

Street

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and purchased a piece of property used for street widening as well. MacLeod said the city also had to buy a property that had a 19th century home on it, and actually move the entire structure out of the area where work would occur.

Now that the city has bought the amount of land needed from 409 Elmira, the project can finally get underway.

Parking meters

In other business, the city may have found a solution to the parking meter issue. The council discussed last Wednesday the 12 new meters that would be installed throughout the

Washington Mall and the Jackson Street municipal parking lot.

The 10 meters that will be put in at the mall are going to accept change and credit cards as they always have, but will also accept dollar bills. MacLeod said this will reduce ticketing and confusion for residents and visitors.

MacLeod said it will now be a "pay and display" system as opposed to "pay by the space." The new meters will print out a receipt that lot users will display on their dashboard, showing proof that they paid the meter.

The meters on Jackson will take \$5 and \$10 bills also, but will not give bills in change. Each dollar inserted is worth an hour of parking, so customers need to have an idea

of how long they will be there.

The last company the city purchased meters from gave the city the option to get meters that accepted paper money, but the city opted not to.

"We looked at the market this time and we thought it was the appropriate way to go," MacLeod said.

He said the new meters were purchased through capital bond ordinance funds that were already available to the city, and will not be taken from this year's budget. MacLeod said the meters would be installed and ready for operation by May 1 when the meter season begins.

Eating

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etables every day. Sloan said the school found out in December that they would be receiving a \$500 grant from UnitedHealthcare to reinstate the fruit and vegetable program.

"We wanted to keep the program going so I applied for the grant," she said. "We have to buy canned fruit and vegetables now, instead of the fresh stuff because of losing the state funds, but it's something."

She said she would like to reach out to local and chain grocery stores to see if they would be willing to make donations of fresh fruit and veggies, so they wouldn't have just the canned goods.

Since being awarded the grant, students have been designing posters of their favorite fruits and vegetables as part of the project. Sloan also had the idea of sending the children home with recipe cards, so they and their parents could come up with healthy snack ideas and

write them down.

Sloan said all the recipes will be put together in a book and presented during an assembly on Global Youth Service Day, which is April 15. There will be a slideshow presentation, featuring photos of students eating healthy food in the cafeteria and classroom, taken throughout the several months of the program.

State Sen. Jeff Van Drew was impressed with the program and gave the staff and students a commendation at an assembly the school had when the project first began.

"He sort of gave us accolades for doing this program," Sloan said. "We just want to promote healthy eating and being active."

Shydo said that UnitedHealthcare also sends out executives and representatives to join in on the activities done by the community organizations such as the elementary school project.

"We really love this program," she said, "especially when we get to see the proj-

ects in action."

Every weekday after school from 3 to 5 p.m. students get together and work on their posters and learn about local farms where the fruits and vegetables come from. Sloan said she is trying to put together a field trip in April to visit one of those farms.

There are also students that come in early in the morning as well. Many of the before and after school students working on the project are part of the group Sloan coordinates, which is Children Reaching Excellence Weekly (CREW). However, all 175 students in the school are involved in some way according to Sloan.

She said she hopes more grants and funds will be given to the school so the program can continue. If you would like to learn more about Global Youth Service Day and Youth Service American, visit www.GYSD.org or www.YSD.org/semester.

Mayor

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career firefighters/EMTs)." The mayor made it clear at the special meeting that the country, state and local areas were in the most depressed economic times since the Great Depression so it was important the city use its money more effectively.

"I think we have to be more prudent in how we use our money," he said.

The adjustments Mahaney proposed for the city police department would result in a 24-member police force consisting of one chief, one captain, four patrol sergeants, one detective sergeant, one detective, and 15 patrol officers. Even though the lieutenant position would be eliminated, no jobs in the department would be lost because the lieutenant would have the option to become a sergeant. Mahaney said if he chose to retire however, there could be an additional \$35,000 saved after hiring a rookie officer to replace him.

Mahaney had other ideas for the police department as well. He said he would like the Juvenile/DARE officer to be reassigned to a squad for shift work. Mahaney suggested that the chief and captain provide more departmental leadership by being responsible for scheduling themselves for non-administrative time period shifts, especially during the power shift or night shift in the peak summer months.

Mahaney said the average salary for a police officer in the manager's proposed 2011 budget was \$90,000, not including overtime, benefits or promotions. The projected overtime pay for each officer was around \$10,000, which Mahaney wants to see

reduced. The line item for police overtime in the proposed budget was \$195,000 but he would like to see it decreased to \$150,000.

Mahaney suggested the percentage of salary and wage increase projected for all police department members be lowered to comply with the governor's plan. If all Mahaney's recommendations are followed, the decrease in the department's appropriation would be a total of over \$294,000.

His idea to eliminate two Beach Patrol lieutenant positions and reduce the overall salary of the remaining three lieutenants from \$110,000 to \$90,000 would save the city money in the Beach Utility Budget. The salary reduction would also be to comply with the governor's initiative. The mayor believes there is no need for five lieutenants and three would suffice. If these decisions were to be made, the total money saved in the Beach Patrol would be \$21,700. The changes do not affect the general municipal budget.

Mahaney said the city could also save \$153,702 through the Fire Department by not replacing two empty spots on the crew, which would save roughly \$145,000 in 2011. He said reducing the projected percentage salary and wage increase in the fire department would save around \$8,500 and assist the city in meeting the governor's initiatives.

Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman agreed with Mahaney that the two firefighters should not be replaced with full-time employees.

Mahaney also had recommendations for the Road and Utility Program, which was

presented by the city engineer and MacLeod earlier this month. The program lists repairs and improvements that should be made around the city from 2011 through the 2013 fiscal years. Mahaney would like the city to not exceed \$925,100 (\$653,900 from the Current fund budget and \$271,000 from the water budget) in 2011, which is approximately \$574,900 less than the city has been budgeting in recent years for the Road and Utility Program. The program recommends the city pay \$3,625,800 total for 2012 and 2013, but the mayor suggests it be reduced to less than \$900,000 each year. His reasoning for this is to reduce city debt as much as possible.

"You don't incur new debt until you retire existing debt," he said.

Mahaney had a number of ideas for saving the city money, but also had recommendations to spend. He had the idea of improving the hardware and software used by the city, as well as the city website. In order to do this, Mahaney suggested using the savings from the Public Safety changes and paying an employee \$50,000 per year. He said the city could also eliminate fringe benefits by hiring a consultant for the job.

He also wanted another employee hired in the Code Enforcement/Animal Control Department because a current officer will be retiring in two years. Mahaney said the veteran officer could train the new employee until he leaves the department. Mahaney recommended a Class II police officer for the position.

Nine

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room."

He recalled it being an extremely hot fire and having low visibility when he went up the stairs. Coulter said it was a "quick knock-down" of the fire, which he was grateful for considering the circumstances.

"There was a large sense of urgency, since people were trapped inside," he said. "We made a very aggressive attack."

Coulter said he was also thankful that the call came during a shift change at the firehouse, so more manpower was available. Not only did the 10 men of the Cape May Fire Department respond, but also the U.S. Coast Guard, Cape May Police, the West Cape May, Town Bank and Cape May Point Volunteer Companies and members of an Erma emergency response team.

Coulter referred to the saves and the performance of the firemen during the opera-

tion simply as, "textbook."

"The training really pays off in those situations," he said. "We couldn't ask for a quicker response and three people were saved, as well as the building."

The Merion Inn opened just three days after the fire, with just the smoke and fire damage on the second floor along with some minor water damage. The bar and restaurant area on the first floor were untouched thanks to the steadfast actions of the firefighters who arrived on scene.

The 10 firefighters were awarded citations from the city for their service that day, which read, "If not for the efficient and prompt actions and team effort, severe property damage and loss of life would have occurred. The firefighters aforementioned are hereby awarded a meritorious unit citation for their lifesaving actions."

Those firefighters were Coulter, Curtis Warburton, William Szemcsak, Michael

Eck, Andy Boyt, Alex Toler, Timothy Gay, Jeffery Laag, Robert Elwell Jr. and Chief Jerry Inderwies Jr.

Coulter said this was far from the worst or largest fire he'd ever been involved in, but it was the first that involved human lives being put in jeopardy. The Cape May Fire Department responded to 1,925 calls in 2010 and since Coulter has been there, he said that number increases every year.

He said he hopes the number of members in the fire departments around the area increases or at least remains the same for situations like the Merion Inn fire.

"Our manpower is very limited," he said. "We were fortunate to get that call during a shift change."

Following the incident, the website for the Merion Inn thanked every department and organization that came to their aid during and after the fire.

Vendors Wanted!

LOWER TOWNSHIP - The Lower Township Recreation Department is now accepting vendor applications for the 2nd Annual Farmers Market and the Independence Day Festival. Interested vendors should call 609-886-7880, ext. 8.

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Lower Township receives \$700,000 in small cities block grant from state

VILLAS - Lower Township Manager Mike Voll announced that Lower Township will receive two Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (totaling \$700,000) from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA).

One grant, for \$500,000, will fund the extension and reconstruction of five storm water beach outfalls in the Villas. The streets include: St. Johns Avenue, Greenwood Avenue, Cloverdale Avenue, Arbor Road and Wildwood Avenue. The benefit of this outfall project would be the elimination of flooding conditions and potential property damage as it would allow the

stormwater to discharge during storms without obstruction.

The second grant for \$200,000 will fund the rehabilitation of approximately 9 units of low-income, owner-occupied, single-family housing.

The Township Manager and Council give credit to Colleen Crippen, grants coordinator for preparing a successful application. We are very pleased to have such professionals on staff.

NJCA's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program funds economic development, community revitalization and public facilities projects. The projects are designed to benefit people of low and moderate income, to address local redevelopment strategies, and to address emergency needs for which no other funding is available. Small Cities Grants are funded through NJCA Division of Community Resources.

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