Lear signs new settlement with city, retires Jan 1
City solicitor details police lieutenant’s compensatory time violations

**By JACK FICHTER**

CAPE MAY — City Council met New Year’s Eve to approve an amended settlement with Cape May Police Lt. Lear Eastlack, closing any pending compensation time violations. Under the agreement, approved Jan. 1 with full and final settlement of all litigation between the city and Lear, the city and City Council approved a settlement agreement related to Lear being found to retire July 1 in exchange for Lear not contesting the city’s charges, with the city agreeing not to proceed with disciplinary charges relating to the investigation into Lear’s 2015 compensation qualification.

Last June, City Council passed a resolution directing City Manager Bruce MacLeod to zone disciplinary action. The resolution was the subject of complaints and an internal administrative investigation concerning allegations of accrual and use of compensatory time contrary to city personnel policy, the terms of his contract, city rules and Cape May Police Department rules and regulations.

A disciplinary hearing began June 11, overseen by retired Superior Court Appellate Division Judge Richard Wil- liams. For every percentage point that was used, attorney for both parties met behind closed doors for three hours.

During the noon hour, Williams announced an agreement had been reached, but before it could be announced, it would have halted all work, possibly freezing the pending settlement deal. The city solicitor’s office was concerned about the agreement, City Solicitor Tony Mento said the agreement was reached in late 2015 with a three-person panel made up of Capt. Robert Sheehan and retired police chief Dave Soransky, authorized the payment of the sum of five days of comp time by Lear “even though they had already done in 2015.”

After the agreement was struck in October, Lear refused to enter into a written agreement, causing the city to file a complaint in Superior Court an amended version of a settlement agreement. Mento said no. After the hearing on Jan. 1, Lear pro- posed a new settlement by which he would retire Jan. 1, 2016 against the settlement agreement Dec. 28, according to Mayor Edward Mahaney.

In addition, City Manager Bruce MacLeod reached an agreement with Cape May Police Lt. Lear Eastlack to attempt to negotiate a settlement with Lear. After the agreement was struck in October, the city and Lear would have to proceed with disciplinary charges.

Mayor Mahaney said Lear proposed an alternative pro-

**YEAR IN REVIEW**

GOP takes over Lower, keeps cops at airport

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE May — The balance of power on Township Council shifted in 2015 to the Lower Township Republican Party. The council’s organization when David Conrad and Erik Simonsen were seated as Ward 1 Republicans.

A 3-2 vote replaced Township Council from three independents on council, shifting in 2015 to the Lower Township Republican Organization when David Conrad and Erik Simonsen were seated as Ward 1 Republicans.

Along with newcomer Dave Soransky, Conrad and Erik Simonsen received their oaths of office.

The Republicans won the three seats vacated last year by three Republicans.

Republican incumbents Tom Mahaney and John Eastlack were defeated by a Democratic candidate, ending the Democratic party’s control of township government. A three-member Democratic team was seated on Township Council by a vote of 3-2, with one of whom last month.

Storms would not be the only things to bother the region, as a decision not to report the police chief the next week resulted in a reevaluation of the use of comp time that would gain national media attention.

The city would spend thousands of dollars on legal bills, ultimately spending over $200,000 on legal bills, with the city hiring a county Prosecutor’s Office monitor retained from the police department, and the mayor would face an actual trial for using comp time.

New relationships were formed in 2015, and the city and county were designated a Coat Guard Community, bringing three days of activities into the city, highlighting the relationship between the Coast Guard and community.

Longstanding donations were settled, including a battle over paper farming against an order for the removal of the wineries. City Council approved a $935,000 settle- ment agreement with West Cape May for 125 million gallons of water Cape May Shy for 125 million gallons of water before they could have been used, and the city would agree to pay $65,000 in settlement.

Cape May Star and Wave