

# Point water bills may rise; cost-of-living raise considered

By RACHEL SHUBIN

Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Borough commissioners have begun the 2020 budget process and are planning for a cost-of-living increase and possible higher water costs from Cape May.

Commissioner Bob Mullock said during a work session Oct. 29 that some years the borough can absorb the costs.

"We met with our chief financial officer and started working on our budget," Mullock said. "It looks like we're going to end up with water and sewer in fairly good shape. We have increases in water with the costs-of-living increases. The past couple of years it's been 2 percent, but this year looks like living increases up to 3.5 percent."

Cape May Point has a contract for water with the Cape May Water Department.

"We will do as much as we possibly can to absorb that increase in water, but we are subject to what happens in the Cape May Water Department for what eventually becomes pricing with us," Mullock said. "We have a nice contract with them. We expect to end this year in good shape and we will see what happens with the surplus."

Environmental Commission Chairwoman Catherine Busch asked commissioners if the cost of living for personnel is built into the budget.

"We look at personnel each year," Mullock said. "We don't necessarily have a contract or type of agreement, though all commissioners are sensitive to the employees and budget."

Busch asked if the borough semiroutinely offers a cost-of-living adjustment to borough employees.

"For Public Works, we have increases each year that are appropriate to the

jobs they do and ranges for each employee," Mullock said. "We also have now the consideration of the increase in minimum wage, so that maybe will even speed up increases that will go faster than the cost-of-living increase, because the minimum wage increases are higher than what's being realized as far as the cost of living."

Busch asked if the borough does merit increases and cost of living and if the borough has a system.

"Each of us runs our departments separately," Deputy Mayor Anita VanHeeswyk said. "I'm pretty merit-based and I find that more than likely it covers the cost of living. I don't do the same thing every year for everybody. I do reward good work."

Mayor Bob Moffatt said the beach program budget is overseen by Beach Patrol Capt. Bill Oat and Beach Tag Program Coordinator Chris Garrison.

"Chris and Bill put their budgets together," Moffatt said. "They present them to us for approval, but they certainly do follow a merit system."

Busch asked for clarification that the borough does not have a cost-of-living system.

"Yes, that's right," Moffatt said.

VanHeeswyk said they do not work with unions or negotiate contracts.

"It gives us the leeway to do merit more than just straight cost of living," VanHeeswyk said. "Our contracts for things like water, police, those are based on a percentage. I think salaries I view differently."

In other news, commissioners approved an ordinance to fund the remaining \$68,075 needed for the Lake Lily landscaping improvement project. The total amount of the project is \$133,000, including plants, landscaping, trees, shrubs, perennials,

brickwork and hardscaping. "The landscaper who won the bid is prepared to come in quickly, so right now it looks good," Mullock said. "I like the pathway and I think the coloring looks good and blends in pretty nice; we will keep working on that."

Resident Peg Fraatz asked the commissioners if the vendor for the plants was selling natural plans environmentally friendly for Cape May Point.

"Yes, that is included in the specs and approval from the Environmental Commission and Friends of Lake Lily," Mullock said. "We went over them in two years' time."

Fraatz also asked if there were a warranty for the plants.

"I believe there is," Mullock said. "There was a matter of discussion with [borough engineer] Bruce, so I would expect it was included."

Business Administrator Steve O'Connor provided commissioners updates on current borough projects.

"After you approve the ordinance today, the planning can start tomorrow," O'Connor said. "We got an extension from the county for the Open Space contract until June 20. You can't go around the extension."

O'Connor said current projects, including the storm-water project, should be completed by the end of the week and the paving on Central Avenue should be finished in two to three weeks.

"The plans and specs are done for Pearl and Brainard. We are waiting for the DEP's approval before we put it out there," O'Connor said. "If we can get it done before May [2020] it will be done in spring, if not we have to wait until fall."

Mullock said it was most likely Pearl Avenue would be done by the spring. Public Works Director Bill Gibson said if bids are put out by

next week and received by Dec. 5, then the storm drain work could be completed this winter.

"Then in the spring we could pave it and we don't want them going in May," Gibson said.

Mullock said it was likely to occur in April or early May.

"We are looking at a seasonal gardener for Cape May Point," Mullock said. "It's important to remember the maintenance of these projects. We enjoy a number of areas that don't require a tremendous amount of maintenance, where we keep things natural. We spend a good amount of money each year on lighting and irrigation systems [at the Circle]."

While working on Cambridge Avenue, the borough ran into street sewer lines needing to go over top of the water lines.

"It really was a great amount of work they had to do to lower the water line and put in additional connections," Mullock said. "There is probably six different additional connections [Bill] had to put in."

Gibson said the water main was shut off on Cambridge and was not on a map because it was buried years ago.

"We did find one in the circle and when we tried to shut it off, it broke," Gibson said. "We had to put a new valve in and for Cambridge (Avenue) we also did the one for Ocean (Avenue) while we were in there. They had to lower the pipe to let storm-water come through."

Gibson said it was an eight-hour affair to move the mains for the storm water to come through.

"They dug up a pretty massive area," Gibson said. "In the process of doing so, I did negotiate a little bit on the borough's behalf so they did some work for us while they were in there, replacing the valves for free. We just gave

them some parts to do what they had to do and in return we got the work for free. It was a benefit on the borough's behalf. Now we have a better system to shut valves off. Yesterday I had to shut 15 valves off just to shut the road down. Now in doing that, if we have an issue with that road, we can shut valves off and isolate it for that block."

In 2020, Cape May Point will be having a study done to have all the valves located, Mullock said.

"It's required by the DEP to do a water asset management plan by going through all of our future infrastructure and placements," Gibson said. "We are lucky we are smaller and it's only costing us about \$25,000. Other townships pay more."

VanHeeswyk asked if there was grant money to do this research and study. Mullock said not for this study but the borough is applying for a lead grant through its engineer.

"We are looking into the Yale Avenue water main replacement," Gibson said. "Bruce will work with them to get general information."

The borough's Best Practices Survey was submitted and the borough received a score of 42.5 out of 53, clerk Elaine Wallace said.

VanHeeswyk asked if commissioners were going to get a report from county engineer Robert Church on changes to a plan for traffic-calming measures on borough roads.

O'Connor said Church reported he was hoping to get back to the borough by the middle of November.

"Because I got that information from the Taxpayers' (Bulletin), I think I would have preferred to get it here first and have the Taxpayers (Association) report on this meeting," VanHeeswyk said. "I would have expected your report to come here first. I thought you were working for us."

O'Connor said Taxpayers Association President Connie Campenella asked him to reach out to Church and he did.

"I work for everybody," O'Connor said.

VanHeeswyk said she thought it was only fair to have the information on record in the minutes as it came through from the Taxpayers Association bulletin. She then read to the commissioners from the bulletin email.

"Borough Administrator Steve O'Connor shared with us this update about the traffic-calming plans in an email to the county engineer," VanHeeswyk said. "Robert Church reported the changes have been made to the plans based on the last meeting with Cape May Point officials."

VanHeeswyk said Church is receptive to things when she has seen and spoken to him. She continued to read from the bulletin email.

"More changes are under consideration and Mr. Church chose to meet with the project consultant to redo everything before the end of October. Then, the goal is to provide the borough with a 90 percent completed set of plans, or final concurrence, before we prepare the big package for Mr. Church," VanHeeswyk read. "Mr. Church also noted that some Cape May Point residents have suggested incorporating raised speed pillows, see description below

Connie Campanella wrote, along Cape Ave or possibly Lighthouse Ave as means to control speed. The county has installed them on Main Street in Dennisville and has received very positive feedback from the residents concerning their effectiveness."

VanHeeswyk said speed on these streets has been a constant through many terms in the borough and it was extremely important to share with everyone in the minutes.

## Lower voters approve aquatic center referendum question by slim margin

By JACK FICHTER

Cape May Star and Wave

Voters in Lower Township said "yes" on a nonbinding referendum question on whether the township should construct a \$10.5 million aquatic center at the county airport by a slim margin of 107 votes. A total of 2,945 "yes" votes were cast for the proposed aquatic center and 2,838 "no" votes.

In the 1st District Legislative race, Republicans Lower Township Mayor Erik Simonsen and Ocean City Councilman Antwan McClellan defeated Democrats Bruce Land and Matt Milam. Simonsen told the

Star and Wave he would resign as mayor but continue his position as athletic director at Lower Cape May Regional High School. Deputy Mayor Frank Sippel will move up to the mayor's seat while an appointee will fill the council seat until the next election.

For three seats on the Cape May Board of Education, the winners were Anita DeSatnick with 633 votes, or 35.66 percent; Dawn Austin with 574 votes, or 32.34 percent; and Edward Connolly with 553 votes, or 31.15 percent.

For three Lower Cape May Regional School District Board of Education seats,

winners were Gary Douglass with 3,278 votes, or 25 percent; Nicole Morrison with 2,507 votes, or 19.16 percent; and Frank Onorato with 2,483, or 18.98 percent.

For three Lower Township Elementary School Board of Education seats, winners were Sally Drozd Yerk with 2,718, or 20.84 percent; Nichole Koch with 2,376 votes, or 18.21 percent; and Charles Utsch with 2,146 votes, or 16.45 percent.

Two seats were filled on the West Cape May Board of Education. Brian Groetsch was elected with 247. Dan Kurkowski was elected to the school board as a write-in candidate.

## No Shave November to aid cancer victim

CAPE MAY — The Cape May Police Department will again be participating in this year's No Shave November and again teaming up with the other police departments in the county to raise money to help a family dealing with cancer.

This year the police department will be raising money to support the Higginbottom family. Jennifer Higginbottom, a 34-year-

old mother of two young boys, was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. She is a graduate of the Middle Township High School and is employed by the county library but is currently not working due to treatments.

Higginbottom has already undergone a double mastectomy and is currently receiving chemotherapy treatments. Her husband

is Sgt. Mark Higginbottom, an 18-year veteran of the Middle Township Police Department.

The public is encouraged to participate. Donations may be made by sending a check payable to Cape May Police Department Welfare Fund. Write "No-Shave" in the memo field. Mail checks to the Cape May Police Department, 643 Washington St., Cape May, NJ 08204.

City of Cape May • 2019

# LEAF COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Loose leaves raked to the curb will be collected on the day/week of your scheduled street maintenance route.

**LEAVES CONTAINING DEBRIS, TRASH OR BRANCHES WILL NOT BE COLLECTED**

ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3
All streets running North, South, East & West	All streets running North, South, East & West	All streets running North, South, East & West
Beach Avenue to West Perry Street	Ocean Street to Madison Avenue	Madison Avenue to Wilmington Avenue
3rd to Ocean Street	Beach Avenue to Lafayette Street	Beach Avenue to Lafayette Street includes Clay Street & St. James Place
Oct. 28th to Nov. 1st and Nov. 18th to 22nd	Nov. 4th to 8th and Nov. 25th to 27th	Nov. 11th to 15th and Dec. 2nd to 6th

Leaves, Branches, and Grass may be dropped off at the Recycle Yard  
830 Canning House Lane, Cape May  
For more information call The Public Works Dept. 609-884-9570

**MURDER FOR TWO: THE HOLIDAY EDITION**

A HOLIDAY MUSICAL FOR ALL AGES  
Book and Music by Joe Kinosian  
Book and Lyrics by Kellen Blair  
Directed by Hans Friedrichs

**NOV 6 - DEC 29**  
THUR-SAT @ 7:30 PM  
SAT & SUN @ 3:00 PM

November 22nd - Best-Value Night  
Kids are free at every Matinee with a paid Adult ticket

**Join us for**  
Will and Anthony:  
Home for the Holidays  
Saturday, November 30th  
8:00 PM



Holiday Spirit Package  
Enjoy our holiday musical "Murder for Two: The Holiday Edition" on November 30th at 3:00 PM and then join us for Will and Anthony: Home for the Holidays, a special one-night-only holiday concert at 8:00 PM. Also, consider the Holiday Deluxe Package, which also includes a ticket to "A Congress Hall Christmas" on December 1st at 3:00 PM all for one low price!

**FOR TICKETS: 609-770-8311 or CAPEMAYSTAGE.ORG**  
CAPE MAY STAGE - 405 LAFAYETTE ST., CAPE MAY, NJ



**Holiday Preview Weekend**

**Tree Lighting Ceremony**  
Saturday, Nov. 23: 7pm  
Emlen Physick Estate  
1048 Washington St.  
Sponsored by Sturdy Savings Bank

**Free Activities**  
TREE LIGHTING • HOLIDAY EXHIBIT  
SELF-GUIDED TOURS  
OF THE PHYSICK ESTATE  
6pm-8pm  
REFRESHMENTS • CAROLING • MUSIC

Donations of non-perishable food items will be accepted for the Cape May Community Food Closet

**The Cape May Holiday Season begins**  
**November 22 - 24**  
Ghosts of Christmas Past Trolley Rides  
Santa's Trolley Rides  
Holiday Lights Trolley Rides  
Food & Wine Events and more!

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