

Cape May Point OKs budget with no tax increase

By JACK FICHTER

Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Borough Commission approved its 2019 budget with no increase in the local purpose tax.

The tax rate remains at 29.6 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The budget totals \$1.8 million with \$1.3 million to be raised by local purpose tax.

At an April 11 meeting, auditor Mike Garcia, of Ford-Scott and Associates, of Ocean City, said spending was up \$17,000, less than 1 percent of the total budget. He said the majority of the increase was salary increases of about \$18,000.

The biggest increase in

salaries was for beach taggers in order to meet the new state statutory requirement for \$10 per hour minimum wage, Garcia said. He said the budget had about \$4,000 earmarked to raise the lower end hourly rate on beach taggers to the \$10 mark.

Garcia said the budget was \$63,000 below the state-mandated 3.5 percent spending cap and \$496,000 below the 2 percent tax levy cap. The borough has a 99.27 percent tax collection rate, up from 98.2 percent from last year.

"We're nearly at the highest rate of collection that we've had in the last 10 years other than 2011," he said. "In 2011, we were slightly higher."

When the borough collects

a high percentage of taxes, it allows a minimization of the reserve for uncollected taxes and builds the surplus account, Garcia said.

Cape May Point has \$750,139 available in its surplus account, the highest amount in 10 years. This year's budget uses \$243,807 of surplus funding which represented 33 percent of the total available surplus, according to Garcia.

The borough has been using more surplus to balance the budget in the past two years. He said over the last 10 years, the amount of surplus used has averaged 28 percent of available surplus.

"We are not over relying on surplus," Garcia said.

Of revenues for the bor-

ough, 72 percent is raised by property tax with 13 percent coming from local revenue, predominantly from beach fees and rental permits, he said.

Of expenditures, 34 percent goes to salaries, wages and retirement payments, capital improvements at 21 percent and police protection at 16 percent.

Garcia said of the budget for the Department of Public Affairs and Public Safety, 52 percent is spent on police protection from the city of Cape May, 2 percent for the borough's volunteer fire company and 22 percent for lifeguard salaries.

The budget for the Department of Revenue and Finance earmarks 22 percent

for the municipal clerk's office, 14 percent for the finance office, 9 percent for tax collection, 5 percent for planning and zoning, 7 percent for legal fees, 9 percent for insurance and 4 percent for computers.

Of the budget for the Department of Public Works, Parks and Public Properties, 39 percent is reserved for public works and roads, 4 percent for engineering fees, 19 percent for public buildings and grounds, 4 percent for beach maintenance and 15 percent for trash removal, according to Garcia.

The borough's Water and Sewer Utility has a surplus of \$171,208. He said the surplus was less stable than the borough's surplus

account. The utility is using \$104,341 or 61 percent of surplus to balance its budget, he said.

Revenues for the Water and Sewer Utility are comprised of 51 percent from water bills, 36 percent from sewer bills and 13 percent from the surplus account, Garcia said. He said the utility was using less surplus this year, \$137,000 last year, compared to \$104,341 this year.

He said the Water and Sewer Utility spends 10 percent of its budget on salary and wages and 70 percent on purchasing water from the city of Cape May at \$230,000 and \$251,000 for sewage services from the county Municipal Utilities Authority.

Coast Guard mess hall serves about 570,000 meals per year

By MARK ALLEN

Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — My earliest recollection of a military mess is a blurry memory of an innocuous, oversized, stifling hot Quonset hut of World War II vintage.

Truthfully, it was not much more than a shack with opaque windows and an interior illuminated by rows of bare incandescent bulbs hanging over long rows of rough-hewn wooden tables and matching benches.

The mess hall of my earliest memory was bare bones. Meals, or "chow," per the accepted parlance of the time, was served up on six-compartment steel trays that the new Marines retrieved from a table upon entering the building. Mess hall chow

was served only twice daily; the third meal consisted of out-of-date C-Rations left over from the last war.

Unsmiling, soon to be discharged mess-men dressed in what once upon a time had been white mess uniforms but were now stained and filthy from food slop, stood behind huge vats and trays of food. Meanwhile, we lined up, and one at a time holding our trays at attention just barely touching the tips of our noses; our eyes straight ahead, resisting the temptation to focus on anything.

When it was our turn to be served, we would march in a regimented fashion up to the first messman and lower our tray so that it was parallel to the floor, or deck, (again in that parlance). At this point, a slight almost cruel twitch

might appear at the corners of the messman's mouth, when with a theatrical flourish he (they were all males in those days) slammed an oversized portion of something starchy, gooey and always overcooked — be it powdered eggs, mashed potatoes, hash or whatever — onto our tray with a huge oversized aluminum spatula.

As he did so, a loud smack echoed throughout the building. Finally, if at this point we had buddies, they might make a "hole" so that we could squeeze into a small space on one of the benches. After reciting the obligatory prayer of thanksgiving to Chesty, we dug into the contents of our tray; we only had 5 minutes to wolf it down. Chow time in the Marine Corps.

That was then. Mess halls

have come a long way since I was a young Marine. For starters, today in the Coast Guard, the facility is commonly referred to as the "galley." My wife and I often visit on a Sunday morning to enjoy the very best brunch available anywhere in Cape May.

The galley aboard Training Center Cape May is located in Etheridge Hall, which itself is situated between the hospital and the gym. In terms of numbers, the galley serves about 300 recruits three meals each a day. It also provides meals for the permanent party, about 70; the day care center, another 70; and the hospital, which represents 30 or 40 additional meals. That's about 570,000 per year. The galley chef prepares a five-week menu that rotates every week so as to

provide variety. Remember, recruits are only expected to be at TRACEN for eight weeks, so it's likely they may never see the same weekly menu more than once. Before going to the cooks, the schedule is then reviewed and approved by the senior chief. Interesting, the galley also caters special events such as promotion dinners, change of commands and "hail and farewell" celebrations.

Menus include vegan, vegetarian, healthy choice and kosher options. Recruits have access to a salad bar, a potato bar and even a pizza bar. Exceptions based on a particular religion are accommodated. There is little concern over specific food allergies since life or death allergies are a cause for rejection in the first place. Recruits have little occasion to tarry over a meal because they have only about 20 minutes to eat. The galley serves up meals at a strict pace of five recruits per minute. The biggest hold-up, according to what I've been told, are when the company commanders arrive. CCs use mealtime as a window of opportunity to instruct or "communicate" with their recruits.

The galley is not staffed by Coast Guardsmen since it is too large of a requirement to handle "in-house." Rather, all cooks, food preparers, line servers and cleaning functions are handled and staffed by a contractor, Galley Corp.,

which has been doing so for the past five years.

Especially as they near the end of their eight-week basic training, recruits begin to relax and enjoy mealtime. According to one source, "They actually love the food lines in weeks seven and eight because it gives them a chance to talk to real people, normal people. My girls are always nice to the recruits and the recruits respond in kind. It's a nice, personal connection."

Gretchen and I often go aboard the base for Sunday brunch, which is excellent. But how about a normal recruit day? Since I'm writing this on a Wednesday, let's look at what was on the menu for a typical Wednesday. For breakfast there was Farina, a pancake on a stick, scrambled eggs or hard-boiled eggs. There were tater tots, turkey sausage links, breakfast nachos and corned beef hash.

For lunch, we had chicken and wild rice soup, buffalo chicken thighs, pulled pork nachos, a salad of cole slaw, french fries, steamed carrots, sautéed zucchini, tri-colored cauliflower and a corn dog. Dinner was more of the chicken and wild rice soup, BBQ turkey breast, hot dogs and beans, baked macaroni and cheese, roasted whole sweet potatoes, milk and honey corn on the cobb, stewed tomatoes, sautéed green beans and chicken tenders.

TIDES : April 17-24, 2019

| DATE | HIGH | | LOW | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | A.M. | P.M. | A.M. | P.M. |
| 17 | 7:01 | 7:32 | 12:32 | 1:05 |
| 18 | 7:52 | 8:20 | 1:27 | 1:52 |
| 19 | 8:41 | 9:06 | 2:20 | 2:38 |
| 20 | 9:28 | 9:52 | 3:10 | 3:23 |
| 21 | 10:14 | 10:37 | 3:59 | 4:07 |
| 22 | 11:01 | 11:22 | 4:49 | 4:52 |
| 23 | 11:50 | | 5:39 | 5:39 |
| 24 | 12:09 | 12:41 | 6:30 | 6:28 |

MOON PHASES

Full moon, April 19 • last quarter, April 26

Cape May Star & Wave

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CAPE MAY COUNTY COAST GUARD COMMUNITY WEEK

APRIL 27 - MAY 4, 2019

• APRIL 27

Southern New Jersey Coast Guard Ball

at The Wildwoods Convention Center 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Tickets available at coastguardcommunity.org

• MAY 4

Coast Guard Community Festival

at TRACEN 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

APRIL 11 - MAY 9

Art Show

at The Mad Batter

APRIL 14

Art Show Opening Reception

at The Mad Batter

3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

APRIL 26

Launch of Open Brow Beer

at MudHen Brewing Company

APRIL 27 - MAY 5

Youth Art Show

at Nature Center of Cape May

APRIL 29

Coast Guard Salute

at MudHen Brewing Company

MAY 1

Youth Art Show Awards

at Nature Center of Cape May

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

MAY 1

Cape May County Museum

Reception

exhibit opening reception at 7:00 pm

MAY 1 - SEPTEMBER 27

Cape May County Museum Exhibit

MAY 2

U.S. Life Saving Station 30 Program

at Fourth St. & Atlantic Ave., Ocean City

7:00 pm

CoastGuardCommunity.org

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