Lower Twp. seeks MUA funds to pay new police officers

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

I believe this is a win-win for everybody,” Simonsen said.

You can argue it reduces the tax rate, but reality is it’s shifting from one pocket to the other,” –Mayor Michael Beck

VILLAS — In a 3-2 vote along party lines, Lower Township Council voted Monday to ask the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority to allow the township to use Monzo’s 2014 -year budget to pay the salaries of new police officers before this year. 

Mayor Erik Simonsen, David Perry and Tom Conrad voted in favor of asking the MUA for money from its surplus account, while independent Mayor Michael Beck and Councilman Jerry Inderwies voted against.

“It is a bad idea to make a budget decision before the end of the fiscal year,” Inderwies said. “We should allow council to rescind the appointments for new officers before this year and have a safer town.”

The proposed 2015 township budget currently calls for a 2.5-cent increase in the property tax rate and $205,000 in MUA funds to pay the salaries of new police officers.

“I believe this is a win-win for everybody,” Simonsen said.

He said officials are negotiating with the Police Department, which would cover the $205,000 cost next year.

Conrad, Simonsen and Perry voted in favor of releasing information following a March 3 city council meeting in which Sheehan’s contract was not renewed based on a recommendation in the city attorney’s investigation of alleged comp time abuse by Sheehan.

Monzo reviewed events that took place during a March 3 city council meeting in which Sheehan’s position as chief of police with a one-year contract was not renewed based on a recommendation allowing council to rescind the appointment before the end of the fiscal year.

The vow was made in the city attorney’s investigation of alleged comp time abuse by Sheehan.

He said council’s decision was based on information provided by the prosecutor.

While a news conference for members of the media was being held March 12 at Cape May Convention Hall, about a dozen members of the public and one City Council member were standing in the building’s lobby complaining they were not admitted to the event.

Monzo requested a retraction from Prosecutor’s Office

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