit cigarette that smoldered in the couch of Erik’s apartment. The fire has been ruled as accidental.

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