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School 1 To Be \$300,000 Short

If you find that the family pocketbook simply won't stretch far enough this year, you are not alone. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district is scrambling as hard as the average breadwinner to find the loopholes to offset a reduction of \$300,000 or thereabouts in spendable monies for school operations during the current school year. Board President Richard M. Bard reported this week that the "shortfall" should run anywhere from \$325,000 to \$375,000. This is over and above the \$820,000 in budget cuts agreed upon by the governing bodies and the Board of Education last May.

Why the unexpected gap? Bard cited \$180,000 less in state aid than had been anticipated when plans were made for the 1975-76 budget. This pullback in state aid is being felt in districts throughout New Jersey, but is particularly difficult in Scotch Plains-Fanwood, Bard said, due to the absence of any surplus which could be applied to offset the decrease in state aid. Many districts have turned to their surplus account, he said, but in Scotch Plains-Fanwood, the surplus going into this school year was only \$8,000. Why? Bard said previous boards spent any surplus accumulated at the end of a fiscal year.

Over and above the \$180,000 less in aid, is another \$88,000 in what is called "building aid" which the board had anticipated and is not receiving. There has always been a formula used by the state in determining what is paid a district toward paying off its building indebtedness, and that area is a part of the monies withdrawn on the state level.

The remaining areas are more familiar to the householder. "Utilities" is the name of the problem. Fuel has skyrocketed, way above the anticipated increases established at budget building time. Electrical increases are soaring way beyond any anticipations, and telephone bills are playing a major role in the higher costs, Bard noted. Commercial telephones now have gone to message unit billing as of September 29th. After the first 75 message units, the district pays 6-1/2 cents for each additional unit. When one is paying the bills for a multi-million dollar operation such as the local school district, this new basis for billing tends to double telephone bills. Bard finished off the tale of woe with a reference to extreme increases in legal bills. "Let's face it, we had not anticipated legal bills to be as high as they are. The reason is that there is ever more legal involvement, people are suing us more," he said.

Next question. Where will the district get the difference

Scotch Plains Sets Expenditure Program Five-Year Capital

Major Portion Of Funds Allocated For Flood Control

The Scotch Plains Township Council outlined a \$3,662,500 program of capital improvements to be undertaken by the community over a six-year span, from the current year through 1980.

If governmental officials adhere to the program they approved in resolution form last week, the heaviest burdens from capital expenditures will come in the year 1976, when Scotch Plains tackles major storm improvement projects involving the Cedar Brook. During that year, the township anticipates an expenditure of \$1,143,000 for capital improvements, with \$900,000 earmarked for the Cedar Brook, and an additional \$30,000 for related detention basin engineering services. The \$900,000, it is expected, will represent one-half of the total cost of an elaborate dual detention basin project designed to relieve flooding occasioned by the overflow and backup of the Cedar Brook. The other half of the Cedar Brook project, which would be undertaken simultaneously in Scotch Plains and in Plainfield, would be picked up by the county.

As civic officials see it now, total capital improvements for the current year should run \$269,600. In future years, the estimated figures are: \$1,143,000 in 1976; \$955,000 in 1977; \$455,000 in 1978; \$405,000 in 1979; \$434,900 in 1980.

The preparation of a Capital budget is a state-mandated formality. Each year, municipal officials must prepare a plan for anticipated capital expenditures for the six years ahead and must submit same to Trenton. The action is by resolution, not by ordinance, and is not binding in any way. Officials may change priorities from year to year, including new, eliminating old capital projects as they see fit.

The bulk of the capital improvements, \$3,374,900 of the \$3,662,500 six-year total, will go toward engineering projects. The remaining funds will be shared by Public Property, Fire Department, Police Department, Scotch Hills, the Recreation Commission, Environmental Action, and flooding.

Under engineering, storm sewers represent a sizeable chunk of dollars. This year, no storm sewer projects will be undertaken. Next year, \$90,000 will be spent, \$70,000 on Rahway Road, \$20,000 on Elizabeth Avenue. Then, in 1977, a major storm sewer expenditure will be made, with \$700,000 dedicated toward severing the east branch of the Green Brook. Other 1977 storm sewer areas include Shackminton Drive, Clark's Lane, and Cooper Street. Heather Lane, during the fol-

lowing three years, a scattering of Scotch Plains streets will be sewerred.

Stream improvement is the other big area for capital spending in Scotch Plains. The Cedar Brook detention basin figures heavily here, with \$955,000 of a \$1,080,000 six-year total for that improvement.

Sanitary sewers will cost Scotch Plains \$235,000 in years ahead, with the northside of Route 22 and Rahway Road Bonus Hill Drive area to be sewerred, and the Essex Road Pumping Station to be eliminated, at a cost of \$70,000 in 1975.

The township plans to pave Forepaugh Avenue / Weaver Street, Raritan Road from Rahway to Terrill, West Broad from Martine to Lamberts Mill, and rights of way in West Broad and the Park Avenue Ramp, to the tune of \$700,900 over six years. "Curbs will cost a total of \$80,000, and sidewalks will be added at several locations, including Cooper Street, for \$90,000, over a six-year span.

Projects not relating to engineering are expected to cost the township a total of \$287,600 from 1975 through 1980. Various items of road and maintenance equipment will be purchased for Public Property, with expenditures of \$96,100. Replacement of fire equipment will cost about \$15,000, with police department equipment replacements set at the same figure. Scotch Hills Country Club will receive \$7,200 in renovations this year, and recreational improvements have been set at \$85,000 - with \$60,000 of that \$85,000 earmarked for 1976, when it is expected that the township will match Green Acres funds with township funds for construction of additional tennis courts and other improvements at Kramer Manor Park.

Under Environmental Action, the six-year plan shows a figure of \$50,000 to be spent from 1976 through 1979 on a conservation center. To complete the list, specialized flood control projects are expected to cost Scotch Plains \$19,300, with monies to be spent in Mantou Way, Byrd Avenue and Morse Avenue.

**Vote
Next
Tuesday**

Spooks, Ghosts, And Goblins. Another Gala Hallowe'en Coming

Make way, folks? Here comes that super-gala parade of midget people, all dolled up in their great Halloween creations! You can just betcha that there will be dozens of appliance boxes put to good use once again this year, as Fanwood people pull off that creative effort which always results in award-winning Halloween creations. We have it on good authority that this will be the year of the bicentennial costume, and it's a bet that five-and-drummers and Betsy Rosses and red-white-and blue will figure heavily amidst the orange and black for Halloween, 1975.

Halloween night is the big date. Fanwood youngsters will gather at the Fanwood Memorial Library tomorrow (Friday) night at 6:45 p.m. At 7, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raider Marching Band will sound a marching beat and off they'll go, the youth of Fanwood, gaily across Martine, up Marian, and into LaGrande Park, where they will circle round the park in age brackets for a costume judging.

First pre-school and kindergarten, then first through third grade, then fourth through sixth grade will be judged, with winners for Prettiest, Spookiest, Most Original and Funniest. The winners will come up on stage to dip into a giant black "witches-cauldron" filled with coins.

For those who'd rather try a hand at a jack-O-lantern, there will be prizes for those, too! Prettiest, Spookiest, Most Original and Funniest pumpkins will bring prizes to their creators, being pumpkins to LaGrande

Park between 4 and 6 p.m. for arrangement on the judging table.

To finish the evening, there will be a Mystery Telephone award. Kids are invited to fill out forms they've received at school (extra blanks available at the library or at the park on Halloween night). They drop their forms in a special box on stage at the park, and during the half-hour AFTER the festivities are over, a few phone calls will be made to names drawn. If lucky winners are at home to answer in person, a "very worthwhile" prize will be delivered soon after, right to their door, by Recreation Commission officials. (Moms, our Mystery Telephone contest is designed to keep kids off the streets after dark!)

For the exhausted parents who have survived Halloween and fit the hand out for all those eager participants, the Recreation Commission will provide cider, coffee and donuts as a follow-up!

it needs? Bard had already contacted state officials to question whether a referendum could be undertaken to seek voter approval of an additional sum in taxes to offset the difference. He was told this move could be made . . . but it was advised that it might be a poor move, since the referendum would probably go down, and then the district would be no further ahead.

Board members had a meeting planned with Scotch Plains township officials for Tuesday night to discuss other matters, and Bard said it was conceivable that the question of governmental funding could be raised.

Of course, cutbacks is the ultimate alternative Bard said. The Superintendent of Schools Reigh Carpenter, who has already had to decide where to trim some of the funds lost in previous cuts, has been asked to recommend additional areas. His ideas will be considered by the board.

The Board will also focus on what Bard termed its "tangible assets." School One could be sold (a move already in the initial stages), other excess school properties which Bard did not name specifically, could be disposed of for income. "There's not much more we can cut," the Board President said. "We have already cut books and supplies to the bone. In our previous cuts, while we have cut staff, we have not cut staff at the classroom level. We feel we have not affected the students too much so far. Supplies, equipment and replacement of old equipment has already been hacked at. It is disturbing to think we may have to go to staff," he concluded.

First Alarm 84 Years Ago This Month

A fire alarm was given in Fanwood on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 1891, at 7:40 p.m. Members who answered call Messrs. H. P. Robinson, Smith, Gardner, Downer, Gibbs, Warren, Anderson, H. Robinson, W. E. Pentz, W. R. Pentz, J. Querean, H. Querean, L. Tuzo, P. Tuzo, Kye, Richardson, and Lawrence.

Mr. Chas. Richardson house was totally destroyed but through the efforts of Company Mr. W. E. Pentz house was saved. Company was well guided by its asst. foreman H. P. Robinson.

Members who were not excused by toeman and did not answer roll call after fire was out were Messrs. Anderson, Gibbs, Warren, Pentz.