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OFFICIALS SAY UNDISTRIBUTED FUNDS USED TO BALANCE STATE BUDGET

Township Volunteer Rescue Squad Joins Fight For Release of Monies From State EMT Fund; Condemns New Proposed State Regulations

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, joined by other municipalities statewide, is demanding monies be released from the state's Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Fund that was created in 1992 to provide funding for training and recertification of EMT volunteers.

In addition, the New Jersey state League of Municipalities is condemning regulations proposed last July by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services that, according to President of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad Daniel Sullivan, makes it

doubly hard for EMT volunteers to obtain funding and training.

State Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger called the measures over the EMT Fund a case of "regulatory overkill."

The 1992 EMT legislation to financially bolster the state's unique network of volunteer rescue squads was co-sponsored by Assemblyman Bagger and won the support of both the Assembly and Senate. It imposed a 50-cent surcharge on traffic fines to fund the EMT program. Four years later, officials agree that at least \$1.5 million was used from the otherwise

undistributed EMT funds to balance last year's state budget.

The State League of Municipalities passed resolutions last Friday to urge the immediate distribution of funds to the squads. Assemblyman Bagger said that if the Department of Health and Senior Services agrees to drop its proposed regulations, a system for distributing the EMT funds could be implemented fairly soon after.

Assemblyman Bagger urged the department to withdraw its regulatory measures in a letter to its Commissioner, Len Fishman, last Friday. State Senate sponsor for the EMT Training Fund Act, Senator from the 12th District and Majority Leader John O. Bennett, has also expressed his opposition to the regulatory measures in a letter to the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee two weeks ago.

According to officials, Oversight Committees of both the State Senate and Assembly can recommend that the Legislature override the regulations, if the regulations are found to exceed the intent of the law.

Fred Steinkopf, Vice President from the Eighth District of the New Jersey First Aid Council, said he believes the proposed regulations exceed the intent of the laws that created the fund. Mr. Steinkopf said, for example, the proposed regulations include \$200 fines if an EMT volunteer fails to complete paperwork.

He indicated that the regulations discourage volunteerism. He also described situations where volunteer hopefuls were turned away from overcrowded training classes when previous training sites did not meet the Department of Health and Senior Services standards. Before this, the First Aid Council successfully oversaw EMT training, he said. One hundred and twenty hours of initial training are required to be an EMT volunteer, with recertification every three years, officials said.

According to Mr. Sullivan, who also represents 56 area rescue squads as Chairman from the Second District of the state First Aid Council, if the Department's measures prevail,

"Volunteers will be regulated beyond the law, beyond reason and beyond the extent of regulation that we can expect volunteers to bear."

Attorneys for The Association of Governance by Laws, which is looking at the proposed regulations, say, for example, it is difficult to understand how squads can comply fully with the Americans With Disabilities Act under the regulations since it is unclear how disabled volunteers could also comply with certain other requirements for service as EMT volunteers.

Mr. Sullivan has also called the regulatory measures "a power grab" by the Department of Health and Senior Services. Rescue squads are already regulated under the State Department of Transportation, the federal government, the First Aid Council and municipal governments, officials added.

Other rescue squad and First Aid Council members said they are puzzled by the regulations and wonder whether the Department of Health and Senior Services wants "to run the volunteer squads out of existence."

Scotch Plains Mayor Alan M. Augustine said he alerted the League of Municipalities earlier this year to the Department's regulatory measures which in turn led to the League's resolutions opposing the measures. Mayor Augustine said he wants to see the Department rescind the "over-regulation" of the state's EMTs.

"We have an excellent and cost effective volunteer rescue squad in Scotch Plains," he said. "I share their concerns with over-regulation. They should get the EMT funding."

The township has a 50-member volunteer squad answering about 1,000 calls per year. It operates 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week.

Assemblyman Bagger and Augustine represent the 22nd Legislative District which includes Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

Osborn Cannonball Plans Christmas Gala: See Story on Page 2



JOINING THE FIGHT...The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad has joined other municipalities around the state to demand the release of funds from the State's Emergency Medical Technician Fund.

Former Fanwood Mayor Patricia MacDonald Kuran Lauded for Her Dedication to Borough and Education

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Former Fanwood Mayor Patricia MacDonald Kuran, the first woman and the first Democrat to serve as Mayor of the borough, was fondly remembered by friends and colleagues this week for her tireless service to the community, as well as for her generosity to the many students she came to know during her 25 years as a teacher-librarian with the Plainfield school district.

Mrs. Kuran, who died of leukemia on November 19 in Sylmar, California, served two terms as Mayor between 1983 and 1991. She had previously been a Fanwood councilwoman from 1979 to 1982, and was credited with inspiring former Mayor Linda D. Stender, now a member of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly, in their own careers as elected officials.

"She was like my mentor," remarked Mayor Connelly, recalling how she first met Mrs. Kuran while the latter was campaigning door-to-door in the rain for her first term as Mayor. Later encouraged by Mrs. Kuran to run for Borough Council herself, Mrs. Connelly was appointed by her role model to the Fanwood Planning Board, the Environmental Commission and as Police Commissioner.

Although those who knew her well described her as a very private person, Mrs. Kuran was also known for being exceptionally committed to her public role, and as Mayor could be found attending to borough business in her office during afternoons, evenings and on weekends. Mayor Connelly said her friend "really cared about the people in that no message that came in was too insignificant. She loved Fanwood."

Mrs. Katherine Mitchell, a friend of Mrs. Kuran and a past member of the Environmental Commission, said the former Mayor "really researched the issues and really knew what she was talking about." She noted how Mrs. Kuran, both as a councilwoman and as Mayor, regularly attended Union County and state government meetings in order to keep up to date on matters which would affect her constituents.

Deputy Borough Clerk and Deputy Tax Collector Colleen Huehn, who was first hired as a payroll clerk in 1989, during Mayor Kuran's second term, described the former Mayor as "a really lovely lady, always very fair to the residents of Fanwood, and who always had a good listening ear. She always had Fanwood residents' best interests at heart."

During her tenure as Mayor, Mrs. Kuran fought against a ruling by New Jersey's Council On Affordable Housing (COAH), which stated that Fanwood must provide 87 units of low or moderate income housing units in accordance with Mount Laurel requirements established in 1986. She maintained that the borough, which measures only slightly more than one square mile, was already fully developed and could not accommodate the mandate.

Councilman Andrew J. MacDonald recalled how Mrs. Kuran, with the support of the Borough Council, also lobbied "quite vigorously" in favor of the Fanwood Bill, passed by the state Legislature in 1989, which prevented developers from demolishing existing houses in order to acquire vacant land for affordable housing units.

The councilman also recollected how Mrs. Kuran and Mrs. Stender successfully championed the preservation of Fanwood's historic train station by acquiring federal, state and local funds to repair the roof and otherwise restore the Victorian building. "It's a piece of the borough's history and I suspect that if we had done nothing it would be a heap of rubble today," remarked Councilman MacDonald.

Dr. Sharon Katz, a guidance counselor in the Plainfield school district, said her longtime friend, colleague and fellow Democrat preferred to be known as a public servant rather than a politician, and always put the needs of Fanwood residents over any perks her office gave her. The counselor said the former Mayor would frequently type her own letters and would make long-distance calls from her home, rather than use her office telephone.

Dr. Katz noted how Mrs. Kuran also never accepted fees for performing marriage ceremonies, but instead asked those who received her services to make their checks out to the borough, for the benefit of the Fire Department, Rescue Squad, or other municipal agency. She also filled in at weddings for the late Garwood Mayor Georgiana Guierri during the latter's illness, and donated that money back to Garwood. "Pat never kept a penny," Dr. Katz said.

A permanent reminder of her generosity is the red brick "Calahan Walk" and plaque on the front lawn of Fanwood Borough Hall, which was dedicated on January 21, 1990 in memory of Ms. Jeanette Calahan, an employee of the borough. Mrs. Kuran donated funds for the tribute from money she received for performing wedding ceremonies.

Former Mayor Kuran opted not to seek re-election in 1991 due to a back injury she suffered several years earlier which was causing her pain, and was succeeded in office by two fellow Democrats, Mayor Stender served from 1991 to 1995. Mrs. Connelly was elected in 1995.

Mrs. Kuran maintained a successful rapport with Democrats and Republicans alike, never letting partisan differences interfere with effective government, according to Dr.

Katz. A testimonial given in her honor at the end of her second term included accolades from members of her own party, as well as Republicans such as Mountainside Mayor Robert F. Vigilanti, former Roselle Park Mayor Helen Ryan and former Cranford Mayor Edwin H. Force, now Chairman of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Mrs. Kuran also had her name entered into the Congressional Record by United States Senator Frank Lautenberg in recognition of her having been elected the first woman and the first Democratic Mayor of Fanwood.

A descendant on her mother's side of the Denton family, which came to America in the 1600's, Mrs. Kuran was born in Union and had lived in Fanwood since 1959. She was awarded a bachelor's degree in literature and a master's degree in communications and information services from Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

Just as she was known for her selfless approach to governing the borough, she was also remembered for the many ways, large and small, that she enriched the lives of students in the Plainfield school system. She worked as a teacher-librarian first with elementary school students and

later at Plainfield High School, providing instruction in library programs, assistance to students and supervision of overall library functions.

She also extended herself on a personal level, giving students a ride home or loaning them money for lunch or a special activity, according to Dr. Katz, who recalled how the former Mayor once loaned a young girl \$50 to go on a church trip. Mrs. Kuran, who retired from the Plainfield school district last year, had previously worked as a librarian for the RCA and American Management Association.

Mrs. Kuran had recently moved from Fanwood to California to be near her son, Peter Kuran, and her three granddaughters. A graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and the owner of his own special effects company, Mr. Kuran has done work on such theatrical films as "Star Wars," "Edward Scissorhands," and "The Addams Family."

"Her love was helping her town," Dr. Katz commented, adding that she felt her friend could have become governor had her political aspirations risen that high. "She was a brilliant woman, with a dynamic personality, just phenomenal. They'll never be another Pat Kuran."

Fanwood Board of Adjustment OKs Applications For House Additions and Driveway Widening

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Four new applications were approved last Thursday by the Fanwood Board of Adjustment, which also memorialized two resolutions of cases which were heard on October 17.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Bernardo of Watson Road were granted a bulk variance from the borough code in order to construct an addition onto their home for a larger eat-in kitchen.

The couple, who sought to maintain their current sideyard setback of 9.6 feet, required a variance because the permitted side yard setback is 15 feet.

The applicants explained that the proposed addition would be built toward the back of their residence and would not alter the existing sideyard distance between their house and the property line. They reported that their kitchen area is currently little more than an enclosed porch and that they require more space for their family.

Mr. and Mrs. Jason Fernandes were awarded a bulk variance to create a second floor addition to their home on Midway Avenue. The applicants, who have two children, testified that they were seeking the variance in order to provide supplementary bedroom space and an additional bathroom to accommodate their growing family.

"We feel Fanwood is a wonderful town with a good school system," stated Mr. Fernandes, explaining to

the board why he wanted to create the addition onto his home rather than move elsewhere. "We've enjoyed living here, we've made a lot of friends and this is where we'd like to stay."

Mr. and Mrs. Fernandes needed a variance because their proposed side yard setback of 11.75 feet is in non-compliance with the permitted distance of 15 feet. The couple, whose home currently has a side yard setback of 10.27 feet, told officials their planned addition would not enlarge the existing footprint of their house.

On the recommendation of Board Attorney Charles H. Brandt, the Fernandes agreed to amend their application to also include a garage on their property which has a narrower side yard setback than that which is permitted under the borough code. Mr. Brandt advised the couple to amend their application so that they would not have to come back before the board for a separate variance for the garage.

Mr. Fernandes asked the board if it could waive the usual one-month waiting period between approval of the variance and memorialization of the board's decision so that they could commence building the addition before winter. Mrs. Rice responded that the board would send a letter to Building Inspector James Silance stating its willingness to waive the requirement, adding that he would then decide whether to approve it.

Savino P. Lamastra of Portland Avenue received permission from the board to maintain his driveway which, at 22 feet wide, was in non-compliance with the 10-foot width permitted under the borough code. Mr. Lamastra said that he had paved over a gravel portion of his driveway in order to provide more parking space

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REVITALIZING FANWOOD...Fanwood Policemen's Benevolent Association Local No. 123 recently presented a donation to the Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Development Committee for improvements in the downtown business district. Pictured representing Local No. 123, left to right, are: Patrolman Eugene Chin, Treasurer, and Traffic Officer Richard Trigo, President. Accepting on behalf of the committee are Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly and Committee Member Neil Schembre.

DEADLINES HELP PAPER SERVE YOU

Those preparing press releases for submission to The Times are reminded all copy should be in the hands of the Editor at 50 Elm Street, Westfield, by 4 p.m. on the Friday before the Thursday on which they wish it to appear.

Times releases also may be mailed to Post Office Box 368, Scotch Plains, 07076 to meet the above requirements.

For events which happen the weekend prior to publication, press releases should reach the Editor by Monday of the week of publication at 10 a.m.

Obituaries will be taken until Tuesday at 5 p.m.

For events which are planned weeks or months in advance, we encourage submission of stories as early as possible prior to the event.

The above deadlines are meant to enable us to prepare your copy carefully.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING