



THE TIMES

FORMERLY
THE
SCOTCH PLAINS TIMES
AND
FANWOOD
INDEPENDENT

VOL. 9 NO. 4

SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD, N.J., THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1968

10 CENTS A COPY

"Rip" Collins in New Party Assignment

Union County Republican Chairman Loree "Rip" Collins has announced his resignation from that post to become a special advisor on legislative affairs to Webster B. Todd, State Chairman. Collins, who has been Union County Chairman since September, 1966, said his resignation would become effective February 7. His announcement surprised a county executive committee meeting at the Stage House Inn last Saturday.

Commenting on the appointment, Todd said "I cannot underestimate the importance of this new responsibility that 'Rip' has accepted and I look forward to a long and mutually constructive association with him in Trenton".

Todd explained that the non-salaried post has been created to meet the responsibilities the Party has to all of the people of the State, who have given legislative leadership to the Republicans with two-thirds of both houses.

Commenting on his new appointment Collins said, "The challenge we as Republicans face in New Jersey in the future is formidable and I am honored that Mr. Todd feels I can make a contribution to the Party's effort."

"I will be the funnel for groups that want to be heard," Collins said. "Labor and management, doctors of Medicare, dope addicts and the like. The legislators don't have staffs to do research and set up policy, so that's my job."

Collins won the Union chairmanship in a close race with Irving Velinsky of Plainfield after Jay A. Stemmer announced his

Budget Hearing "Full of Sound and Fury" - Produces Few Solutions

180 Attend School Board Budget Hearing

New teachers' salary guide and the spiraling costs of municipal competition for quality teachers were major points raised at a Board of Education hearing on the 1968-69 school budget Tuesday night. The new budget, subject of a February 6 election, includes an increase of \$1,126,117 in proposed total expenditures, \$836,857 of which results from an increase in the number of teachers, across-the-board salary hikes, and mandatory incremental increases.

Approximately one hundred and eighty people attended the hearing. Many indicated that the tax increase (estimated at \$11.25 per month on a \$25,000 home) was higher than they wished to see. The majority praised the Board for dedication and work in preparing the budget, but many asked for some form of action in holding the line of annual increases in teachers' salaries. Several suggested that the communities within the county get together to jointly avoid the competitive salary guides, jumping each year in municipalities anxious to attract top teachers.

Several drew comparisons to industrial pay-raise methods. Former Scotch Plains Mayor George Johnson said he could understand raising the base pay to attract new talent (the rate increases to \$6500 in the budget) but nowhere in industry, he said, does the increase apply across the board to all employees. An area realtor, Ray Winters, pointed out the example of a teacher at Stage 7 in the scale, whose salary jumps from \$7900 to \$9200. He asked who in the audience could expect an annual increase of \$1300.

With regard to salaries, Board members said that a cutback in the salary guide would be a disaster with the schools suffering greatly in teacher quality. SINCE such a large portion of the budget is unchangeable due to the cut in state aid, a lowering of the salary scale would not provide that great an annual relief to the taxpayer.

The \$600 increase in starting rate over last year, they said, is not unusual when compared to surrounding communities. It enables the local board to retain some competitive advantage without "overdoing it" they said. Comparing Scotch Plains with area districts, they said we pay less for teachers per pupil than any communities except Clark and Rahway.

Ralph Davis, an executive from Sunnyfield Lane, said that any budgets with which he is familiar, including church and business, would not tolerate increases of more than ten percent. He stated that all the communities with which Scotch Plains is competing have more tax rates except Westfield.

Board members pointed out that this is an unusual budget, since it started out with a quarter million dollar loss in state aid. The state aid is given to a school district during its first five years

of regionalization, completed here with the past year. In addition, \$136,000 is a new item in the budget, for the new busing of pupils to private schools.

An increased enrollment of 200 for next year involves the hiring of several new teachers: eight in senior high, five in junior high, and one at the elementary level. In addition, two specialists will be added, a social worker-psychologist and a learning disabilities-reading teacher, necessary to qualify for aid. Two elementary school librarians, two experts to guide all elementary teachers in fast-changing fields of math and social studies, one guidance counselor for both junior highs, and seven auxiliary personnel to release teachers from lunch and study hall.

It was explained that the teachers' aides would not provide extra free time for teachers, but would enable them to spend more fruitful hours researching their lesson plans or aiding students.

Speaking of the rate of increase Board President Sheldon Anderson said "It imposes burdens, on all, and we know it". Faced with the state aid decreases, he said the Board was faced with four choices: 1) a severe austerity budget, greatly sacrificing quality, 2) a maintenance budget without improvements, again sacrificing quality, 3) a budget maintaining present levels, necessitating minor improvements, 4) improving the quality of education. The Board, after long months of deliberation, he said, elected step 3.

John Mielach of Heritage Lane, Scotch Plains expressed apprehension over patterns being established by the percentage of raise. He pointed out that the actual raise in revenue from local property tax is at 40 percent, a jump from \$3,930,676 to \$5,448,926. He questioned where the trend would stop, and said that this increased budget shows a decrease in capital outlay, which cannot be expected in future budgets. Several other residents expressed concern over their ability to afford the taxes in the community.

Mrs. William Hodge, long active in The Association for Good Schools, reminded the audience of the condition of the Scotch Plains schools ten years ago. She said the system has shown overwhelming improvement, and that children and their education are the most precious commodity to be considered.

Township Budget Hearing Scheduled

A \$2,671,275 budget for 1968 was introduced on Tuesday night at the Township Committee Meeting. With anticipated revenues of \$1,607,721, a remaining sum of \$1,063,554 must be raised from local taxation. The budget increase of 364,528 is occasioned by jumps of 67,849 in county taxes, 1,112,683 in local Board of Education budget, and 145,385 in municipal operating costs.

If the county and regional school taxes are confirmed, the total tax rate, based on property

assessed valuations of 88,407,-313,44 will be 7.18 per 100 of assessed valuation - with taxes based on the new 50 percent assessment.

The budget outlines expenditures of 1,063,553,76 for local purposes, 4,486,500 for regional school taxes, and 672,900 for county taxes, plus 125,230 for veterans' and senior citizens' exemptions. The total on which the tax rate is calculated tallies to 6,348,183,76. Figures for 1967 included 918,295.93 for local purposes, 3,373,817.47 for schools, and 585,051.45 for county. The Proposed School Budget would absorb about 70% of the total tax levy.

The budget, in its entirety, will be published in a forthcoming issue of the TIMES. A public hearing will be held in the Municipal Building at 8:30 p.m. on February 20.

retirement in 1966. This was after Collins' own legislative career ended with the Democratic upsurge in 1965. Since then the former Navy football great has had the satisfaction of seeing his parth rise from that devastating defeat to last fall's overwhelming triumph.

Local Police Officer Named Head of State Group

Lt. Joseph J. Powers of the Scotch Plains Police Department was installed as president of the New Jersey State Identification Officers Association at a dinner meeting of the association at Snuffy's Steak House last Thursday night. Lt. Powers has been

a member of the Scotch Plains Police Department since 1946. According to Lt. Powers, the New Jersey Identification Officers Association, now in its 30th year, has never been more necessary than at this time when

scientific identification is so important in the apprehension and conviction of criminals. The association membership is made up of police officers from all parts of the state and is affiliated with similar organizations in New York state and Connecticut.



Left to Right - Past President Lt. James Lesak Jr., Garwood; Chief Dominic Spinelli, South Plainfield; Lt. Joseph Powers, newly installed President of N.J. State Identification Officer's Assn. and Scotch Plains Chief James Osnato.