

Respond

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resident, he pays 61 cents per day for the same fire protection on his 120x120 property. “You are getting the best deal you could possibly get. You can’t get a cheaper fire company that’s trained like we are,” Nelson said. He said the fire company not only meets all the state and federal requirements for fire fighting but is also very helpful to the community, standing by at the firehouse during severe weather and setting up shelter when it’s needed. The fire company attends the West Cape May Elementary Fire Prevention week each year and recently provided students with fire detectors as well. Firefighters set up a food drop for the community food bank, helped run the Christmas parade at the request of the borough and sponsor local Boy Scout and Cub Scout Troops. He said taking into account everything the fire company does for the borough, “the cost of our entire company is

less than half the cost of one career firefighter from a similar size career department.” Nelson said Kaithern was quoted saying the fire company should not always look to the taxpayers for more money and do a better job renting their banquet hall for more funding. “We do not volunteer or train to be fundraisers,” Nelson said. He said the company advertises the hall renting services in the Bridal Magazine, the Herald newspaper and on both the Borough’s websites as well as the fire company website, but it’s hard to compete with the other local venues that provide the same service. Kaithern agreed that the firefighters are not trained to be fundraisers, but suggested they hire a professional fundraiser for the task. Burke said the entire discussion of the fire company budget began because they requested an 11 percent increase in the VFC line item. They did not receive that 11

percent increase, but did however receive close to a 3.5 percent increase. “The borough only has so much money to go around,” Kaithern said. At the Feb. 23 meeting, Burke asked how much money received by donation is actually used for what the borough is asked to fund. Commissioner Ramsey Geyer, who oversees the fire company, said he would like to know what items Burke and Kaithern want the VFC to pay for with that that money. At the Feb. 23 meeting, Burke and Kaithern said they have repeatedly asked for some sort of documentation listing the items the fire company bought with the community contributions and other independently raised revenue. Geyer asked why they needed to know that information. Kaithern said if the VFC was asking for more money from the taxpayers, then they should disclose that information. Kaithern read a document at the conclusion of the

March 9 meeting that was written by Geyer in November 2008, before he was a commissioner, to show he once agreed that the fire company should disclose all information regarding fund raising and contributions. In the letter, Geyer made multiple recommendations regarding the West Cape May fire company after going over correspondence between the VFC and the borough. Geyer then sent them to Kaithern. “The documentation shows that the VFC expects the Borough to cover all expenses relative to ‘fire fighting,’ without any regulation. As a Volunteer Fire Company, I thought they raised money to support their operation, but the West Cape May VFC appears to want to raise money from the public, but not provide any reconciliation of how that money is spent,” Geyer’s letter says. “The VFC has consistently refused to follow the proper procurement procedure.” Nelson said at the March 9 meeting the fire department

used the donations and money they raised for a \$35,000 kitchen upgrade, a \$35,000 rescue van, a \$35,000 “non-slip” floor in the engine bay, a \$5,000 command vehicle, and a \$1,900 Hydrant Assist valve for their first out engine. “We have also applied for grants to help with expenses,” he said. Another discussion held between commissioners at the Feb. 23 meeting concerned the fire company’s response a zone south of the canal in Lower Township, which is part of the Town Bank VFC coverage area. Burke asked Nelson at last Wednesday’s meeting, which fire company responded first to calls in that area. Nelson said the West Cape May VFC has an agreement with Lower Township to respond to those calls and receives \$1,500 to do so. He said this agreement is that same as responding to Cape May City calls. Nelson said the VFC responds to all calls in Cape May Point as

well. Kaithern said that agreement with Town Bank should be discussed and possibly altered in some way, such as asking for more money. “We’re looking for more money to fund our fire company, so I think we have to look at all our options,” Kaithern said. “We would respond if they didn’t give us any money,” Nelson said. Geyer said West Cape May VFC Chief Chuck McPherson uses his own personal vehicle to make a determination of whether more response is needed at most calls south of the canal. “I would hate to think we would be in a position where we told Lower Township, ‘I’m sorry we’re not going to respond to the house that’s a half block away because you don’t pay us enough.’ That is not what fire companies are about and that is not what their mission is,” he said.

Reads

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goal of reading 1,000 books before Friday, March 25. Lining the school hallways are small certificates signed by the children’s parents as proof the students actually read the books. The certificates are color-coded for specific grades, so when the final day arrives, a class can be chosen as the winner for reading the most books. “It’s sort of like a little competition that everyone benefits from,” Helbig said. “We got off to a great start – I think we can reach the 1,000 book goal.” As of St. Patrick’s Day, the combined total of books read was over 600 according to committee member Karen Slack. She said at the final

assembly on Friday, members of the Cape May County Library will come to read to the students and celebrate the students’ accomplishments. “The program really just encourages the students to read in and out of school, and we have a lot of fun with it,” Slack said. Mahaney and county library members are not the only guest readers to come visit the school. Helbig said community residents of all kinds volunteer to visit the school and read a book for the children. She said the school has been taking part in the program for years. Throughout the month, the committee and staff organize activities for the children like Dr. Seuss trivia,

book exchanges and coloring projects. “It’s really a fantastic accomplishment,” Mahaney said. “The city really likes to partner with the school in many of the events like this.” Mahaney said last year, 12 city employees from different departments came in throughout the month of October to speak with the students about their specific job and the department they work in. “It’s really interesting to talk to them about the city and listen to the ideas they have and what they think should happen,” he said. At the end of Thursday’s reading, the students also discussed the job of the mayor and their interpretation of what his position entailed.

Mahaney said the school has been extremely proactive in getting the students involved in not just reading, but other activities as well. He commended them for organizing the science and environmental fairs, along with the spring Triathlon, which was put together by Tom Holden. The triathlon in May allows students to participate in physical activity like running and biking around the school grounds and also swimming in the school pool. “You couldn’t do all this without the cooperation of the administration and teachers,” Mahaney said. “We have a great staff at this school.”

Money

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inherent connection between the LTMUA and the township, which created it. “The MUA would not exist without the township,” Lare said. Lare said the practice of

asking for money from an MUA is done throughout the state, and the practice is encouraged by Gov. Chris Christie, who said schools should not sit on large surpluses of taxpayer money, which just sits in the bank drawing interest.

Beck said he didn’t believe the township needs to request the money. Several members of the public spoke against making the request calling the action, unfair, inconceivable and unconscionable. Resident Jack Sparks supported the request, saying

although it was talked about, the township did not make the request last year because it was able to come up with a zero tax rate increase.

Respond

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Schupp voted for the introduction of the 2011 Municipal Budget. The commissioners also introduced ordinances to raise the cost of beach tags, certain municipal and rental property fees. They also

introduced bond ordinances for capital improvements to the borough, one of which authorizes the board to replace a 25-year-old backhoe in failing condition. The hiring of a new Flood Plain Manager, John McGraw, was approved to replace former Commissioner Joe Nietubicz.

Van Heeswyk introduced Lizbeth Shay as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, as well as website/I.T. department; Henderson announced the receipt of the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) Gold Award to the borough. Applications are now being accepted for 2011

beach taggers through the office. Comments from the public after the meeting reflected general satisfaction with the 2011 budget, particularly regarding the minimal increase in costs to residents.

Ocean Drive closed going north March 27

LOWER TOWNSHIP - The 13th Annual Ocean Drive Marathon will be held on Sunday, March 27, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Lower Township motorists should avoid Route 109 and Ocean Drive from the Route 109 Bridge (Veterans Memorial Bridge) to Wildwood Crest on this date between 8:30 and 11 a.m. Motorists in the area between these hours should be prepared to expect lengthy traffic delays and or temporary detours to allow the runner to pass. Route 109 north will be closed from Cape May to Ocean Drive and motorists will be rerouted through West Cape May. Ocean Drive northbound will be closed from the Route 109 Bridge to Wildwood Crest during this time. All traffic will be diverted northbound onto Route 109 north and the Garden State Parkway. Anyone wishing to travel on Ocean Drive during these times must come in through Wildwood Crest as only the southbound lane will be open. Lower Township police officers will be stationed throughout the trace to strictly enforce the detour.

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***LIMITLESS PG-13 12:00, 2:25, 5:00, 7:25, 9:45**
***LINCOLN LAWYER R 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50**
***PAUL R 11:40, 2:15, 5:05, 7:35, 10:00**
***BATTLE: L.A. PG-13 11:30, 2:10, 4:45, 7:20, 9:55**
RANGO PG 11:35, 2:00, 4:30, 7:10, 9:40
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