

Point

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Township. Commissioner Bob Moffat is the Director of Public Safety.

Another large element of public safety is fire and EMS. The Cape May Fire and Rescue Department provides ambulance service on Cape Island, which includes Cape May, Cape May Point, West Cape May and part of Lower Township. The Point has a shared services agreement with Cape May for EMS, costing the borough \$22,000.

The Point maintains its own fire volunteer department, known locally as Cape May Fire Company No. 1, which currently has 31 members. VanHeeswyk said the borough budgeted \$8,000 in 2012 for the volunteer fire company, plus another \$500 for operating expenses. She said the fire company owns the building and the borough owns the fire trucks.

The Cape May Point Beach Patrol also falls under Public Safety. The borough currently employs 19 lifeguards, who start guarding beaches on the Saturday of the third week in June until Labor Day.

The borough also hires 16 beach taggers for the summer.

Keeping the borough clean is another important function of taxes. VanHeeswyk said the borough has a contract for \$70,000 to have trash picked up weekly and recyclables weekly in the summer and every other week the rest of the year. VanHeeswyk said

the elimination of trash can corrals at the street not only enhanced the appearance of the Point, but is expected to reduce the cost of trash/recyclables collection. She said with the corrals in place, the trash contractor would have to stop at every property to see if there was trash in the cans, even if the homeowner had not been there for months. Now, they only stop where cans are placed by the street, saving time for the contractor.

Public Works falls under the oversight of its director, Mayor Skip Stanger. Public Works has three full time employees – a supervisor, two workers and a casual worker used for inspections, etc. The Public Works department maintains buildings, grounds and roads. Stanger said they maintain all public grounds, including grassy areas, such as Pavilion Circle, as well as the beaches and beach entrances.

“They rake the beaches from Lehigh to Stites Beach,” Stanger said, adding that there has been some environmental concern expressed over raking beaches.

Alexander Beach is a protected beach and not raked.

Stanger said Public Works plows snow in the winter, picks up bagged lawn debris, keeps storm water drains clear and maintain water tower. Stanger said Public Works would be taking on a greater responsibility with regard to Lake Lily.

“I spent some time (speaking)

with the Environmental Commission, and Public Works is going to be assuming some things volunteers have done in the past, but this is all in the future,” he said.

Stanger said the borough will also assume more responsibility for funding for borough property, such as Lake Lily. One of the more immediate tasks is controlling recently discovered parrot feather, an invasive aquatic weed. He said the Environmental Commission is statutorily mandated by the state that reports to the governing body, and he has asked them to report on what they want the “gems” of Cape May Point to look like.

To provide all the services listed, and others, the Point tax rate for 2012 was .258 per \$100 of assessed value, down 1.13 percent from last year. The 2012 Cape May Point Municipal Budget was \$1,686,462.58. Of that amount, \$1,323,946.03 was raised by the local purpose tax, which is down 1.03 percent from 2011.

The assessed valuation for the Point is \$513,079,442, which is up .07 percent from 2011. VanHeeswyk said the borough assessments are within the range of what the county requires, and a revaluation is not imminent.

She said the tax collection rate is around 99.2 percent.

The Cape May Point year around population, according to the 2010 census, was 291, up 50 people from 2000. In the readjustment the popu-

lation was said to be down about 10 people from that. The summer population is around 4,000 people.

VanHeeswyk is the Point's Director of Revenue and Finance. She oversees the largest department, which employees 10 people, many of them part-time. Four of the positions are statutory. Revenue and Finance includes the clerk, registrar, administrator, election clerk, tax assessor, code enforcement, code official, zoning officer, CFO, bookkeeper, receptionist, deputy clerk. The planning and zoning boards are all volunteers, but the boards have to be funded, including paying for the professionals – the board solicitors and engineers – borough legal services and the auditor.

The borough also rents the fire hall from the fire company for its upstairs meeting room for \$3,600 per year.

VanHeeswyk said the borough runs a water/sewer utility that is separate from the regular budget. Point homeowners get a water/sewer bill from the borough.

In order to control spending, vanHeeswyk said it is carefully monitored. She said the borough also monitors staffing levels.

“It's always been tightly run, and the new administration is looking at new and better ways to try and consolidate things...prioritizing for more efficiency,” she said.

VanHeeswyk said the borough has 18 shared services agreements, such as for

police services, but many are for small amounts, some like \$1,000 year. The Board of Commissioners just authorized an interlocal agreement with Cape May County and its participating municipalities for the loaning and borrowing of equipment. If the borough needs a piece of equipment for a short period of time, it will be able to borrow the equipment from another municipality. Likewise, the borough equipment would be loaned to other municipalities.

VanHeeswyk said the borough looks at the cost of doing things in-house first, but if the cost is greater than hiring an outside contractor, they will hire someone else.

VanHeeswyk said grants are a way of cutting costs, but the borough has to look at the matching funds that the municipality is required to put up. The borough did accept a grant for the resurfacing of West Lake Drive, which will cover \$180,000, or about three-quarters of the cost of the project. VanHeeswyk said getting a grant doesn't save money unless you have a project.

“For a town our size we had better need a project - we need to know where to get the grants, but need to have a reason to apply,” she said.

The borough also saves money by belonging to the Joint Insurance Fund, or JIF.

According to borough clerk/administrator Connie Mahon, by belonging to the JIF the borough pays an annual

assessment, like a premium, of \$35,000 per year. She said the borough recently asked for a private bid for the same coverage and it came back at \$95,000 for the same coverage.

“We asked for an insurance quote from AON, they're like Lloyds of London, and they declined to give us a quote. They said, “You're way too small for us to be effective in any way, sorry,” Mahon said.

The JIF assessment is \$35,915 paid in quarterly increments. Mahon said along with JIF membership come guidelines, which are designed to minimize risk. The guidelines include not serving alcohol on public property, which includes the beaches.

In summary, vanHeeswyk said good fiscal management combined with best practices, such as sharing services, and monitoring staffing levels, helps keep taxes in line with the services the borough offers.

“I think people get a good value in Cape May Point, they get a good value for their taxes,” she said.

Lake

Continued from page A1

mentations saying they would like to see as much as possible of the invasive parrot feathers species removed by hand from around the edge of the lake, with spraying if needed.

“It is understood that the removal of parrot feathers would be done by a few knowledgeable volunteers to take care not to bother native species,” Sachs said.

Parrot feathers was described as a fine-leaved, well rooted species, and it is

necessary to remove all the roots in order to eradicate the species.

Sachs said the commission supports the use of chemicals if necessary, but supports the best means of removing invasive species, such as pickerel weeds, also found at the lake. She said they also supported the planting of cattails in specific areas to help control phragmites.

“What it boils down to is we discovered a new invasive species in lake,” Stanger said.

Stanger made a motion to approve the Environmental Commission's recommendations. Deputy Mayor Anita vanHeeswyk recommended waiting another week to find out more on the status of the pickerel weed population.

In other business, Commissioner Bob Moffat, Director of Public Safety, said local residents were working with the Cape May Police Department to address speed-

ing on Cape, Lighthouse and Lincoln. He said some residents agreed to allow police to park in private driveways to monitor traffic speed.

Moffat said they would also work on monitoring bicycle regulations.

Moffat also reported what he called a healthy growth in beach tag sales – about \$3,000 above last year. He also said the Beach Patrol now has three EMTs on the staff, and they would provide assistance on and off the beach.

He said it was determined to be both economical and financially sound to repair and maintain the existing Emergency Management/Beach Patrol vehicle at this time rather than replace it.

Moffat also reminded the public of the Sept. 15 Adopt A Beach Program beach clean up.

vanHeeswyk said the borough continues to work with the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) issues. She said the state has been attempting to confiscate aging COAH funds.

“They are going to have to come to us and prove we have to give it up,” she said.

VanHeeswyk said the borough's insurance premium is down 9.8 percent because they are insuring with the Atlantic/Cape May County Joint Insurance Fund.

“We are pooling together to become a large group,” she said. “Us going alone to a large company...they just can't help us.”

vanHeeswyk also said there have been comments on how clean the Point is, but there were also nine summonses written this year. She said the commissioners were going to discuss the ordinance to allow for a friendly letter to be sent if there was an infraction.

“By this time people have to figure out how to comply,” she said.

Cape May Point residents used to have trash can corrals at the curb, but they were banned by ordinance. vanHeeswyk indicated this would probably result in a cost savings since the trash collection contractor no longer has to stop at every house to see if there is trash. Residents now put out their cans on trash day and remove them after pick up.

Stanger said the next phase of the beach replenishment was going out to bid and the Army Corps of Engineers had hoped to award the contract on Sept. 4. The plan is to replenish sand on St. Peters Beach and Lighthouse Beach, part of a \$4.556 million project, which includes placing 91,800 cubic yards of sand on Lighthouse Beach, with an option for another 22,000 cubic yards, and 37,000 cubic yards for St. Peters Beach.

Stanger said in going over some old bonds they found an item for a wash station for vehicles. He said instead the commissioners would investigate entering into an agreement with the city of Cape May to use their facility.

He said the irrigation pumps in Pavilion Circle are working, but there continues to be problems with the pumps at the pumping station near the water tower.

The Cape May Point Board of Commissioners will meet again on Thursday, Sept. 13, at 7 p.m., upstairs in the firehouse.



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6	12:07	12:30	6	5:57	6:51
7	12:54	1:19	7	6:40	7:46
8	1:48	2:15	8	7:29	8:46
9	2:50	3:16	9	8:26	9:46
10	3:54	4:16	10	9:27	10:40
11	4:52	5:10	11	10:26	11:28

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