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POLICE, EMTS AMONG VISITORS ON CAREER DAY

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Lower OKs budget, 1.9-cent tax rate increase

Independent members criticize use of MUA funds to pay salaries of four new police officers

BY JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — In a 3-2 vote falling along party lines, Lower Township Council approved its 2015 budget and a 1.9-cent tax rate increase.

The local tax rate for the year 2015 is 55.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The municipal purpose tax will be \$555 for every \$100,000 of assessed value. A home assessed at \$200,000

will see an annual increase of \$30. Republican Councilmen Erick Simonsen, David Perry and Tom Conrad voted for the budget, while independents Mayor Michael Beck and Deputy Mayor Norris Clark cast “no” votes.

At its introduction, the budget contained a 2.5-cent tax rate increase, which was reduced to 1.9 cents by using a \$205,000 contribution from Lower Township Municipal Utilities

Authority (MUA) to pay the salaries of four new police officers expected to be hired this year.

Clark called the budget a “cop out,” because council was not showing a willingness to do all it could do to save money for taxpayers. He said merging the MUA with the township would be the ultimate in shared services.

“We’re funding this budget by taking the ratepayer money, and that’s wrong,” Clark said. “It’s wrong be-

cause they should be kept separate. Ratepayer money should be kept into an account, so that the rates can be kept low and so that we can have money to take care of unforeseen needs in the infrastructure of our MUA.”

He criticized the hiring of an attorney as township solicitor whose fee was \$42,000 more than other bids. When Republicans gained the balance of power in January, council voted 3-2 to replace township

solicitor Ron Gelzunus with David Stefankiewicz.

Beck said dissolving the MUA would have saved the township \$1 million, which he called a “low estimate.” He also questioned increasing the Police Department from 42 to 46 officers. Beck said he supported having 44 officers, noting crime-rate figures are showing a decrease in the

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Little League season in full swing



Kim Royster/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cooper Daly throws out the first pitch for his age group as Lower Township Little League holds its opening day April 18. At right, Allie Marmello sings the national anthem. Far right, Christian Campanaro on the pitcher’s mound. At bottom, players wait to play ball. Below, Coast Guard Capt. Todd Prestige, left, Little League President Todd Shoffler, center, and Assemblyman Bob Andrzejczak sing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.”



City bid to change funding formula at LCMR in limbo

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Little action is expected in the near future in the city’s fight to change the funding formula of Lower Cape May Regional High School.

At an April 7 City Council meeting, City Solicitor Tony Monzo said any further legal action was in a “state of limbo.”

“The city’s counsel has advised the city to wait for certain decisions that are being handled currently at the state level and that in the next year, the city would look at some alternatives in terms of what to do next,” he said.

Monzo said nothing was pending at the moment before the state or any court.

Councilman Jack Wichterman, who was selected by council to finish the unexpired term of Jerry Inderwies Jr., said he was very much in favor of what the city has accomplished on the issue.

“What we have done is fulfilled all the requirements that we had to fulfill before we take the matter into court,” Wichterman said.

He said Cape May is not the only municipality challenging the regional school-funding formula.

“There are others who are pursuing right now in court,” Wichterman said.

The city’s special counsel, Vito Gagliardi and Kerri Wright, are waiting to see what decisions come down from northern New Jersey, he said.

Wright said two cases are pending before the Appellate Division that they were “keeping an eye on.” One case involves North Haledon, which is not likely to be argued until September, she said.

Haledon and Prospect Park are trying to overturn a decision by the state Commissioner of Education that would require the boroughs to pay additional money to Manchester

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Cape May Elementary to mark 50th with fete

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — It was a different world when Cape May City Elementary School opened its doors to students for the first time Sept. 8, 1965.

Ford had just introduced the Mustang, The Who had its first hit record, “The Sound of Music” was playing in movie theaters and the ground war in Vietnam had just begun.

In Cape May, the Rev. Carl McIntire threatened to move Shelton College out of the city over a failure to receive a zoning variance, 85 low-income federally sponsored housing units were approved for Lafayette Street, construction of a new Convention Hall began with a bid of \$69,952, a pound of Eight O’Clock coffee cost 67 cents in Acme and a new home in North Cape May could be

Bids to replace swimming pool at elementary school too high, city says.
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purchased for \$13,990. The school will celebrate its 50th anniversary June 5. Beginning at 5:30 p.m., the event will include tours of the school, refreshments and live music from the band “Old School.”

The anniversary event will allow former classmates and teachers to reunite. The school is hoping to reach as many former students as possible. A survey on capemaycityschool.org allows former students to

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