

WCM equipment repairs expands company budget

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY - The West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company needs to repair its ladder truck, but has already expended its budget, Commissioner Ramsey Geyer said.

Geyer brought up the issue at Wednesday's commission meeting, saying this was the time when governing bodies are permitted to move funds from one line item to another. Geyer was asking the commissioners to look at where they could find funds to transfer to the fire company, which needs about \$2,500 to repair

the platform on the ladder truck.

"They have \$3,000 for uniform expenses - maybe they can use that for repairs," Mayor Pam Kaithern said.

"If it's an emergency and a need, and they have money of their own, you think they could handle emergency repairs," Commissioner Peter Burke said.

Asked if it was a repair that needed to be taken care of immediately, Fire Chief Chuck McPherson said it was like a failed car inspection.

"It gives us a little time to fix it, but you can't go on indefinitely," he said.

Geyer said Underwriters

Laboratory performed the inspection on the ladder truck and found items in need of repair. The fire company spent about \$3,500 on repairs, but a problem with the ladder platform requires an additional \$2,500.

"United Laboratories did not say it was unsafe to operate, but it needed to be fixed," Geyer said.

McPherson said he doesn't know how safe the platform is while not repaired.

"If someone gets hurt, if they don't want to fix it, don't want to pay for it?" McPherson said. "The truck is not exactly broken. But am I liable or is the borough

liable if someone is hurt? Do I take the truck out of service? It's a gray area."

McPherson said he has been working on the issue with Geyer and he believes the other two commissioners are just refusing to make an emergency appropriation.

Last week, Burke said the money left at the end of the year is normally already accounted for.

"The borough runs on a very tight budget," he said.

Burke said if you take funds from another account you are taking from another need of the borough.

"The fire company has its own funds, and we don't know

what they do with it," he said.

Kaithern said if they took money from one department because they didn't spend it quickly enough it wouldn't be there if they need it. However, she said if the ladder truck was an emergency it would take it to another priority level.

McPherson said it's hard for the fire company to get by on \$60,000. Lower Township, he said has a \$1.2 million budget for fire service, and the Cape May Fire Department has a \$1.5 budget. He said the fire company can and does raise funds, but said no borough department has to raise funds. Additionally, West

Cape May residents pay \$88 a year for fire service. McPherson said his fire tax in Lower Township was \$600.

"If Public Works needs a new step ladder or a dump truck you won't see them out standing in the street," McPherson said. "We're here to protect the citizens of West Cape May and we're just asking for a little help to maintain the equipment they own."

McPherson said the paid for one pumper and the ladder truck. He said the other three vehicles were purchased by the fire company at no cost to the taxpayers.

City postpones Sewell's Point ordinance, passes others

Continued from Page A1

Two properties on St. John's Avenue belonging to JCP&L will be transferred to the city following the remediation project.

Council also introduced Ordinance 197-2009, which is the city's salary ordinance. City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the ordinance contains the titles for all employees and their rates of pay. Some salaries were amended in the ordinance to comply with minimum wage regulations.

City council passed three ordinances after second reading and public hearing. Ordinance 190-2009 deals with waste and storm water management systems. The ordinance, MacLeod said, brings the city in line with Department of Environmental Protection standards. One provision of the ordinance requires lids on trash containers. MacLeod said one issue dealt with before passage was releasing property owners from responsibility for the collection

covers. Another issue was the upgrading of parking lot storm water grates. "Whenever a parking lot is resurfaced a new style of grates with smaller holes will be installed," MacLeod said. Another provision will allow property owners in some areas, particularly those with sump pumps, to hook up to city sewer lines while road reconstruction is going on, and the city would waive the fee for the hook-up. Those who reuse water from sump pumps, such as for irrigation, would not be required to hook

up to the storm water system. Ordinance 192-2009 repealed Ordinance 437-2005, which established registered sex offender prohibition zones. Monzo said last year the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled such ordinances were not constitutional and were preempted by Megan's Law.

"The city enacted the ordinance but it was never enforced," Monzo said.

Ordinance 194-2009 authorized the city's implementation of Cape May's COAH plan. The city received sub-

stantive certification for its COAH plan on Oct. 16. The city applied before the end of last year, and is one of 44 municipalities to receive such certification. Included in the ordinance were zoning modifications for developers constructing affordable housing, development fees, and authorizing Triad Associates as the administrative agent for the city's COAH program.

Monzo said the city had previously established a development fee in lieu of constructing affordable housing, which is dedicated to an affordable

housing fund. Developers are required to pay 1.5 percent of the value of residential construction and 2.5 percent of commercial construction into the fund.

A developer is required to set aside 20 percent of new units for affordable housing on projects of five or more units or contribute to the fund. One and a half percent would be charged for projects of less than five units.

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The Oceanside Community Club meets monthly. They are a non-profit group serving to help the community. Their main charity this year is Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. By supporting the bake sale you will be helping these children have a wonderful Christmas.

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Entered at Post Office in Pleasantville, NJ 08232 as a periodical (USPS 619020)

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: By mail in Cape May County: \$22; East of Mississippi, \$25; West of Mississippi, \$29, Mail subscriptions paid in advance. Newsstand price: \$.50 per copy.

PUBLICATIONS SCHEDULE: Weekly, every Thursday.

POSTMASTER: Send address change to Cape May Star and Wave, 600 Park Blvd. #28, West Cape May, NJ 08204.

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