

Cape May budget

Continued from page A1

the 2009 municipal budget is actually three budgets – the city, the water/sewer utility, and the beach utility budgets.

The 2009 budget as introduced includes \$188,735 in cuts from when it was originally presented, and reduces the city's employment by 3.5 positions by the end of June.

MacLeod said the city was accomplishing the personnel cuts by reorganizing some of the city staff. One individual from the city clerk's office was being voluntarily reassigned to the mayor and city manager, and two employees in licensing were being moved into the clerk's office. A firefighter who retires in June would be replaced with an entry-level firefighter starting at a lower wage, saving the city about \$24,000. Two individuals in Public Works have announced intentions to retire this year, one on April 1

and the other on June 1. The city plans to hire two seasonal workers to temporarily fill those slots. The net savings in the budget would be \$30,000, MacLeod said. He said the positions would be evaluated and the city would determine in 2010 whether the positions would again be filled by full-time personnel.

MacLeod said the city decided to retain the deputy CFO position, which would be advertised over the next month or so.

MacLeod said the city would not have to spend \$25,000 by holding off on promotions in the manager's office, the tax collector's office and the police department.

Council passed the budget 4-0 on introduction, with Councilman David Kurkowski absent. Councilman Niels Favre said the budget was the result of some rigorous debate.

"We didn't all see eye to eye on everything, but we came up with a consensus," he said.

Police vehicles

Continued from page A1

expense (OE) budget because the vehicle is considered a truck.

At any rate, Donohue said the chief of police has not driven a new vehicle for 16 years.

"And the majority of the detectives' vehicles are 10 years old," he said.

According to Donohue, the police department used to get five new vehicles per year, but that was taken away. He said the department recommended getting four new

vehicles one year, three the next, and continuing the rotation.

"That was rejected and we're getting two cars," he said.

Donohue said Ocean City and Atlantic City are making the change from the Crown Victoria to the Charger.

Donohue also said the goal has always been to keep vehicles on the road as long as possible.

"We had a vehicle refurbishing fund to rebuild engines," he said.

Donohue said the

Department of Public Works does maintenance on police vehicles. When they are starting to age, front line vehicles go into spare status, and some of those vehicles have about 200,000 miles on them, Donohue said. After they are no longer serviceable enough as spare cars they are sent to auction.

Donohue said his new Dodge Durango has the emergency lights like other police vehicles and when needed works as a command center vehicle.

Point commissioners meeting

Continued from page A1

36-09 was unanimously adopted to support that project. He announced that renovations of the firehouse, including installation of an elevator, are moving along well.

Other resolutions were passed without incident. Three new ordinances were introduced, the most significant of which was the establishment of East Lake Drive as one way between Lighthouse Avenue and Oak Avenue; this will be voted on

in April.

Under the Public portion of the meeting several residents raised questions about trash cans and corrals that can present health concerns when they overflow along the streets and asked how the Commissioners intend to respond. Commissioner Van Heeswyk explained that while summonses can certainly be issued to violators of the local rules, it's the Board's preference to encourage compliance through letters first, followed by fines as necessary.

She urged residents to notify the Board members of any serious violations they might observe, especially regarding trash issues, but also cautioned residents against becoming excessive about non-compliance.

The commissioners agreed that encouraging Cape May Point residents to take voluntary personal responsibility for community upkeep is the tone they wish to set in these areas for the foreseeable future.

Lower budget

Continued from page A1

township \$800,000 in revenue.

"We just can't walk in the door, open the window and start throwing things out," Beck said.

Resident Joe Winters asked if the councilmen who voted to approve the contracts – Councilmen Glenn Douglass, Wayne Mazurek and Thomas Conrad – understood the impact of the labor contracts at the time.

"I don't understand why there was no abstaining," Winters added. "The taxpayers

have to live with this budget."

Beck said when Township Manager Kathy McPherson was in her job previously she provided council with a spreadsheet to explain the contracts, something he said former Township Manager Joe Jackson did not do. He said the spreadsheets were helpful for understanding contracts. Beck again said much of what this council is dealing with was determined prior to this budget, and to get to a zero tax increase could take significant layoffs.

"We have to balance this with the needs of the taxpayer," Beck said. "We won't balance this in one budget. And we have to be fair to our employees."

At the same time, Beck said the township couldn't afford to pay 15 officers over \$100,000 a year and raised the issue of regionalizing police departments. But he added that the idea of regionalizing wasn't popular in the county.

"I'm at the dance but no one wants to dance with me," he said.



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Tim Maruszczak, seated, flies his 30-foot-long cat kite in front of Congress Hall. He had the cat made to resemble his real cat.

Cat kite

Continued from page A1

hole in the tail releases sand that blows in. When he brings it down, Maruszczak opens a zipper in the back to release the air.

One of the most frequently asked questions, which Maruszczak declined to answer when his wife was in earshot was, "How much did it cost?"

The medium-sized cat actu-

ally runs around \$2,500, but Maruszczak doesn't consider that extravagant.

"It's worth whatever just to see the kids' faces when they see it flying," Maruszczak said.

Bridge closed

Continued from page A1

tooth joint.

The bridge closed at around 7 a.m. yesterday, March 18, and is scheduled to re-open by the end of Friday, March

27, weather permitting. Concrete barriers and other traffic control devices will be placed at the ends of the bridge to prevent anyone from accessing the bridge. The bridge will open on-

demand for marine vessels.

Other work is slated for the bridge after March 27, but it does not require the bridge to be closed for vehicular traffic. All work should be completed by Memorial Day weekend.

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