

School

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May did the same.

West Cape May board member Lynn Bowlby said the school has an outstanding bond from an addition in 1997 that must be paid, which costs \$75,000 a year. The district still has \$550,000 left to pay on the bond.

Perniciaro said that even with the bond payments, the cost per student would still be substantially less than what is currently being paid.

The current cost to send a student to West Cape May is over \$29,000 while sending a student to Cape May is \$16,468. If West Cape May

consolidated, the cost per student would decrease to \$15,815, which is a conservative estimate, Perniciaro said.

The number of students enrolled was also researched in the study, to see if Cape May could in fact manage a 15 percent increase in students. Looking at the 2009 figures, if Cape May and West Cape May were to combine, there would be 191 students. Cape May Elementary has a holding capacity of over 300 students.

"We don't project anywhere near 300 students within the next 10 years, considering the demographics," Perniciaro said.

He said the population in Cape May County dropped just over 6 percent from 2005 to 2009, using census data. He attributed this to housing cost and employment rates. The enrollment projections for the schools showed that by 2014, the combined total of students would only reach 221 at most. However, sheer numbers were not the concern for some board members.

"Whether we are saving \$700,000 or \$10 million, it comes down to what is best for the children of each district," Cape May board member Edward Connolly said.

When it comes to the curriculum issues, all schools

core content is mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), Perniciaro said. Both Cape May and West Cape May districts offer Spanish courses and both have education programs for students with special needs. West Cape May currently has two special education students while Cape May has 20 classified cases. Perniciaro said the resources are available to handle this change if the consolidation occurs.

The study showed that the class sizes would reach no higher than 21 students according to Perniciaro, which isn't much bigger than

the average class size at Cape May now.

"Some kids thrive in bigger surroundings, some thrive in smaller surroundings," Perniciaro said. "Give your ideas to the board and be heard," he said to encourage parent involvement.

"We are looking at everything with an open-mind," Bowlby said. "Our school is 150 years old and we always averaged about 50 students."

She said the small atmosphere is what makes it a "wonderful little school," and it has educated eight generations of West Cape May farming families since it began in 1865. West Cape May School

Superintendent Dominick Potena said the boards have to ask themselves if it is worth moving ahead with the idea and to not jump ahead of themselves.

"The study was a good idea," Potena said. "The school boards needed to see that in order to make an intelligent and informed decision."

"The money amount is not substantial," he said. "The boards have to decide what's the next step, taking community input into account."

Whether the three school boards support the plan or not, the final decision is left up to the NJDOE.

Demo

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Albrecht and Heun does residential and commercial demolition, working on Carpenter's Square Mall in Cape May, the Avalon Hotel, and the 22nd Street Pier in North Wildwood. They have municipal experience as well. The company demolished the

old Avalon police station a year and half ago. Incorporated in 1969, Albrecht and Heun has done beach fill work in Cape May Point, and more recently, had the contract to supply trucks and sand for the beach restoration at the Coast Guard base.

Heun said his company also

supplied the low bid on the Ponderlodge demolition contract with the State of New Jersey, before efforts to save the building delayed the demolition. He said the state planned to rebid the demolition there, with bids expected to be received in early January, when the Convention Hall demolition

should be completed.

MacLeod said bid packets for the next phase of the project, the pile driving, went out Tuesday, with bids due back to the city by Friday, Dec. 17.

"We would anticipate the pile driving work to be done during late January, February, and possibly into March," MacLeod said.

The projected date for starting the construction of the new Convention Hall is May 1, 2011.

Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman said he has been pleased with the progress the city has made since it established a timeline for the project in July. The city also opted to separate the con-

tracts into demolition, pile driving, and construction.

"Since we broke it into three projects everybody is much more confident we will be able to do it (complete the project) within the time frame if not before," Wichterman said.

"What the first philosopher taught, the last will have to repeat."
Henry David Thoreau

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Fire

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shouldn't have to go through the physical and background check considering they already have with their current departments.

"Procedure must be followed for each and every applicant," Mayor Pamela

Kaithern said.

The firefighters were approved by the West Cape May VFC on Nov. 22, so there was not enough time to put it on the Nov. 24 agenda for board approval. Geyer said he would ask the fire company to write up letters of approval for the next meeting

so the board can look them over.

Prior concerns about using the Knox Box for emergency access to off-season businesses and homes for the fire company have also been put to rest. Geyer said he received information from three other companies that sell similar products, but the fire company now has a master key to Cape May Manor, which allows them to access any of the seven housing units within the building. The Emergency Medical Technician team of Cape May City has a master key as well.

The VFC does have a lock box on the side of their trucks, which contains the keys to multiple residents and businesses that are not used during the off-season according to Geyer. The owners have given these keys to the fire company so they can avoid damaging doors as

much as possible in the case of an emergency.

In other business, the board had a closed session meeting prior to the regular meeting, in which they interviewed candidates for the municipal judge position. The interviews started at 10:30 a.m. and continued until 1 p.m. when the regular meeting started. The presiding judge, David DeWeese will be retiring Dec. 31.

The water system study continues in West Cape May according to Kaithern. She said the representative doing the testing is part of a large company, which has several other cases to take care of, so the procedure is taking longer than expected. She said she expects to receive the calibration test results of the meter system within a couple weeks.

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Jump

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asked to take on the township manager duties in 1999. She served continuously in that post until 2007, when the council, led by Mayor Walt Craig, chose to replace her. McPherson resigned and stayed on as personnel director. She was reappointed as township manager in January 2009 when Mayor Mike Beck and Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare were elected.

Asked what prompted her decision to retire at this time,

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McPherson said there were a lot of changes being discussed at the state level with regard to pensions and benefits, and this is affecting other municipal employees.

"We've received a lot of (retirement) notifications for next year," McPherson said. "A lot of people in the police department, someone in recreation, someone in finance went in October...we're all getting old and gray."

McPherson said the job is always a challenge, but the next manager's biggest challenge would be the municipal budget.

"The 2 percent cap made it difficult to balance the budget," she said. McPherson said a lot of towns have looked at layoffs as a means of balancing the budget, but Lower Township has been looking to avoid layoffs "at all costs."

Asked what she planned to do during her retirement, McPherson said, "Everything that I can't do when I'm working."

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