

Sale

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who if not paid before, would be paid then the property changes hands. That could take a while, however.

"If the property is sold the liens have to be paid. You could have money tied up for five years," she said.

Jackson said a mortgage company will often pay the liens because they don't want the property foreclosed upon.

In most cases, however, people generally pay on their own. Amounts on the tax sale range from \$15.71 to \$30,918.50.

Some of the smaller amounts are on wetlands, which can't be developed, so they have almost no taxable value. Jackson said there are a number of lots owned by a developer who has to pay 71-cents per year in taxes. The township tacks on a \$15 administrative fee, which is the minimum, and that accounts for the \$15.71 owed.

One property owner owes about \$15,000 in taxes and fees. She said the original tax amount was \$12,352 per year. If at the end of the year, she said, if someone owes more than \$10,000 they are

assessed a 6 percent penalty. There is also interest added to the amount owed. If the amount is below \$1,500, the interest is 8 percent. If it's above \$1,500, the interest is 18 percent. Jackson said the \$15,000 figure includes an \$800 penalty and over \$1,800 in interest.

The property owner with an amount owed over \$30,000 is assessed \$25,562 in taxes plus a \$1,650 penalty and over \$3,000 in interest.

Jackson said in these two cases the individual responsible for paying the taxes has not paid them in a year.

In other cases, most of the tax was paid but there were apparent mistakes made.

"We do try to find oversights. I called a lady the other day because the lady didn't pay right the amount," Jackson said.

She said some people end up delinquent because they are second home owners, and they changed their permanent address, which make them hard to find. Jackson said when that happens the township does its best to find them.

If a tax account is put through the tax sale, and if

no one bids the lien goes to the township. The township only has to wait six months to start foreclosure. Jackson said if it's an attractive property, someone or a company might purchase the lien, but they will have to wait two years before it can go to foreclosure. She said, on the other hand, if the lien holder can get a judge to say the property is abandoned they foreclose after six months. Jackson said most of the properties listed on the tax sale do not get to this point.

"I would say most people end up paying the lien off at

some point," she said.

Sometimes, she said, someone is trying to sell the property and doesn't want to put money out until it's sold, at which time all taxes and liens must be paid. She said a lot of mortgage companies, in cases where the taxes are not escrowed, will pay before the tax sale.

"Or, they wait to see if you are going to pay it," she said.

Of the 509 properties listed in the tax sale, Jackson hopes to see that number under 200 by April 23.

CRDA

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just about ready to be mailed to the CRDA for review.

Gaffney referred to the new Convention Hall as the biggest financial burden the city has taken on and funding for the project is crucial.

In other Convention Hall news, Cape May City Council approved a resolution for a change order six from Ogren Construction, costing \$168,000.

The work includes \$111,000

of Nelson Cooney Theatrical Lighting, aluminum conduit and labor. There is also a 400-amp company switch being installed, which will allow performers at concerts to plug into the system.

Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman said the stage lighting installation will be done by Ogren, which will save money and time by not putting the item out to bid. He said the Convention Hall project was still within its \$8 million construction budget

and on schedule.

Mayor Ed Mahaney said in the original bid for Convention Hall, there were certain add-on alternatives involving installation of equipment. He said by letting the primary contractor take care of certain aspects, the city could save money.

"We thought if we pulled them out of the general contract bid, we probably could get a better price by handling them ourselves," Mahaney said.

Budget

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He said the city is getting rid of around \$853,000 in debt from old items in 2014 as well.

"We don't expect any impact at all from Convention Hall because we are going to replace old debt with the Convention Hall debt," he said.

MacLeod said the Convention Hall debt service is only in the form of bond anticipation notes and bonds are expected to be sold over the next two years. He said the budget shows interest of less than one percent on the anticipation notes.

Costello noted debt service in 2012 rose from \$2.1 million to about \$2.2 million

- an approximate \$92,000 increase. However, he said the amount would not increase over the years.

"Do you want to carve that in stone?" Gaffney said.

Costello said he would stick by his comment.

Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman said this is the 17th budget he has been a part of and said he felt it was the best possible scenario for the city. He said it would not be good practice for the city to try to reduce the 1.1-cent increase. Wichterman said the owner of a \$700,000 home would only be paying about an extra \$7 a month this year, which he felt was reasonable given the current cost of living.

Mayor Ed Mahaney said the

city has an AA bond rating and only two entities in the county have a higher rating. He said the bond rating of Cape May has increased every year since 1995. Mahaney said it would not be a good idea to use surplus funding for decreasing the 2012 tax rate because it could ultimately hurt the city's bond rating, which has happened to other municipalities.

"When ours went up, others went down because they didn't have an adequate surplus," he said.

He said those municipalities also saw their bond rate lower because their debt service increased while old debt was not being taken care of.

USCG

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The station will also be home to Aids to Navigation Cape May, which oversees over 700 navigation aids and multiple lighthouses. The multi-mission building will also support the three 87-foot patrol boats stationed in Cape May - the Ibis, Mako and Finback. The vessel maintenance area covers around 3,500 square feet of the new station.

Rear Adm. William Lee of the 5th Coast Guard District, said it's not often the Coast Guard is given the funding to build a new building like the new multi-mission station.

"I've been in the Coast Guard 32 years, and I can count on one hand the new stations that have opened," he said.

Lee thanked Congressman Frank LoBiondo (R-2nd NJ District), who was responsible

for securing federal funding to build the station. LoBiondo said the Coast Guard is constantly asked to do so much with so little, and the training center was in dire need of a new facility.

"These are the young men and women serving their nation, and putting them in a premier facility like this shows how much we appreciate their devotion," he said. "We tell our service members 'thank you,' but words only go so far. We take for granted that this is the only recruiting center in the country."

LoBiondo and Kelly were both pleased with the number of projects the Coast Guard has been able to accomplish this year, such as the renovation of the dining hall and the completion of the new multi-training/gymnasium facility.

LoBiondo, Coast Guard subcommittee head, said Pres. Barack Obama is proposing \$600 million in cuts for the fiscal year budget beginning Oct. 1, which LoBiondo said is unacceptable and ignores the needs of the nation and commitment of the U.S. Coast Guard. The budget has been proposed and will be taken to Congress.

LoBiondo said the training center could be training half the recruits they normally do by next year.

Kelly said for years, the station has trained around 5,000 recruits per year. He said this year it will be around 3,200 and is preparing to train roughly 2,500 recruits in 2013. He said it's not just a federal budget reducing the number of Coast Guard trainees, but also the economy reducing the Coast Guard attrition.

"People aren't getting out," he said. "With a bad economy like this, people are staying in."

He said with such a low number of Coast Guard members leaving or retiring from the military, there is a slightly lesser need for new recruits. However, Kelly said the quality of recruits coming in has only risen, which has caused the Coast Guard to become more selective with their applicants.

"We had recruits graduating today with Bachelor's Degrees and Master's Degrees," he said. "Recruit quality is way up."

USCG 1 - Congressman Frank LoBiondo and Rear Adm. William Lee cut the ribbon for the new multi-mission facility at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May

State

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comment.

West Cape May is also a member of the regional school district along with Lower Township and Cape May City. In the 1950s, Cape May Point opted not to join the district and decided to pay tuition to send just two or three students. The formula used at that time was based solely on the number of students sent from the municipality until the current funding formula

was put in place.

Wichterman said the school board could also change the formula, but because most of the board members are from Lower Township, they won't vote to change the formula either. In December 2003, the board voted 6-2 against a resolution from Cape May asking to change the funding formula to one based on 40 percent from students enrolled and 60 percent from property value.

In January, Wichterman asked Mayor Ed Mahaney to

contact Sen. Jeff Van Drew for help. Wichterman said Van Drew has not done much to assist Cape May, so he was forced to go to the governor.

Wichterman hopes Cerf will attend the meeting on March 30, especially after City Solicitor Tony Monzo said legislation allows the Commissioner of Education to modify the apportioned formula in the situation where municipalities voluntarily join or form a regional school district.

Storm

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the morning their mother said they had to get out of the house. They didn't travel far, however, going only as far as York Street in West Cape May, where they spent five days with family friends.

O'Neill said the tide came up April 6, but they got no water on York Avenue.

"That was Tuesday. The storm was still to come on Ash Wednesday," he said.

After the storm passed, from his perspective, the neighborhood didn't look much worse for the wear. There was still water lying around and some branches to be picked up. But then he went down to the beach.

"It was unreal," O'Neill said.

O'Neill said he would see water coming through what was left of Convention Hall,

and where the Pier House Restaurant is located now, at the corner of Beach and Pittsburg.

"At Convention Hall I could see the ocean looking through it. The Boardwalk was all out in the street," he said. "There were lost businesses... Playland across from Carney's, shops opposite the Top of the Marq (Marquis de Lafayette Hotel)."

O'Neill said except for the water, their home was untouched. He said all the other neighbors stayed and rode out the storm as well. He said he saw no serious damage in the neighborhood, and his father had played it safe by removing that motor from the furnace.

"The beachfront was the worst. It took a week or two to clean up," he said.

O'Neill said the schools closed on Ash Wednesday and

didn't reopen until Monday.

O'Neill said people couldn't believe the destruction the storm wreaked on the beachfront. Some talked about the 1944 storm, and another one in 1950, but he was still too young to remember those storms. But he recalls that on Ash Wednesday 1962, everyone stayed in their homes. O'Neill stayed in 2011 as well, when officials were telling people to evacuate.

"I stayed during Hurricane Irene but went to the firehouse. I also stayed for Gloria, but we boarded up the house," he said.

Most of the O'Neill clan is still in the area. Only Michael, who lives in California moved away. Frances lives in Mickels Run and teaches at Sandman Consolidated School. Stephen lives in North Cape May and Kevin on Maple Avenue.

Russell started working later in high school. He worked at Douglass' Market doing stock work. He went to work at Swain's Hardware, where he marked 33 years just the other week.

Over time, O'Neill has seen changes in the community. He said as a kid there were no B&Bs in town - they were all private homes. Later, many homes were converted to a bed and breakfast.

"Now they are going back to private homes," he said.

O'Neill said he remembered Convention Hall as a fun place to visit. He mentioned the fishing pier on the back, the dance for kids, and shops where the kids could pick up treats. The replacement Convention Hall didn't have the same character.

O'Neill said the new Convention Hall, the third he has seen in his lifetime, looks beautiful from a distance.

Construction continues toward its Memorial Day ribbon cutting date.

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**WRATH OF THE TITANS 2D PG-13 12:20
**WRATH OF THE TITANS 3D PG-13 2:45, 5:05, 7:30, 9:55
21 JUMP STREET R 12:05, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50
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TIDES
March/April 2012
Eastern Standard Time

	High	Low
	A.M.	P.M.
28	12:27	6:21
29	12:42	7:11
30	1:34	2:16
31	2:35	3:22
1	3:40	4:26
2	4:42	5:23
3	5:39	6:14
4	6:31	7:02
	Moon Phases	
	Full Moon, March 8	
	Last Quarter, March 14	
	New Moon, March 22	
	First Quarter, 30	
	Perigee, March 10	
	Apogee, March 26	