

# THE TIMES



## otch Plains - Fanwood

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IN PARTNERSHIP...Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Future Business Leaders in America Chapter are pictured in front of the Clubb Corporation's world headquarters, where they took part in a project as part of the chapter's partnership with Clubb.

### COUNCIL DECIDES TO KEEP WELFARE SERVICES LOCAL

## Township's Sanitary Sewer Project Hits Snag As Contractors Face Three-Year Jail Sentence

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specially Written for The Times

Scotch Plains Township's \$1.7 million project to upgrade its sanitary sewer system hit a major snag Saturday when officials said they discovered, through an article in *The Star-Ledger*, that contractors hired for the work were sentenced to three years in state prison last week.

According to the article, the pair of former commercial real estate developers pleaded guilty last February to bribery, extortion and theft in a half-million dollar bid-rigging scheme. On Tuesday, the township council, in effect, canceled the agreement with the contractors — who most recently have been operating as Consolidated Design and Building Corporation in Roselle Park.

By law, Consolidated has 10 days to plead its case with the township before officials decide whether to look at the next three lowest bids on the extensive sewer work. Councilman Martin Marks said Tuesday, "This certainly draws into question the ability of the contractor to satisfy our requirements and be responsible."

Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins denied township officials had any prior knowledge of the contractors' illegal dealings, saying, "This information was not made available to us in the bidding process. Obviously, the council would not have gone ahead with it if the information had been made available to us."

The council handed the \$1,178,000 contract over to Consolidated just last week with a resolution at its regular meeting.

According to *The Star-Ledger*, Saeed Ahmed, 39, of Weehawken and Thomas Loreda, 42, of Far Hills have been operating as Consolidated since 1993, when they left the Monmouth County construction company, Hovsons. The township contract for the sewer work included the Delta Contracting Company, which was said to be a joint venture with Consolidated for the township project. The pair admitted helping con-

tractors pad bids, according to the article, and then demanded kickbacks. Mr. Ahmed was reportedly a project manager for Hovsons, and Mr. Loreda was the Director of Finance for commercial development with the company.

Ahmed was to begin serving the three-year jail sentence last Friday in Somerset County Jail, according to *The Star-Ledger*, while Loreda was freed on bail in order to continue running the construction company. A Superior Court Judge in Somerville denied the two probation. Loreda will serve his prison term when Ahmed is finished with his three-year sentence.

Mr. Atkins said a consulting engineer from Killiam Associates, the firm hired by the township to oversee the sewer project, discovered the newspaper article and alerted the township. Consolidated was notified Tuesday, Mr. Atkins said, of the council's actions.

A group made up of the township

manager, attorney, a council member and the consulting engineer would hear and consider a plea from Consolidated not to drop the contract, if Consolidated requests it.

On a separate matter, the council unanimously approved a resolution for the township to continue to administer its own welfare assistance.

By September of next year, Union County hopes to have in place a system to administer welfare benefits to replace those of towns that relinquish their welfare programs to the county, under the Work First New Jersey measures.

Township officials said the governing body was considering sharing welfare administration duties with Fanwood under the state-approved option.

The municipalities already share the same Director of Welfare, Maria Santo, officials noted.

In other business, Mr. Atkins said he would give the council a written preliminary township budget pro-

### RECYCLING ASSOCIATION COMMITS PROJECT FUNDS

## Merge of Fanwood Boards Okayed; New Fire Chief to Take Helm Jan. 1; Pending Sidewalk Repairs Discussed

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

During its final regular meeting of the year last Thursday, the Fanwood Borough Council adopted on second reading an ordinance permitting the Planning Board to assume the duties of the Board of Adjustment. The latter board meets for the last time tonight, Thursday, December 18, before being disbanded.

Following months of discussion, the governing body introduced its ordinance, which amends the Borough Code, on November 13. Officials maintain that merging the two boards will compensate for a decline in volunteers and appeals, while also saving taxpayer dollars since only

one board attorney will be needed.

The council also passed a resolution confirming that Fanwood will not enter into a contract with the Union County Utilities Authority (UCUA) to participate in the authority's tentative deal to lease the county incinerator to Ogden Martin Systems for 25 years.

The proposal, which was conceived as a way to retire the \$293 million debt on the facility, calls for 250,000 tons of garbage to be delivered annually to the plant, which Ogden Martin built and operates.

Participating municipalities would be guaranteed a rate of \$50 per ton — reduced from \$83 — for the life of the agreement, with only cost-of-living increases enacted based on the Consumer Price Index.

Borough Clerk Eleanor McGovern revealed that Fanwood cannot sign a contract with the UCUA since the borough is one of seven Union County communities which do not include garbage collection in their municipal budgets, and therefore cannot tell haulers where to take their trash. Residents contract with haulers for garbage collection, and are then billed individually.

The council's resolution, however, encourages the UCUA to negotiate an agreement with the haulers who service Fanwood so that residents can benefit from the lower rates, Maryanne S. Connelly said.

Under other business, Councilman William E. Populus, Jr., the borough's Fire Commissioner, announced that Fanwood resident John Piccola, a member of the Fanwood Fire Department and an employee of the Department of Public Works, will become the borough's new Fire Chief on Thursday, January 1.

Mr. Piccola, who has been a member of the fire department since 1981, will succeed current Fire Chief Daniel Librandy. Councilman Populus publicly thanked Chief Librandy, who he said had "worked quite diligently to bring the Fire Department where it is... I think he gave his heart to this job and he will be missed."

Council members renewed discussion of sidewalk repairs, which the

Mayor touched on briefly during the governing body's December 11 agenda session. Mrs. McGovern said she was planning to send out surveys, per a request by the Mayor, to other communities to find out whether sidewalk repairs in those towns were paid for by the municipalities or by residents.

Council President Bruce H. Walsh, who sits on the Public Works Committee, remarked that officials need to look both at sections of the borough where sidewalks are in need of repair and also at areas where sidewalks do not currently exist but have been recommended for safety reasons.

Headed, however, that even when grant money is available for the work, residents sometimes balk at the placement of sidewalks along their streets because of maintenance costs involved. Mr. Walsh recommended that procedures for the placement of sidewalks be established, based on input from different sources within the community.

Arlene Court resident David Truemp, who ran for the Borough Council on the Republican ticket earlier this year, congratulated the Democratically-controlled council later in the meeting for addressing the sidewalk issue.

Noting that he and his runningmate, Councilman-elect Joel Whitaker, had championed the need for sidewalk repairs during their campaign, he asked "who says the two parties can't work together?"

Robert Sommerich, President of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Recycling Association, announced that the association had made a commitment to donate \$1,010 in recycling proceeds to Fanwood's Channel 35.

Representatives of Channel 35, which broadcasts regular meetings of the governing body and other

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Scotch Plains-Fanwood District Puts Forth First Ever Special Education Curriculum

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN  
Specially Written for The Times

Special education supervisors Suzanne Flannery and Janet Ramos broke new ground for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District with their presentation of "Special Education Standards and Proficiencies" during the December 11 open agenda meeting of the Board of Education.

"This represents the first time that a special education curriculum has been set forth," explained Ms. Ramos, who supervises special education at the secondary level.

She emphasized that, while Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals remain "the heart" of the curriculum, special education in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood district now parallels the general education standards more closely than ever.

"Some students will achieve the benchmarks established by the State standards," Ms. Ramos said, "some will not. Our goal is to (help every student) work in that direction."

Ms. Flannery oversees special education at the pre-school and elementary levels.

She said one of the by-products of the year-and-a-half-long effort to draft special education standards and proficiencies is a "stronger partnership between general education and special education."

Special education teachers have been trained alongside their general education peers in the implementation of the district's new math and science curricula.

Another outgrowth of their efforts will be a special education resource handbook that will be made available to teachers. It will include the alternative strategies sometimes needed "to parallel the mainstream wherever possible," while "always keeping in mind the individual needs of every student" using the IEP.

Board member Morris H. Gillet commended the efforts of Ms. Ramos and Ms. Flannery and their col-

leagues. "By trying to stay as close to the general education (curriculum) as possible," he said, "it helps give students a sense of accomplishment."

"We are very appreciative of your efforts," added board President Dr. Donald T. Sheldon.

"This really is a milestone for us and, probably, many districts in the state," said Dr. Sheldon.

Eleanor McClymont, Interim Director of Pupil Services, said she foresees the Scotch Plains-Fanwood document being used as a "model" around the state.

"It's one thing to present one content area," she explained. "It's another thing to tie them all together in a workable document."

Looking ahead to the next regular public meeting tonight, December 18, Superintendent Dr. Carol B. Choye will seek board approval for the "Special Education Standards and Proficiencies" as presented to the board.

A discussion of the individual school report cards is pending receipt of these documents from state officials.

The report cards were due Decem-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Council Eyes Automation For Libraries

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Council will consider a request from the Borough of Fanwood to hook up with the township in its plans to automate the Scotch Plains Free Public Library early next year, in order to simultaneously automate the Fanwood Memorial Library.

The agreement between the municipalities could reduce the cost of the \$180,000 project for Scotch Plains by \$10,000 to \$20,000, according to officials. The total cost to Fanwood is an estimated \$80,000.

In considering the proposed share, Councilman William F. McClintock, Jr., the governing body's Liaison to the Library Board of Trustees, said he was for it, "as long as it doesn't slow us down."

Officials said long-time Scotch Plains Library Director Norbert Bernstein had conversations with Fanwood's new Library Director, Dan Weiss, about the possibility of working together on the automation and computerization of the libraries.

Scotch Plains alone will add 18 more computer terminals to its library system. Reportedly, it could take up to 18 months to convert the township library's card catalog to the computer system. Residents will be able to search the card catalog on home computers through the Internet when the work is complete.

Officials said the township will pay for only about 75 percent of the total cost of automating the Scotch Plains library, since the library has private donation funds that will cover the other 25 percent.

Earlier in the month, the council had hoped to move ahead on the automation plan by the end of the year. However, according to Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins, attorneys arranging for an estimated \$140,000 bond issue on the project advised the council to introduce and adopt the ordinance for the bond issue in the same calendar year, that being 1998. Since the council will not hold another public meeting this year, time ran out.

### Holiday Deadlines Told For Upcoming Issues

Readers preparing press releases for submission for the New Year's Day issue of *The Times* should make note that all press releases, pictures and letters to the editor must be submitted by noon on Tuesday, December 23, to be considered for publication in the Thursday, January 1, issue.

Sports stories must be submitted by 10 a.m. on Monday, December 29, while obituaries will be accepted up 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, January 8, 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.



BOWLING TO PREVENT BIRTH DEFECTS...David Gewirtz, right, President of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's chapter of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), is shown presenting a check to benefit of the March of Dimes to Mary Lou Dawson, Director of Development for the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation. The \$2,950 check was the proceeds of a "bowls-a-thon" sponsored by the high school student organization. Also pictured are the top money raisers, who participated in the event: Paul Barnes, left; Theresa Mullerky, second from left; and Chris Cardinal. Rounding out the list of the fund-raising "top 5" is Louis Zisman, who is not pictured.