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ELECTION SPLIT MEANS DEMOCRATS WILL MAINTAIN 4-3 MAJORITY ON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councilman Populus, Mr. Whitaker Victorious on Tuesday In Races for Two Available Seats on Fanwood Governing Body

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Democratic Councilman William J. Populus, Jr. and Republican Joel Whitaker were the winners Tuesday in contested races for two available seats on the Fanwood Borough Council, which will continue to reflect a 4-3 Democratic majority for the next year.

Councilman Populus was reelected to his second full term on the governing body, while Mr. Whitaker won for the first time after three previous bids for a council position. He will occupy the seat currently held by outgoing Republican Councilman Dr. Chester R. Lindsey. Full council terms in Fanwood are for three years.

Councilman Lindsey, a 1995 Mayoral contender, has served two non-consecutive council terms since 1989. He opted not to run for reelection this year, saying he wanted to give others a chance to serve on the governing body.

Unofficial tallies released by Borough Clerk Eleanor McGovern's office after the polls closed Tuesday night showed Councilman Populus to be the top vote getter, with 1,407.

Mr. Whitaker, with 1,368, nearly tied with his runningmate, David Trumpp, who received 1,365. Mr. Populus' runningmate, Patricia Plante, trailed with 1,238 votes.

Among 4,731 registered voters in Fanwood, 2,906 turned out at the polls in this year's general election.

The outcome of this year's election means the council will remain split 3-3 between Republicans and Democrats, with Democratic Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly serving as the breaker in the event of a party line vote. Democrats have held a majority on the council since 1988.

Councilman Populus, 61, of La Grande Avenue, was first appointed to the governing body in 1993. Elected to his first full term the following year, the incumbent currently serves as the borough's Fire Commissioner and as Chairman of the council's Administration and Finance Committee.

Mr. Whitaker, 55, of Marian Avenue, previously ran for council in 1989, 1992 and 1994. He is a former member and Chairman of the Fanwood Planning Board, and also served on the municipality's Downtown Development Commission.

Democratic newcomer Mrs. Plante, 40, of Oakwood Court, is a member of the Fanwood Board of Health and was recently appointed by former Fanwood Mayor Linda D. Stender to the Union County Transportation Advisory Committee.

Mr. Trumpp, 35, of Arlene Court, is the son of former Fanwood Mayor Theodore "Ted" Trumpp. He de-

scribed his debut council campaign as "a wonderful experience," adding that he was looking forward to running for council again in the future.

Mr. Populus, surrounded by a crowd of well-wishers at the South Street Café in Fanwood after the election results were announced, expressed gratitude to Fanwood voters for reelecting him to another term.

"People know me, they know what I'm all about," remarked the council-

man, who listed economic development and deregulation of electric power among his priorities for his second term. "They knew I would continue to take the same path."

Mrs. Plante, who joined the celebration for her runningmate, also praised supporters for their contributions to the Democrats' campaign this year.

She said she was "delighted" by Councilman Populus' win, calling

the latter "unbelievably progressive." Mrs. Plante maintained that the councilman "is going to bring Fanwood into the future."

At a Republican gathering at the Stage House Inn in Scotch Plains, Councilman-elect Whitaker and Mr. Trumpp also reflected on their campaign.

Mr. Whitaker said he conducted a highly active campaign this year, conceding that he had not pursued

his goal as aggressively during previous bids for a seat on the council.

Mr. Whitaker said he and his runningmate walked "virtually the entire town," adding that he found many voters were dissatisfied with the Democrats' long-held majority on the governing body.

"I'm looking forward to working with the council on things we can do to move Fanwood forward," remarked the Councilman-elect, who cited local property taxes and the condition of borough sidewalks among his chief concerns.

"We sent a positive message," commented Mr. Trumpp about the campaign conducted by himself and Mr. Whitaker. "We obviously hit on concerns important to people in Fanwood. We ran a clean campaign and a posi-

tive one that Fanwood citizens deserve.

"I knew it was going to be a hard race because Mr. Populus is very well-liked and respected as a councilman," Mr. Trumpp continued. "I wish him the best."

The candidate added that he was "fortunate enough to have Joel as a runningmate. He deserved to win. We worked well together." Councilman-elect Whitaker reciprocated by calling Mr. Trumpp "a superb campaigner."

Councilman Populus and Councilman-elect Whitaker will be sworn into office during the governing body's annual reorganization meeting on Thursday, January 1, in the Fanwood Borough Council chambers.



CONGRATULATIONS... Councilman-elect Joel Whitaker, second from left, receives warm wishes from fellow Republicans during a victory celebration at the Stage House Inn, after the results of Tuesday's general election were announced. Mr. Whitaker won the seat on the Fanwood Borough Council currently held by Councilman Dr. Chester R. Lindsey, left, who is retiring from the governing body this year. Joining them are Karen Paurocamp, Campaign Manager and President of the Fanwood Republican Club, and Councilman Stuart S. Kline. An additional picture appears on Page 12.

MR. MEADE SAYS BOARD MUST FOLLOW TIGHT FISCAL PROCESS

Dr. Sheldon Says BOE Must Share Responsibility Regarding Deficit

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN
Specially Written for The Times

Albert J. Syvertsen's repeated assertion during the public meeting of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education on October 30 that he and his colleagues on the board were not advised by district administrators of "over-running the budget" was rebuffed by Board President Dr. Donald T. Sheldon.

"We've all received (administrative) reports year after year," Dr. Sheldon said. "We're all here to accept the responsibility that we didn't flag them."

He added that the administration is presently in the process of creating a consistent format for its financial reports to the board.

During the discussion surrounding the \$700,000 deficit in the 1997-1998 school budget, first announced on October 23, Mr. Syvertsen also posed a question regarding the approval of fund transfers within the budget if they exceed what voters have approved.

Board member August L. Ruggiero suggested that a discussion of the budget transfer issue might be "more profitable" if taken up with the auditors during their scheduled meeting with the board on Tuesday, November 11.

In commenting on fund transfers, board member Richard R. Meade said, "We put off transfers that we needed to make sooner. That won't happen again... We were not following a tight fiscal process; that was wrong. This is an opportunity to clean up past processes."

Edward J. Saridaki, Jr., the board's Finance Committee Chairman, attempted to clarify the terminology used in the discussion, explaining that budget adjustments are made on a monthly basis, while fund transfers occur at year-end or three times during the year.

He added, "We can't tie the hands of the administration to pay bills as they come due. Not only budget adjustments, but the transfer of funds within the month as needed (should be considered)."

During the meeting, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol B. Choye reviewed the status of the budget recovery process. The Superintendent, Mr. Saridaki, Dr. Sheldon and Matthew Clarke, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, are conducting a weekly line-by-line review of expenditures.

Dr. Choye noted an increase in "line-item accountability" in purchase orders and professional development requests from school principals and curriculum supervisors. She added that there has been a "noticeable decrease in these requests."

Meetings with budget managers are scheduled for the last two weeks of November. At that time, Dr. Choye, Mr. Clarke and Dr. John R. Crews, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, will review the status of 1997-1998 managers' budgets, as well as preliminary plans for the 1998-1999 school year.

The Superintendent also reported that E. James Lawton of G.R. Murray Insurance was successful in his efforts to get CIGNA, the district's

health insurance carrier, to eliminate a nearly \$92,000 terminal reserve liability charge. Dr. Choye said other potential reductions are under consideration.

In addition, school principals scheduled staff meetings for November 3; Mr. Clarke met with cafeteria managers to advise them to be as cost effective as possible; and the administration remained focused on the budget's under-funded areas, which include substitute teachers, telephone expenses, custodial overtime and maintenance.

With regard to planning for the 1998-1999 school budget, Dr. Choye indicated that Mr. Clarke would be visiting other districts with a "line-by-line budget in practice" to evaluate the efficacy of instituting such a budget here.

During the meeting, Math Supervisor Don Williams and Language Arts/Social Studies Supervisors Pat Boland and Diane Kelly presented an overview of Scotch Plains-Fanwood students' performance on standard-

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TRICK OR TREAT... Lauren Eckert and Kelly Yingling show off their Halloween costumes during last week's parade in Fanwood.

Towns Gather to Hear More About Proposed Lease of County Burner

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

Representatives of seven Union County municipalities gathered last week to wrestle with a decision over the Union County Resource Recovery Facility — otherwise known as the incinerator — and \$35 million worth of county-backed bonds on the facility.

The Union County Utilities Authority (UCUA) has told the seven towns that do not regulate where their garbage is dumped, that they will have to share in paying off the incinerator debt even while their residents contract with private haulers for trash collection.

Every ton of solid waste diverted from the county facility by haulers will be taxed an additional \$15, according to a proposed deal with Ogden Martin Systems to lease the incinerator for 25 years. Special Council for the Freeholders, Jonathan Williams, said the expense per household in those towns would be about \$1.10 a month.

The seven municipalities of Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Mountainside, Berkeley Heights, Clark and Linden, do not require haulers to use the county incinerator for disposal. The group of towns accounts for about 175,000 tons of trash a year.

The UCUA carries a total of \$290 million in bonds that were issued to build and operate the incinerator. When a state court found it a violation of federal commerce law to regulate the flow of solid waste to the county incinerator, profitable operation of the facility seemed doomed.

Additionally, Bergen County, with 190,000 tons of solid waste a year, said it will pull out of the Union County incinerator as a result of the court decision on regulation.

To avoid possible default on the incinerator bonds, Union County Freeholders, under Democratic Chairwoman Linda D. Stender, and the UCUA came up with the proposed leasing of the facility to Ogden Martin which will wipe out \$180 million of the total debt.

However, a total of 250,000 tons of garbage must be delivered to the incinerator every year, under the terms of the deal.

The current price of \$83-a-ton for disposal at the county incinerator will be knocked down to \$50-a-ton and frozen at that price for the next 25 years other than hikes based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Mr. Williams said that even with the leasing deal and contributions of "unspent proceeds" by the UCUA, there is still \$60 million worth of outstanding debt.

The \$15-a-ton hauling surcharge will retire that debt over 25 years, he said. Charges toward paying off the remaining debt are also included in the \$50-a-ton rate offered at the incinerator, Mr. Williams said. Debt service payments on the remaining bonds totals \$5 million a year, he said.

Mr. Williams added, "There's been an enormous amount of thought and planning that's gone into this. All the parties involved are very comfortable about recommending this transaction. We still think this is the right thing to do."

In a scenario where the county defaults on the millions of dollars worth of debt, Mr. Williams claimed bond holders will sue to collect and that the costs to residents "would be a lot more than the \$15 surcharge."

Mountainside Mayor Robert F. Vighiani called the proposed lease "a sweetheart deal" for Ogden Martin because, he said, noting that even if the unregulated seven municipalities pay the surcharge, Ogden Martin is free to fulfill their 250,000-ton requirement with other paying customers.

Some officials have said that trash haulers will dispose of waste in neighboring Pennsylvania, where dumping charges are only \$30-a-ton. Others claim haulers will not make the trek and will use local transfer stations to dispose of waste, opening doors to corruption.

On the other hand, the UCUA has said that New York City is interested in unloading waste at the Union County facility, since the Fresh Kills landfill is set to close on Staten Island.

Scotch Plains Councilman Martin Marks said, "It sounds like the only way to avoid the surcharge is to go into municipal garbage collection."

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HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION... Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Marching Band added to the festivities at the Scotch Plains Halloween Parade. They are pictured here in front of the Park Middle School.

Nepawin Lane Property Lines To Settle Case

By CANDACE WALLER
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Planning Board met briefly Monday night to settle the David Walker case. There were no public hearings scheduled.

Mr. Walker, who owns property on Nepawin Lane, wanted to build a house on his land but could not because his construction plans did not adhere to certain spacing guidelines.

Upon hiring a surveyor, it was discovered that a previous surveyor had drawn the lines incorrectly.

"Mr. Walker is seeking a minor subdivision. About 10 years ago Mr. Walker had the property surveyed. The previous surveyor made a mistake," said board attorney Lawrence A. Woodruff.

"Mr. Walker wants to build a house on the land but had to get the line corrected," he added.

Scotch Plains Planning Board member Robert LaCosta said he felt that the board handled the matter quickly and effectively.

"Once new lines are re-established, Mr. Walker can put in his new foundation," said Mr. LaCosta, who added that settling this matter expediently would allow Mr. Walker to start construction before winter weather sets in.

"If he didn't have the lines corrected he would have had to apply for a variance because he would not have had enough space on the side of his house," Mr. LaCosta said. "The re-

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