

# THE TIMES

of

# Scotch Plains - Fanwood



OUR 38th YEAR - IS

USPS 465300  
Postpaid - Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, N.J.

Thursday, December 11, 1997

Published  
Every Thursday

232-4407

FIFTY CENTS



**A WORK OF ART...** This artist puts the finishing touches on a reindeer during a contest held as part of Fanwood's holiday celebration held last Sunday in the borough's downtown.

## BOROUGH OFFICIALS FAVOR LOCAL WELFARE SERVICES OVER COUNTY PROGRAM

### Hauler Proposes New Rates; Fanwood Council Expected to Okay Merger of Boards Tonight

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specialty Writer for The Times

The Fanwood Borough Council addressed several key issues during its December 3 conference session, including the planned merger of the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment; disposal of solid waste and the future of the municipality's Welfare Office.

At the top of the meeting, the council heard a brief presentation by Steve Scioscia, Operational Manager of White Brothers in Plainfield, one of several haulers which contract privately with Fanwood residents for garbage collection.

Mr. Scioscia outlined proposed rate

changes which he said would end the disparity between fees charged to some borough residents compared with others for similar services.

He acknowledged in a subsequent interview with *The Times*, however, that the rate change proposal remains tentative pending the outcome of a proposal by the Union County Utilities Authority (UCUA) to lease the county's Resource Recovery Facility, also known as the incinerator, to Ogden Martin Systems for a period of 25 years.

The UCUA is pursuing agreements with the county's 21 municipalities to enter into the long-term deal, which calls for 250,000 tons of trash to be delivered annually to the Rahway burner.

Under the terms of the deal, participating municipalities would be guaranteed a fee of \$50 per ton for the life span of the arrangement, with increases based on rises in the Consumer Price Index.

Fanwood is one of seven communities in the county which currently do not contract with haulers for garbage collection, and local officials have indicated such a contract would be necessary before the borough could enter into an agreement with the UCUA.

Among the factors which could affect the rate change proposal, according to Mr. Scioscia, would be a surcharge created by the Department of Environmental Protection towards reducing the outstanding debt on the facility.

The Environmental Investment Charge would be imposed on all garbage collected in Union County, according to the UCUA proposal, regardless of whether a municipality had entered into the agreement with the county. For those who sign up with the county, however, the proposal calls for the \$19 surcharge to be incorporated into the \$50 tipping fee.

Under other business, the council reviewed its ordinance permitting the merger of the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment, which is expected to compensate for a decline in applications and in volunteers willing to serve on the two municipal boards.

The new system is also expected to cut costs in attorneys' fees.

The ordinance, which was unanimously approved by the governing body on first reading November 13, is expected to be adopted following a public hearing at the council's regular meeting tonight, Thursday, December 11.

Pending adoption of the ordinance, the Planning Board will assume the duties of the Board of Adjustment, which will be disbanded.

On a different topic, council members indicated the borough will retain the services of Welfare Director Maria Santo rather than combine local welfare services with the county under the state's Work First New Jersey Plan.

Councilman Dr. Chester R. Lindsey, who chairs the governing body's Education, Health and Welfare Committee, confirmed that he had met with Mrs. Santo to discuss the prospect of maintaining Fanwood's welfare services locally.

He revealed that an interlocal agreement with Scotch Plains for the services of the Welfare Director would allow Mrs. Santo to meet state guidelines for maintaining local welfare services.

Mrs. Santo is currently Welfare Director of Scotch Plains as well as Fanwood, but no interlocal agreement currently exists between the two mu-

nicipalities for her services.

Officials noted that the Welfare Director has been in her position for a long time, and that she is also involved with local programs which assist the needy.

Richard Bard, a North Avenue resident who was in the audience at last week's meeting, commended Mrs. Santo for her "aggressive" efforts in getting people into job training programs and back to work, thereby getting them off the welfare rolls.

Council President Bruce H. Walsh voiced support for keeping welfare services within the community, saying "it's generally better" to administer such services as close to the people who benefit from them as possible.

Councilman-elect Joel Whitaker offered another perspective, however, by observing that there are only a handful of welfare recipients in Fanwood, and questioned whether there was any real benefit to keeping a local Welfare Office.

"I'm not terribly anxious to see taxpayers have to bear a burden they don't have to," he said.

Dr. Lindsey noted that the county has not finalized plans for consolidating welfare services since it is not yet known how many communities will

be participating. Municipalities have until Thursday, January 1, to decide whether or not they will join with the county.

Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly, noting that there are sidewalks in the community in dire need of repair, requested that Borough Clerk Eleanor McGovern look into how such repairs are paid for in other communities - whether by residents or the municipalities.

On a final note, Councilman William E. Populus, Jr., Chairman of the Administration and Finance Committee, reminded fellow governing body members that they will soon face the task of hammering out the 1998 municipal budget.

He said he hoped the council will once again be able to deliver the borough's spending plan on time. On February 13, the council introduced its 1997 budget, which reflected a 0 percent increase in the municipal portion of residents' tax bills. It was formally adopted exactly one month later.

Municipal department heads are urged to submit their financial requests by the first week in January, so that the budget may be introduced by the second week in February.

## Council Moves Ahead To Upgrade Pumping Stations for Sewers

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specialty Writer for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Council moved ahead Tuesday with extensive plans to upgrade the south side sanitary sewer system pumping stations by awarding a \$1,178,000 contract to a joint venture company of Consolidated Design and Building Corporation and Delta Contracting Company in Roselle for the work.

The company, also known as Delcon, was the lowest bidder among five other companies. Township officials said the sewer system rehabilitations could take up to 20 months to complete and were primarily electrical in nature.

The township is poised to issue \$1.7 million in bonds to pay for the project, officials said last week.

"The work really needs to be done. It will be an improvement," Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins said.

Councilman Robert E. Johnston added that new development on the south side of the township in recent years warranted the upgrade for the pumping stations at Raritan Road, Lamberts Mill Road, West Broad Street and Greenview.

On another matter, the council acted on a recommendation from the Recreation Commission to raise golfing fees at the Scotch Hills Country Club for next year.

According to Recreation Director Laura Sanson Botto, rates for golfing have not changed in three years. All non-resident memberships will now be \$60, which is a 50 percent increase for some age categories.

Resident membership fees will increase only \$5 under the plan to \$20 and \$30. All greens fees will rise \$1, \$2, \$3 and \$5, depending on the day and time of play.

The new rates would increase revenue for the club by \$50,000 next year, she said. The club has collected \$128,125 in fees so far this year. Township officials claim that the operation of the municipal golf course is not a profit-making business because of maintenance expenses for the course.

The nine-hole golf course will close Monday, December 15, until next spring.

Rates for the tennis courts will not change, according to the Commission.

In other business, the council agreed by resolution to a public auction on Tuesday, January 13, to sell a 9,000-square-foot parcel of property on Plainfield Avenue (at the Westfield border) that the township acquired through foreclosure.

Bidding for the residential-zoned property will start at \$60,000, officials said.

A different piece of township property at 765 Jerusalem Road got the final okay for a private sale to contiguous property owners. Officials indicated that the 5,000 square foot residential parcel, valued at \$50,000,

would be offered for public sale if there were no takers by neighboring property owners.

The council also introduced an ordinance, as expected, to vacate two streets off of Terrill Road that were created on paper only, as access to a development. The so-called streets - Gables and Shepard - were never improved, officials said.

The council agreed to award a \$15,075 contract for municipal janitorial services to the lowest bidder, Bradford and Byrd Associates.

Transfers of \$17,300 from several municipal departments to several other departments were okayed by the council on Tuesday. Deputy Mayor Joan Papen noted that the township was prohibited by state law from shifting budgeted funds around until after November of each year.

Many of the transfers were in connection with department salary costs. Officials are also looking at clerical reasons for a predicted \$10,000 shortage in the municipal fuel budget. So far, though, \$2,500 has been transferred to the department until the year's end.

Officials noted that, owing to a computerized key system, only township owned vehicles can be filled at municipal gasoline pumps.

Several township officials met with Hamlette Place residents for one-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## TOWNS LOOK TO CUT COSTS IN DEREGULATED MARKET

### Officials Hold Second Meeting To Discuss Lowering Utility Bills

Local officials from more than a dozen municipalities in Union County came together in Scotch Plains last week to explore ways of reducing local utility costs.

The December 1 meeting, organized by Fanwood Councilman William E. Populus, Jr., was the second time that representatives from the communities had gathered to discuss the issue. They had previously met on October 28 in Fanwood.

Representatives from Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Westfield, Elizabeth, Plainfield, Cranford, Roselle, Kenilworth, Linden, Hillside, Green Brook, Berkeley Heights and Rahway attended the meeting.

They convened to gain information on opportunities to establish a cooperative venture to take advantage of the deregulation of the electric industry in New Jersey.

The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is moving forward with a plan to restructure the electric industry in New Jersey. The BPU's goal is to begin opening the electric market to competition in October of 1998.

The meeting focused on how to reduce the cost of utilities in municipal operating budgets.

Blossom A. Peretz, the state's Ratepayer Advocate, and several members of her staff came to the meeting to provide an update on the status of the BPU's efforts to deregulate electricity.

Ms. Peretz went over several different options for aggregating the utility accounts of local governments, businesses and residents.

"Some say there is power in numbers. Perhaps we should also say there are power savings in numbers," she stated.

The Ratepayer Advocate stated that her office is working to ensure that consumers will save at least 10 percent off their current bills as a result of deregulation.

By joining together the electric needs of a number of different customers, smaller consumers will be able to attract more competitive rates and enjoy greater cost savings, according to Ms. Peretz.

If municipalities act on behalf of their residents and local businesses, they can establish a larger purchasing pool and attract greater interest from energy suppliers, she maintained.

Also attending the meeting was Phyllis J. Kessler, an attorney from Kudman, Trachten & Kessler in Manhattan, who briefed the municipal officials on deregulation at the first meeting in Fanwood.

Ms. Kessler noted that the range of options discussed by local officials included each town consolidating the electric accounts in their municipality under one contract; consolidating the electric needs of several towns in a joint procurement; extending the joint procurement option to include Union County government accounts; or aggregating the electric needs of residents and businesses in one or more of the towns in addition to the local government accounts.

Steven A. Clark, a representative from NJ Transit, discussed the benefits of the joint procurement option for purchasing energy.

NJ Transit has participated in a similar venture at the same level, working with the Treasury Department and other state agencies to purchase natural gas.

"Joining together gives better le-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Local Soccer School May Be Headquartered In Former Warehouse Opposite Golf Course

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specialty Writer for The Times

Soccer Skills and Drills, Inc., a local school for honing soccer skills, may have a found a permanent headquarters in Scotch Plains.

Last Thursday, after the Scotch Plains Zoning Board of Adjustment approved a use variance for a former warehouse on Plainfield Avenue, across from the Scotch Hills golf course, an attorney for Skills and Drills owner Tom Turnbull reported that the industrial-zoned site is ideal for indoor soccer instruction.

The reason for this, according to the attorney, is because there are no support pillars inside the building and the ceilings are high.

No date was set for when the school might open at the site, but Mr. Turnbull said he hopes to close a deal to buy the building by February. However, Mr. Turnbull said, "It's not a done deal yet."

The building is currently owned by Jack Ganz, according to the board. It will need only minor renovations before soccer instruction begins, according to Mr. Turnbull - who is the brother of Scotch Hills golf professional John Turnbull.

Mr. Turnbull said he first considered the building eight years ago. At that time, it appeared to be a warehouse for dog biscuits, he said. At another time, armored trucks filled the parking lot.

Soccer "doctor" Turnbull is a former township resident who has operated the training classes for the past eight years out of various local centers, most recently the Jewish Community Center.

Mr. Turnbull teaches students - both male and female - what he called "soccer ballet," in Westfield and Princeton as well as Scotch Plains. He has taught students from preschool to college age, he said.

A sign for the soccer school will be on the front of the building only. There are several residential properties near the site.

In other business, the board unanimously okayed an extension of a non-conforming use variance for U-Haul

on Route No. 22, West, to install a 1,000-gallon above-ground propane gas storage tank at the site.

Board Chairman Thomas Barth said U-Haul agreed to follow New Jersey state regulations in the safe storage of propane. Barbed wire will also surround the site after township police recommended some sort of wire deterrent.

Propane gas, which is often used for outdoor barbecue grills, will be supplied to U-Haul by a major producer and supplier of the gas, Mr. Barth said.

Earlier, when U-Haul first applied for the most recent variance, it was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Deadlines Are Told For Upcoming Issues

Readers preparing press releases for submission for the Christmas Day issue of *The Times* should make note that all press releases, pictures and letters to the editor must be submitted by noon on Thursday, December 18, to be considered for publication in the Thursday, December 25, issue.

Sports stories must be submitted by 10 a.m. on Monday, December 22, while obituaries will be accepted up until 5 p.m. that day.

For the issue of Thursday, January 1, copy must be received by noon on Tuesday, December 23. The sports deadline is 10 a.m., Monday, December 29, with obituaries accepted until 5 p.m. that day.

For added convenience, all copy may be e-mailed to press@goleader.com by the above deadlines.

Please note that our regular deadlines will apply for the issue of Thursday, December 18, which requests regular copy be submitted by Friday at 4 p.m.

Sports stories which occur prior to the weekend must be in by the Friday deadline. Weekend sports events must be submitted by noon on the Monday prior to the publication date. Obituaries will be accepted up to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays.