

Engineering firms present to Council

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Washington Street Mall. However, he started his engineering firm 50 years ago, and his firm has represented one municipality for 49 years. Fralinger Engineering now has a staff of 50, including 10 senior members who account for 225 combined years of experience.

Fralinger was also the structural engineer selected by Kimmel Bogrette and authorized by city council for the Convention Hall project. Carl Gaskill of Fralinger Engineering went over areas of the firm's experience, which included building design, land use planning, and road improvements, to name a few. Councilwoman Terri Swain asked about Fralinger's experience with grant applications. Gaskill said Fralinger has worked with USA grants on water and sewer projects and obtaining small cities development block grants.

Councilman Niels Favre had specific questions for Steve Nardelli, who is the structural engineer on the Convention Hall project, asking about his experience with the project and potential challenges.

"The project is moving well actually," he said. "We moved pretty fast with the DEP getting them down here and on site."

Favre also asked if Nardelli's workload was not too strenuous due to serving on half a dozen zoning and planning boards. Nardelli

seemed reluctant to say his workload was not heavy in front of his employer, but said he was serving with five small municipalities.

Mahaney said he was pleased to see Fralinger's fees were set as opposed to offering a range.

Mahaney asked each firm if any member of the firm had faced professional discipline, or if any conflict of interest existed. Each firm said no to each question.

Next interviewed was Jim Mott of Mott Associates, Ocean City, the firm contracted for the new Cape May Fire Department driveway and apron. Mott began his presentation by addressing the fire-house driveway project, saying the low bid was 24 percent lower than the engineer's estimate. He said he would not be surprised if the contractor finished the project in five days, and anticipates the curing of concrete to be completed by mid-June.

Mott, who operates with a staff of 13, said his first job was with the Cape May County Engineer's Office, and his first project was widening Jackson Street in Cape May. He cited several other projects including the Cape Island Creek outflow pipe replacement project, designing the Madison Avenue storm water drainage system, and the Fisherman's Memorial.

Mott eventually went into the private sector and was hired as city engineer for Cape May. He worked on projects such as redesigning

water and sewer systems for Columbia and Sewell Avenues, the water tower at Columbia and Madison and the Solarium project. Mott was also the engineer when the beach replenishment project began. He also worked as the planning and zoning board engineer in Cape May until 2000. He was board engineer when the Christian Admiral demolition issue was raised.

"That was one of the most difficult decisions I've seen a board have to make," Mott said.

Mahaney said the board ultimately voted 5-4 in favor of demolition.

Mott has been municipal engineer for Egg Harbor Township, which has been doing about \$2.5 million in capital projects each year. His firm is city engineer in Somers Point and for the last 10 years has been a planner for Hamilton Township.

"We only do municipal engineering work," Mott said. "And our record on grants has been phenomenal."

Like Fralinger, Mott said he would not bill the city for travel time. Mott said his firm would not charge the city for attending any council meetings. He also said his firm had a lower overhead than competing firms and he would hold his rates for two years.

Favre questioned a statement in Mott's resume saying he would be a liaison between the city and firms employed to do engineering and planning work. Mott said he

would be the city engineer, but sometimes projects have special needs calling for a specific type of engineering.

The final candidate was Schaeffer, Nassar and Scheidegg, Mays Landing, represented by David Scheidegg and Randy Scheule, who works in the firm's planning department. The firm purchased the Karabashian Eddington Planning Group in 2005 to create what Scheidegg called "a well-rounded engineering firm."

"We don't subcontract unless it's something very specific," he said.

Scheidegg's listed the firm's experience, which involved municipal planning, Master

Plan review, street improvement design, feasibility studies, etc., as each of the other firms have done. Scheidegg also listed working on grant applications for other municipalities as one aspect of the firm's experience. His firm is currently the municipal engineer for Buena Vista Township, and represents Corbin City and the Town of Hammonton.

Scheidegg said he did the design for the ballpark in North Wildwood, which eventually became a condominium complex. His firm has worked with coastal towns such as Atlantic City and Sea Isle City. He said about 40 percent of his firm's work is in the public sector.

Deputy Mayor Linda Steenrod asked each firm what they would do to ensure projects were completed and not stalled by minor details that somehow held up completion. Each firm's representatives indicated there are generally contractual requirements that fine contractors if work is not completed on schedule, and that the firm oversees and communicates with the contractors to ensure promptness.

The vote to select a firm to be the city engineer was held at the council meeting on Wednesday evening, too late for this edition of the Star and Wave.

Budget passes in Lower

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township council institute a hiring freeze to stem future spending. Beck said he believed in looking carefully at any hires, but did not want to hamstring the township if it needed to fill positions.

"We're not hiring anyone without taking a close look and seeing what we're doing, but I won't box ourselves in by saying there will be a freeze," he said.

Councilman Glenn Douglass said he did not agree with a hiring freeze.

"And I don't want anymore cuts to police," he said.

Douglass also asked if the two sergeant's positions were being abolished, but Township Manager Kathy McPherson said they just wouldn't be filled.

"We're not changing the ordinance," Beck added.

Another resident said the elementary school budget saw no increase, and the regional school district had a .18 percent increase, asking why township council couldn't do the same. Beck said while that is true for the school district this year, he

suggested the resident look at previous years and see if that was the case.

Beck also said the average tax bill in Lower Township is \$3,300, and half of that is for schools. About one-third goes to the township and the remainder to the county.

Councilman Wayne Mazurek said the Lower Cape May Regional School District

Beck asked the residents attending the meeting to be patient with his administration.

"I promise you this - this house will be in order financially," he said.

Beck said the previous budget exceeded the spending cap and the 2009 budget is below it.

Douglass added that the

'We're not waiting to get wet. We're putting up the umbrella now.'

-Lower Township Mayor Mike Beck on the municipal budget

was able to hold the line on spending because of big cuts in health care obligations. The district offered a health care buy-out for married employees and 50 people took the buy-out.

Asked what Beck meant when he said the council was addressing budget issues preparing for next year - as opposed to making changes in the 2009 budget - Beck said the only way to make significant cuts in the 2009 budget was to start laying off township employees.

council would be looking to consolidate more services in order to better benefit township residents.

Resident Fred Long asked if the township had looked at overtime and comp time payments to township employees.

"I suggest you take a sharp look at that," he said.

Mazurek said the 2009 budget was the most scrutinized budget he had seen as a councilman.

"I'm pretty happy with what we did," he said.

Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare told the public, "I didn't get in this game to pay more taxes. We will scrutinize everything."

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Entered at Post Office in Cape May, NJ 08204 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.

ASSISTANCE:
For information on starting mail home delivery of the Cape May Star & Wave call 609-884-3466 weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm.