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INDEX Editorial & Weather - 02 Teacher Nominated - 04 Sports Wrap - 05
 Al-Qaeda Leader Dead - 06 Town Watch - 10 Pastor's Heart - 12
 Observation Booth - 14

ORANGE GYMNAST DAZZLES WITH STELLAR PERFORMANCE



PAGE 5

Photo Courtesy Anthony Woolford

WAS IT WORTH THE RISK?

PAGE 6

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who recently made a controversial trip to Taiwan



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CANDIDATES FILE FOR 12 BOARD OF EDUCATION SEATS IN 5 TOWNS

By Walter Elliott

MONTCLAIR - Four individuals here, from among the newcomers and incumbents from seven towns who have filed their petitions for boards of education seats by 4 p.m. July 25, will be making history no matter how their township's voters will decide on Nov. 8.

Officials County Clerk Christopher Durkin's offices are currently examining the petitions for Yvonne W. Bouknight, Brian Fleischer, Noah Gale and Mfreke "Monk" Inyang after they have passed Montclair Public Schools' clerical muster.

The quartet are participating in Montclair Public Schools' first November General Election. MPS, following the will of a majority of that township's participating registered voters' Nov. 3, 2021 referendum approval, held a special March 8 election that added two members to its seven-member panel.

Montclair is undergoing a three-year process to convert its public school board from a mayor-appointed panel to one elected by voters. Orange Public Schools went through a similar process in 2018-20.

Montclair and Orange's school administrators, however, had decided to hold their BOE

elections on the otherwise mostly partisan November General Election ballot. They followed West Orange, Bloomfield, Belleville and Nutley in putting their candidates on that ballot instead of the third Tuesday in April.

South Orange-Maplewood has always held their board elections in November. Newark and Irvington remain the last "Local Talk" towns holding annual April school board and budget elections.

Clerk Durkin's Election Division and the respective school board clerks/secretaries are leaving a door for any school-related ballot referendum questions until Sept. 8.

School boards who hold November elections are allowed to put budget item questions before voters should the questions exceed five percent of the school year budget. School budgets, as a state condition of shifting elections to November, are otherwise left to the boards and administrators.

"Local Talk," as of press time, does not know of any forthcoming school referendum questions.

School board elections, whether held in November or April are nonpartisan. Candidates are not allowed to identify

(Continued on page 13)



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 To
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 16**



Dhiren Shah
Editor-in-Chief

Hello Readers,

The national primary election was in the eyes of the politicians. Everyone was especially curious about the conservative voters' trend in the primary, which will impact the general election. Everyone's ears were ready to listen to the primary results of the Republican Party, especially the Trump supported candidates. Since May, the primary season has been going on.

The one-way January 6th committee congressional is getting to the bottom of the events that happened. They are trying to find out how to stop Trump from running in the 2024 election. Within the Democratic leaning media outlets, Trump has been accused of wrongdoing

on January 6th. However, the primary election of the Republican party is giving a good response for the Trump supported candidates.

On Aug. 2, Indiana Senator Todd Young, who said President Trump was responsible person for the January 6th attacks, won the GOP nomination. However, Trump has supported over 200 candidates, some lost and some won, but his candidates have won about 60%. This includes wins over incumbents who voted to impeach Trump. Now, President Biden and Nancy Pelosi are trying hard to divert people's minds from the economy, inflation and a near future recession to world politics.

By going against two major powers, Russia and now China, it will be very tough for the Democrats to keep a majority in Congress and capture a clear majority in the Senate. By giving money to specific groups of people, it may not help Biden and the Democrats win the November election. They must think about Americans first. We help in the

world in the name of climate change and support those small countries who geographically are in the best interest of the USA. We must think about the growth of America first, and then help others.

On Aug. 3, Governor Phil Murphy announced that he will extend outdoor dining from November 2022 to November 2023. As per the reports, the majority of the restaurants have survived due to outdoor dining. We are getting used to it as well. However, there are some New Yorkers that oppose outdoor dining due to parking problems and filthy streets, and they are even suing the city and trying to pressurize New York Mayor Eric Adams to stop outdoor dining.

Speaking of Adams, on the same day he announced an emergency procurement declaration to rapidly procure shelter and other services for people seeking asylum in New York City. However, some New Yorkers have opposed spending money on illegal immigrants and want to make sure no public benefits by way of taxpay-

er money are being given to them.

Newark Penn Station will be getting a facelift thanks to a \$191 million restoration budget. There will be three public hearings starting from August 9, 2022. Newark Penn Station opened in 1935 and some renovations have been done on or about 1970. Newark Penn Station mainly serves NJ Transit, Path Trains. Amtrak and Newark Light Rail, along with buses outside. The ridership is increasing every day, which according to a 2017 report, NJ Transit has a daily weekday ridership of about 27,695. Amtrak has a yearly ridership of about 731,000 and Path Train ridership increased in 2017 to about 8.5 million annually. Newark Penn Station needs better facilities to serve people as a 21st century train station.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>
Hot & Humid	PM Thunderstorms	Scattered T'storms	Partly Cloudy	PM Thunderstorms	Scattered T'storms	Scattered T'storms
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ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK TEACHER NOMINATED FOR STATEWIDE AWARD



independent, and religious schools. The New Jersey Non-public School Teacher of the Year Award is a prestigious title the organization awards annually to a teacher who exhibits outstanding dedication, knowledge and skill for his or her craft, while demonstrating respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues.

Wester was nominated for the award after her students this past school year scored high marks on their Advanced Placement Exams. The administration at Seton Hall Prep described her as a diligent and caring teacher who is a “mainstay at sporting events” and frequently goes above and beyond to ensure the success of SHP students.

Wester is currently undergoing an interview process with NJCAPE to determine her eligibility for the award. NJCAPE

will be ready to announce the winner early in the school year.

“The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools is thrilled to recognize Juliette Wester as the Archdiocese of Newark Teacher of the Year and to nominate her for the NJCAPE Nonpublic School Teacher of the Year Award,” said Barbara Dolan, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Newark. “Julie is a dedicated and talented teacher and a wonderful witness to the mission of Catholic school education. Her own educational journey is an example of the tremendous influence Catholic school teachers have in the life of their students.”

Wester is a product of the Archdiocese of Newark’s Catholic schools, having attended Our Lady of Sorrows Grammar School in Maplewood and the

Academy of Saint Elizabeth in Florham Park, NJ, before going on to earn her bachelor’s degree in political science and economics from Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia and her M.Ed. at Seton Hall University. She has only worked in Catholic schools, having taught at Marian Middle School in St. Louis, MO, and the Sisters Academy in Asbury Park before joining Seton Hall Prep in 2014.

“Being recognized for this award was so amazing and really such an honor, but it is because I have been surrounded by such wonderful educators my whole life as both a student and a teacher,” Wester said. “I would not be getting this award if it were not for the privilege of being surrounded by so many wonderful teachers I have been taught by and have taught with.”

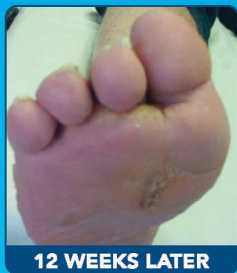
ESSEX - The Archdiocese of Newark is proud to nominate its Teacher of the Year Juliette Wester, a history teacher at Seton Hall Preparatory School (SHP) in West Orange, for the New Jersey Council for American Private Education (NJCAPE) 2022 New Jersey Nonpublic School Teacher of the Year Award.

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos Courtesy Anthony Woolford

By William Hathaway, Jr.

Orange native Kelise Woolford was on the national stage this past weekend in which she took part in the United States Junior Competition in Salt Lake City, Utah. The young gymnast will be heading to the gymnastics championships in Tampa, Florida from August 18th thru August 23rd.

Woolford competed at North Stars gymnastics in Boonton, New Jersey at the age of seven years old. At 14, she has taken part in many gymnastic events such as the Regional 7 Level 8 Beam Floor and Bar Championship and the 2nd AA in 2019 Region 7 Champion Floor Bars and Beam. She got first place rankings in every event at the Level 9 regional championship.

The 10th grader is affiliated with the Buckeye Gym in Ohio. Her father Anthony Woolford said he was excited for her.

"I feel good. I'm proud of her. This is her dream," he said. He also noted Kelise competed in the MJ elite in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

In NFL news, the Miami Dolphins have been docked a 1st Round pick in next year's draft, and a 3rd Round pick the year after for violating the integrity of the game after reports that the team tampered with Tom Brady and Sean Payton, who were under contract to other teams. Team owner Stephen was also suspended through Oct. 17 and fined \$1.5 million.

In MLB trade news, the Yankees recently added outfielder Andrew Benintendi, who takes over for the slumping Joey Gallo, who was then shipped to the Dodgers. However, the biggest moves came from the San Diego Padres, who made deals to acquire coveted young superstar and Home Run Derby Champion Juan Soto, along with Nationals teammate Josh Bell, as well as closer Josh Heder from the Brewers and Brandon Drury from the Reds.

Finally, the sports world lost two giants. On July 31, NBA legend Bill Russell passed away at age 88. Then, on August 2, the iconic voice of Vin Scully was gone at the age of 94.



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WAS IT WORTH THE RISK?

Bold, stupid, intriguing, mysterious, and an unnecessary risk are all terms used to describe an unprecedented trip made by the person with the third highest government rank in the U.S.

On Aug. 1, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) made a stunning trip to Taiwan. As Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, she is the highest ranked person in American government to visit the region in over 25 years. One reason that U.S. officials dare not to venture there is due to China's stance that they own the rights to Taiwan, even though Taiwan disagrees.

In an op-ed piece to a publication, Pelosi said that she made the trip to the distributed region in order to show solidarity with Taiwan. The trip to that area came as Pelosi was already leading a delegation through the Indo-Pacific region, with stops in Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan.

"Our Congressional delegation's visit to Taiwan honors America's unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan's vibrant Democracy," Pelosi said in a statement.

"Our visit is part of our broader trip to the Indo-Pacific - including Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan - focused on mutual security, economic partnership and democratic governance. Our discussions with Taiwan leadership will focus on reaffirming our support for our partner and on promoting our shared interests, including advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific region. America's solidarity with the 23 million people of Taiwan is more important today than ever, as the world faces a choice between autocracy and democracy.

"Our visit is one of several Congressional delegations to Taiwan - and it in no way contradicts longstanding United States policy, guided by the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, U.S.-China Joint Communiqués and the Six Assurances. The United States continues to oppose unilateral efforts to change the status quo."

While Pelosi had bipartisan support in making the journey, with even Republicans slamming China's threats against the Speaker, many have wondered if it was worth the

risk. It is believed that a simple statement would have been enough to show support, without a physical visit. Most notably, in the wake of threats made by the Chinese government in warning Pelosi against the journey. Specifically, there were threats of "shooting down" Pelosi's plane. China also flexed its armed forces muscle with military exercises during the Speaker's tour.

Despite the threats, Pelosi did leave Taiwan after a day unscathed. Still, was this really just a show of solidarity, or was there an ulterior motive? The U.S. auto sector has struggled mightily during the pandemic, especially since new cars are dependent on specific semiconductor chips that are not easily manufactured domestically. As a result, newer models have been scarce, while older models have gone up exponentially in price.

Taiwan is one of few nations with the capability of producing the chips, with the other key producer being China.

MODERN DAY LEADER OF AL-QAEDA KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN

One of the most notorious figures in the world of terrorism has faced the blade of justice, and has been taken off the battlefield - permanently.

On Aug. 1, U.S. President Joseph R. Biden announced that he had successfully authorized an operation that eliminated Ayman al-Zawahiri, the modern day leader of Al-Qaeda. al-Zawahiri had been running the terror group since his old boss, Osama Bin Laden, was eliminated by Biden's old boss, President Barack H. Obama, in May 2011.

Here now are remarks made by Biden to the nation following the operation:

"My fellow Americans, on Saturday, at my direction, the United States successfully concluded an airstrike in Kabul, Afghanistan, that killed the emir of al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

"You know, al-Zawahiri was bin Laden's leader. He was with him all the whole time. He was his number-two man, his deputy at the time of the terrorist attack of 9/11. He was deeply involved in the planning of 9/11, one of the most responsible for the attacks that murdered 2,977 people on American soil.

"For decades, he was a mastermind behind attacks against Americans, including the bomb-

ing of the USS Cole in 2000, which killed 17 American sailors and wounded dozens more.

"He played a key role - a key role in the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 and wounding over 4,500 others.

"He carved a trail of murder and violence against American citizens, American service members, American diplomats, and American interests. And since the United States delivered justice to bin Laden 11 years ago, Zawahiri has been a leader of al Qaeda - the leader.

"From hiding, he coordinated al Qaeda's branches and all around the world - including setting priorities, for providing operational guidance that called for and inspired attacks against U.S. targets.

"He made videos, including in recent weeks, calling for his followers to attack the United States and our allies. Now justice has been delivered, and this terrorist leader is no more.

"People around the world no longer need to fear the vicious and determined killer. The United States continues to demonstrate our resolve and our capacity to defend the American people against those who seek to do us harm.

"You know, we make it clear

again tonight that no matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out.

"After relentlessly seeking Zawahiri for years under Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump, our intelligence community located Zawahiri earlier this year. He had moved to downtown Kabul to reunite with members of his immediate family.

"After carefully considering the clear and convincing evidence of his location, I authorized a precision strike that would remove him from the battlefield once and for all.

"This mission was carefully planned and rigorously minimized the risk of harm to other civilians. And one week ago, after being advised that the conditions were optimal, I gave the final approval to go get him, and the mission was a success. None of his family members were hurt, and there were no civilian casualties.

"I'm sharing this news with the American people now, after confirming the mission's total success through the painstaking work of our counterterrorism community and key allies and partners.

"In February, our forces conducted a daring mission in Syria

that eliminated the emir of ISIS.

"Last month, we took out another key ISIS leader. Now we have eliminated the emir of al Qaeda. He will never again allow Afghanistan to become a terrorist safe haven because he is gone, and we're going to make sure that nothing else happens. You know, it can't be a launching pad against the United States. We're going to see to it that won't happen.

"This operation is a clear demonstration that we will, we can, and we'll always make good on the solemn pledge.

"My administration will continue to vigilantly monitor and address threats from al Qaeda, no matter where they emanate from...

"...Because this is the great and defining truth about our nation and our people: We do not break. We never give in. We never back down...

"...Today, we remember the lost. We commit ourselves to the safety of the living. And we pledge that we shall never waver from defending our nation and its people.

"Thank you, all. And may God protect our troops and all those who serve in harm's way. We will never give up."

BLACK LIVES, ANIMAL LIVES, ALL LIVES MATTER



By Michelle Lowe

EST...1996

Message for you

Hello, my fellow readers. What a long time it's been, but it's great to be back with you all. Lately for me since I've been away, I'm still going through complications due to the passing or losses of people from May 13th through July repeatedly.

As of now, it's just seems like a continuation one after another. I haven't written in a couple of months due to the passing of mainly my love, my best friend, my riding partner. All we did was ride a motorcycle together. I spoke about riding a bike in my writing before. One day you're here literally, and who knows, within just an hour you're gone. No responding back is what killed me the most.

We were just together, and on the same day, you were gone. Just one thing changed that day, my love, my friend. You had to go, and said you will be right back. I felt something, but never would I ever want to feel this pain, nor even want this for anyone. No one knows when it's their time to go, so cherish every day you open your eyes. Trust and believe, it is a blessing.

I can't bear it out alone. I'm truly broken and don't know when I will get better. I cannot say, but it will take beyond time. I miss him every day that goes by. The plans we had, and we never kept anything from one another. The memories feel so real, as if I can still feel him. I don't want to believe he's gone, but in reality, he is never coming back. Someone very close to me that I love so deeply has been taken away, and the one person that I know that was meant for my life. Now, half of me has faded and gone as well.

I miss him every day, and no one will replace him. There will never be another. I ask that for my love, my partner, may his justice come.

What a disappointment. How foul could people be and cold? What goes around definitely comes back around,

and for who caused this madness to my love, my partner, you will have your day and that day will be judgement. My man was a good man. When you took him, that was the end of me. It was as if I was gone too, lost without words, couldn't see straight.

One thing I remember is what he used to say to me, and that is he never wanted to see me give up. He wanted the best for me, and to become very successful. How many good times we had. He was my king and I miss him daily, love and more.

To all my fellow riders out here, please be safe and careful. You have to watch for everything around you at all times. We are motor-riders and safety is first. Wear your gear as well, folks. Protection is always best guys. Remember, we are on bikes.

RIP, JJ, Jr.



I would like to highlight our black women that have not been found yet still. These women have vanished, and so much more needs to be done to find and return them home. The missing cases have been open for many years, and still, nothing done has been enough to bring these women home. These are the faces of beautiful queens. Let's keep them in prayer everyone, and so much more.

To all those people out here going through your problems and situations, it seems very hard and tough, like too much weight seems to be on your shoulders. Just keep in mind how much worse it could have been and remember keep your blessings.



P.S. Thank you everyone for your time and attention. Until next time everyone, please be careful and stay safe. Take care.

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ESSEX COUNTY WEEKLY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Municipality	7-27-2022	Deaths	8-3-2022	Deaths
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Bloomfield	13,522	162	13,641	162
Caldwell	1,875	17	1,885	17
Cedar Grove	4,337	136	4,377	136
City of Orange	8,939	173	9,032	172
East Orange	18,626	382	18,781	383
Essex Fells	569	2	572	2
Fairfield	2,260	37	2,270	38
Glen Ridge	1,422	18	1,445	18
Irvington	12,749	280	12,856	281
Livingston	7,434	107	7,500	107
Maplewood	5,955	48	6,013	48
Millburn	4,217	18	4,260	18
Montclair	7,901	87	7,999	87
Newark	85,644	1,256	86,453	1,257
North Caldwell	1,639	10	1,652	10
Nutley	7,329	84	7,381	84
Roseland	1,589	23	1,595	24
South Orange	3,977	22	4,019	22
Verona	3,763	23	3,784	23
West Caldwell	3,105	63	3,134	63
West Orange	14,814	266	14,949	267
Total	223,815	3,364	225,844	3,369

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of August 3, 2022)

NJ: 2,221,405 cases / 31,211 deaths (Plus 3,096 probable)
United States (approx.): 91.71 Million / 1.031 Million deaths
Worldwide (approx.): 580.164 Million / 6.408 Million deaths

**NEW JERSEY TRANSIT CORPORATION
FISCAL YEAR 2022 REQUEST FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, (IIJA), Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, and under provisions of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), gives notice of its intent to apply for Federal Fiscal Year 2022 federal financial assistance, Federal Fiscal Year 2021, Federal Fiscal Year 2020 and Federal Fiscal Year 2019 carryover funds from the following programs: \$525.833 million under 49 U.S.C. Section 5307 for operating and capital assistance; \$238.622 million under Section 5337 State of Good Repair; \$33.471 million under Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities; \$12.320 million under 49 U.S.C. Sections 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program; \$125.000 million under Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA); \$87.214 million of Federal Highway Authority; and \$0.470 million of Discretionary funding for a total of \$1.023 billion.

Federal operating funds will be matched as required with funds provided by the State of New Jersey and local recipients in conformance with Federal and State guidelines. NJ TRANSIT intends to provide the non-Federal share of capital projects through credit for toll revenues. The Federal Fiscal Year 2022 Federal program is described below.

**FISCAL YEAR 2022 FEDERAL PROGRAM
Proposed Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
ALP46A Electric Locomotive Overhaul	12.466
Capital Lease Payments	116.803
Cumberland County Bus Program	2.040
Elizabeth Intermodal Station Reconstruction	25.085
HBLRT Weehawken Tunnel Repairs	4.827
Lyndhurst Station Reconstruction	22.708
Mechanical Equipment Inspection Improvements	1.300
Network Resiliency	4.470
Newark Penn Station (Escalator/Elevator/Fire Ext.)	7.117
New Brunswick Escalator Upgrade and Inbound Platform Extension	2.551
Perth Amboy Intermodal ADA Improvements	10.695
Preventive Maintenance - Bus	196.899
Preventive Maintenance - Rail	87.846
Roselle Park ADA	2.860
SANDY Rsl 08MAS 4 ROC Unit Substations	6.420
SANDY Rsl 15R 4 MMC Building Perimeter Flood Protection Center	4.800
Track, Bridge, Mobility, and Capacity Improvements	1.350
Traction Power, Catenary, and Control System Improvements	1.500
West Summit Interlocking Improvement	14.096
Total:	\$525.833

**Proposed Section 5337 State of Good Repair
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
ALP46A Electric Locomotive Overhaul	21.350
GP-40 Diesel Locomotive Overhaul (7)	23.435
Lackawanna Cutoff Port Morris Andover	40.671
Preventive Maintenance - Bus	0.623
Preventive Maintenance - Rail	146.907
RiverLine Light Rail Vehicle (LRV) Mid-Life Overhaul	5.636
Total:	\$238.622

**Proposed Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Greenville Bus Garage	6.279
HQ-GOB Parking Lot Replacement – Design	8.645
Nabi Bus Overhauls	18.547
Total:	\$33.471

**Proposed Section 5310, 5311
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Local- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Ind.w/Disabilities	7.733
Local- Rural Transit Program Contracts	4.587
Total:	\$12.320

**Proposed Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA)
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Portal North Bridge	125.000
Total:	\$125.000

**Proposed Federal Highway Authority (FHWA)
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
CMAQ/5307 Local Initiatives DVRPC	1.102
CMAQ/5307 Local Initiatives NJTPA	1.887
CMAQ/5310 Local Initiatives DVRPC	1.294
CMAQ/5310 Local Initiatives SJTPO	1.096
Hoboken Terminal Substructure Repairs	4.251
Multi-Level III Rail Car Purchase (113)	75.000
New Brunswick Escalator Upgrade and Inbound Platform Extension	2.584
Total:	\$87.214

**Proposed Discretionary Funding
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
U.S. Route 9 Bus Rapid Transit	0.470
Total:	\$0.470

A. Property Acquisition/Environmental, Economic, and Social Aspects

Any property acquisition or relocation that may be required will be conducted in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the law and regulatory requirements. As appropriate, the social, economic, environmental, and relocation aspects of the projects will be investigated. If required under applicable laws and regulations, interim findings may be presented at a future public hearing and further public comment will be solicited. Prior to the implementation of any of the projects and to the extent required, NJ TRANSIT may prepare an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Federal regulations. The availability of this document will be made known by publication in the same manner as this notice. NJ TRANSIT will adhere to all Federal statutes and regulations affecting structures or properties eligible for or on the National Register of Historic Places.

B. Comprehensive Planning

NJ TRANSIT projects are developed in coordination with the following planning organizations: The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, which is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Northeast New Jersey urbanized area; the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, which is the designated MPO for Camden, Mercer, Burlington, and Gloucester counties; and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, which is the designated MPO for Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic, and Cape May counties. The MPOs are the forums for local decision-making concerning the proposed projects. The projects are developed in consultation with local elected officials, interested citizens, and providers of private bus services.

C. Private Enterprise Participation

Through the comprehensive planning process administered by the MPOs and ongoing communication with NJ TRANSIT's Office of Private Carrier Affairs, NJ TRANSIT continues to discuss with private carriers their participation in the capital program. In addition, NJ TRANSIT encourages, to the maximum extent possible, the participation of the private sector in the development and implementation of public transportation in the State of New Jersey.

D. Senior Citizens and Individuals with Disabilities

Services to be provided will be consistent with NJ TRANSIT's program of reduced interstate and intrastate rail and bus fares for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. Every reasonable effort will be made to plan and design program elements involving facilities generally available to the public with careful consideration of the special needs of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities.

E. Public Input

NJ TRANSIT invites public comments on the above projects and its performance. Request for additional information on NJ TRANSIT's program of projects, written comments and/or requests for a public hearing should be sent to Rocio Munoz, OPRA Manager, OPRA Office, NJ TRANSIT, One Penn Plaza East, Newark, New Jersey 07105-2246 by August 15, 2022.

Based on comments received in response to this notice and information made available, NJ TRANSIT may modify the above program before final submission to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and will make a determination, pursuant to FTA regulations, as to whether a public hearing is in order. The above list of proposed projects will become the final list of projects unless notification is provided in the same manner as this public notice.

Kevin S. Corbett
President & CEO
New Jersey Transit Corporation

TOWN WATCH

DISCLAIMER: The following items are primarily drawn from first responders. Responders' accounts may not be their full activity range. Grand juries hand down indictments when evidence presented them warrant a trial. Named suspects/defendants are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

NEWARK - Those who remember actor Taurean Blacque, 82, who had died in Atlanta July 21, may best recall him as the quiet, patient and street smart Chicago Police Det. Neal Washington on NBC's 1982-97 drama series "Hill Street Blues." He was also the series' "Previously on 'Hill Street Blues' " opening voiceover.

Those here and around New Jersey's largest city, however, remember Blacque as Arts High School graduate and USPS letter carrier Herbert Middleton, Jr. His Arts HS's 1958 yearbook self-description has him marching with its 20th Century Drum and Bugle Corps whenever he was not on the skating rink.

The son of a dry cleaner and a nurse, who was born here May 10, 1940, listed his ambition as "to be a happy and successful commercial artist." The 476 So. 12th St. resident began to realize that goal by first leaving the postal service for New York's Negro Ensemble Company in 1970 and later, coming up with his Taurean Blacque stage name.

Middleton, as Blacque, began getting credited parts in episodes of "Good Times," "Taxi," "Sanford and Son" and "Charlie's Angels" before landing the Det. Washington part in "Hill Street." He was nominated for an Emmy in 1982 as best supporting actor in a drama series.

Blacque, post-"Hill Street," held major parts in NBC's 1989-90 daytime serial "Generations" and in the WB Network's 1996-97 series "Savannah." He moved

to Atlanta to become part of the local acting and production scene until recently.

Blacque adopted 11 children to his own two biological sons. The adoption advocate led President George H.W. Bush to appoint him as the national spokesman for adoption.

Son Henry Middleton announced his father's passing on the latter's Facebook page that Thursday. Two great-grandchildren and 18 grandchildren are also among his survivors. No public services have been planned as of press time.

IRVINGTON - New Jersey not only lost a gubernatorial aide and pioneering bond counsel in John Kraft's June 28 death, but Irvington lost the last of four natives who used to play on the township's playing fields in the 1940s and 50s.

John Leonard "Jack" Kraft, 86, who was born in Irvington May 25, 1936, used to play baseball, basketball and football with Leonard Schneider and the brothers Joe and John Baumann until high school called. Kraft and Schneider were enrolled in New York City's Xavier High School, where they graduated with honors in 1956.

Kraft returned to the Essex County or "Local Talk" area on at least three extended times. The Georgetown University and Yale Law School grad first joined Newark's Toner, Crowley, Woelper and Vanderbilt law firm. He rose through several public finance-oriented law firms until he became Gov. William T. Cahill's associate counsel in 1970.

In 1971, Kraft left the Cahill Administration to work in the new field of bond finance law, becoming bond counsel to Essex and 17 other New Jersey counties. The former USAF pilot, in later years, operated a practice from Livingston.

Kraft, who died in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., follows Schneider and the Baumanns in death. Schneider, 83, a former RCA vice president, died in 2000. John Baumann, 83, a 42-year PSE&G meter department

supervisor, died in 2019; Joe Baumann's year of death was not immediately known.

Wife Anne "Joy," six children, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren are among Kraft's survivors. A private service was held in Florida. Memorial donations may be made to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, cff.org.

EAST ORANGE - A high school student has turned a harrowing escape and being late to his summer job here July 22 into an effort to help the 18 families who were burned out in that day's fire at 161 Prospect Ave.

Jaylen Dukes, 16, reported to 44 City Hall Plaza and the Office of the City Council late that Friday. He had said that fire, police and related units responding to The Villa's blaze had blocked the intersection of Prospect and Park avenues, hindering his commute.

While Dukes started his duties as a Summer Work Experience Program member, he kept thinking back to what he and his family had experienced just after 12:33 a.m.

Dukes had finished his prayers and was about to go to bed when his brother Donnell began to yell at him and mother Doris to get up because their fire detector had gone off. They looked out to 161 Prospect next door - was ablaze. All three got out but later learned that Cherry A. Davis, the grandmother of Donnell's friend, had died.

Jaylen, with the help of Doris, had posted an appeal for new underwear and new or gently used outerwear and shoes for the 161 Prospect families on social media. The response has led to the Dukes collecting adult and children's clothing and footwear across Essex County and into Bergen County.

Those wanting to donate to the Dukes drive for 161 Prospect Ave. are to call (973) 800-6681.

ORANGE - City detectives are looking for the man who stabbed a Good Samaritan while breaking up a fight by a landmark Valley restaurant here on July 30.

Orange Public Safety Director Todd Warren and Police Chief Vincent Vitiello said that their officers had responded to an injured person report from the 400 block of Valley Street at 1:35 a.m. Saturday.

Officers found a man with stab wounds to his stomach. A local EMS ambulance took the unidentified man to a local hospital and was admitted in stable condition.

OPD officers had meanwhile learned that the victim was trying to break up a fight in front of Hat City Kitchen, 459 Valley St. One of the other individuals in the altercation pulled out a knife, stabbed the man and fled before the police's arrival.

Hat City Kitchen had closed at 11 p.m. July 29 before the outside stabbing incident. The establishment has been the latest one on the southwest corner of Valley Street and Forest Avenue since 2010.

City detectives are reviewing area video surveillance recordings as of press time. The suspect's description has not yet been publicized.

WEST ORANGE - Police here and in Hanover Township are pooling their information while searching for the two suspects who robbed two of their respective gasoline stations minutes apart on July 28.

Workers at the Prospect Avenue Exxon station told responding WOPD officers that they were held up by "two black males" who had arrived and departed in a blue BMW at 4:30 p.m. that Thursday. one of them held a firearm while robbing the cashier.

The pair left the southeast corner of Prospect and Eagle Rock avenues in the BMW, whose N.J. license plates read "E68-MBB." The station at 270 Prospect, except for its brief budget branding as "Alert" in 1979-80, has long been an Exxon.

When West Orange detectives put out an all point bulletin, they got a prompt response from

(Continued on page 14)

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From The Pastor's Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Stop The Steal

"Stop the steal" is a phrase that has been around for a long time, but it was coopted and made popular by Roger Stone. He used it to promote a group of would-be poll watchers called "Stop the Steal" during the 2016 election, first under the auspices of defending Donald Trump's Republican primary nomination and later to contest a potential Hillary Clinton victory that never became a reality. Stone created the group to uncover voter fraud, which experts say was not happening in the U.S. elections. But in the 2020 election cycle, the phrase was so politicized and weaponized that it led to the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, January 6, 2021.

Although the phrase has been much abused, it would be a blessing if we could live without thieves attacking our communities. Here is a fact of interest to me. I was talking to a grandfather who immigrated to the United States many years ago. Soon he began to share with me that although he had not been to college or university, like his children, he thought himself much smarter than they were. He asserted that while they had some **knowledge**, he had **wisdom**.

As if to authenticate his claim to wisdom, he cited a case that caused my eyes to grow large. He said that in the days when he was coming from his country to the United States of America, the U.S. Embassy wanted to see how much he had in his Bank Account. On a first visit, he told them that he was a businessman and sold clothing in the community market. He knew that what he had in his account was insufficient for them to give him the visa, thinking he would not return to his country, so he planned his strategy.

He had in his account \$5m in

his county's currency at the time. That was about \$7,500 US. When he was ready to request a visa, he went to the bank and got a certified bank statement. A few days later, he took \$3.5m from the account and opened a business account at another bank. Several days later, he went to the new bank and requested a bank statement. He said, "See, I am really smart; I was able to show a total of \$8.5m that satisfied the Embassy." With that supposed amount, he got the visa, which opened the way for him to enter the U.S.A. legally.

I figure that you are thinking what I am thinking, that while the fellow was saying he is "smart," you are saying, "He is a thief." How differently do you judge this "smart" fellow from the former President of the United States, who claimed to have raised \$250m for his "election defense fund" that did not exist? The House Select Committee investigating the January 6 attack at the Capitol made the case at its second hearing that Donald Trump and his campaign engaged in fundraising fraud, raising \$250m for a Trump "election defense fund" that did not exist.

The "Official Election Defense Fund," as it was called in fundraising emails, was repeatedly sent out until 30 minutes before the Capitol attack, according to Trump campaign aides Hannah Allred and Gary Coby, who testified to the January 6 Congressional Investigation panel. The campaign raised \$100m in the first week after the election and raised about \$250m as it asked donors to help fundraise legal challenges to the results.

Again, what do you think? Is this stealing or not? A story that Jesus told along a similar track is listed in Luke 16:1-15. It is an interesting story that you need to read in its totality. It says:

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management because you can no

longer be the manager.' ³ "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg - ⁴ I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.' ⁵ "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ "Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.' ⁷ "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' "A thousand bushels^[b] of wheat,' he replied. "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.' ⁸ "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

⁹ I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. ¹⁰ "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

¹³ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." ¹⁴ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵ He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

Do I need to affirm further what Jesus already affirms, that what the "shrewd" manager did was nothing but stealing? The manager is called "shrewd" be-

cause he was using all his energy to secure his material contentment in the world, regardless of any ethical considerations. Jesus commended him not because he did something righteous but because he did what he would argue he had to do to secure his earthly comforts. Of course, Jesus was saddened because the man did not think of his eternal interest. Whether you call what the man did stealing or lying, he cared very little about his actions.

Because an individual might not judge an action such as stealing or lying as cursed, it does not mean the action is not cursed. As is said, victims of theft know the horrible feeling it produces. The act of someone taking what may have been an especially precious gift from a loved one pierces our hearts and makes us feel violated and unsafe. Theft has a tremendous impact on individuals and society as a whole. Theft disturbs societal stability, resulting in feelings of fear, insecurity, and a desire for revenge.

People who live in the Metropolitan world think of stealing as a problem in third-world countries where laws against stealing are ignored. But, whether shoplifting, praedial larceny, scamming, aggravated assault, embezzlement, bank robbery, church robbery, or stealing the tithe, stealing is and is detrimental to any person, community, or population that is affected by it.

There are pointed practical reasons why the Lord said, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). Among them is that stealing causes a curse on us personally and our society. It causes a rise in the cost of commodities, increases violence as acts of retaliation, and creates guilt and deformation of our character. Therefore, we must be careful because stealing is not just in the big things, but even in the little things.

To kill the curse of stealing, we need to accept the 8th commandment, "You shall not steal." This command applied to the ancients, as it applies to us today.

CANDIDATES FILE FOR**12 BOARD OF EDUCATION****SEATS IN 5 TOWNS***(Continued from page 1)*

themselves with any political party during their campaigns. Candidates are allowed to run solo or under a common slogan or platform.

Elected public officials may endorse a school board candidate or ticket. Political party committees or organizations may lend their campaign resources to one or more candidates.

In MONTCLAIR, there is one incumbent and three challengers seeking to fill three school board seats here.

Mfreke "Monk" Inyang was Mayor Sean Spillar's last appointed board member. Inyang was made successor to the late Dr. Alfred Davis, Jr.'s season on Jan. 12.

It appears that current Board President Latifah Jannah and Vice President Priscilla Church have decided not to run for elective office.

Challenging are Yvonne W. Bouknight, Brian Fleischer and Noah Gale. Bouknight and Gale ran in the March 8 special election; Fleischer is making his first run.

SOUTH ORANGE - MAPLEWOOD voters will be picking at least two new members on the two-town school board panel.

Board President Thair Joshua and member Erin Siders have decided not to run again, leaving South Orange's Johanna Wright as the sole incumbent seeking re-election.

The five challengers are all first-time candidates.

Regina Eckert and William "Bill" Gifford III are the Maplewoodians running. South Orangites Will Meyer, Ritu Pancholy and Nubia DuVall Wilson have also filed petitions.

BELLEVILLE voters may have two incumbents and four challengers to choose from.

Board of Trustees President Luis Muniz and Vice President Gabrielle Bennett-Meany are seeking re-election. Trustee Ralph Tunis, however, has declined to run again.

Challenging are Michael Louis Derro, Lissa Missaggia, Ruben Angel Rodriguez and Michael Sheldon.

Sheldon, currently a critic of Belleville's municipal government, is seeking his return to the trustee board. Missaggia is conducting her second straight campaign. Derro and Rodriguez are first-time runners.

NUTLEY continues the local trend of fresh and familiar faces among this



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year's school board candidates.

Former board president and longtime member Charles Kucinski is seeking re-election. Current Board President Daniel Carcinella and member Frank DeMaio, however, have opted not to run again.

Theresa "Terry" Quirk, who was unseated in last year's election, is seeking a comeback. Daniel Fragnals is making his second straight campaign.

Tom D'Elia, Gregory J. Palma, Andrea Lynn Podgarsky, Emanuel Triggiano and Laura Valente are conducting their first campaigns.

Candidates for ORANGE and WEST ORANGE's BOE elections were not immediately available. Seats held by current ORANGE Board President Shawneque Johnson and members Guadalupe Cabio and Sueann Gravesande,

who were elected in 2019, are up for the Nov. 8 election and Jan. 7, 2023 inauguration/reorganization.

WEST ORANGE Board President Jennifer Tunnicliffe and Vice President Gary Rothstein, who were also elected in 2019, are also up for election or re-election. The board annually offers two seats before its voters.

Prospective Nov. 8 voters have until Oct. 18 to register or transfer their registration with Essex County. Nov. 1 is the last day to apply for a Vote By Mail Ballot by mail.

Nov. 1-5 early voting - by mail, dropbox or at selected voting machine polling stations - are to be announced. Nov. 8 voting machine polling station locations are also to be announced in October.

Visit essexclerk.org for details.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

MOVE

BODY CONSCIOUS

As a photojournalist, my camera has gotten me out of a lot of trouble. So why would I not utilize it as my way out when I was panting like I had just run a marathon on that Friday night.

I don't know which one was worst; my inability to keep up or my panting like a lap dog after a lengthy power walk. But in all honesty, it certainly had to be my inability to keep up with the woman 64 years of age standing in front of that class giving instructions and making those moves who they call Pastor P.

It was a sad sight to say the least, not for once when I showed up to capture those shots for this article but the next time also, which was supposed to be my participating as a student when grabbing my camera once again as my reliable scapegoat.

I was conscious enough to

know that my body at the time begged mercy and wouldn't, I mean couldn't handle it. Thank you, Canon lol...

FIRST MOVE

"My name is Phyllis Ramey, aka Pastor P. I'm not new to this; I have been actively doing Zumba for years, but have been Zumba instructor for around 6 months. But my main gig is being a pastor. I have been a Pastor for over twenty years along with my husband. My husband is Apostle Sidney, and we have a church in Newark called Jesus Church of Deliverance Ministries and it's located at 368 Hawthorne Ave.



Phyllis Ramey aka Pastor P. High Intensity Zumba instructor Contact Info: 862.755.4692 Photo Credit: Andrea Dialect

"I'm also into Television Production. I started out in radio around 2004-2005. I was in radio than moved from radio onto television and that's where I'm



at now. Because of Covid, things shut down for two years and now it's open. I'm doing Cablevision. It just reopened and I did my first show last Thursday.

"I did an interview because me and my husband actually are producing a movie called Destiny Seventy X Seven, which will be coming out October 13, 2022. There will be two showings at 4:30 and at 6:30, at the City Plex 12 Theater in Newark. Tickets can be found on social media. We have done three previous movies, but this is the one that were featuring.

MOVEMENT CONSCIOUS

Zumba is a fitness program that involves cardio and Latin-inspired dance. It was founded by Colombian dancer and choreographer Beto Pérez in 2001, and by 2012, it had 110,000 locations and 12 million people taking classes weekly. Zumba is a trademark owned by Zumba Fitness, LLC. Wikipedia

"Around ten years ago, I was overweight I was wearing over

one hundred fifty pounds and one day I looked in the mirror and it really hit me. I didn't like the way I looked because I like to wear nice clothes and the clothes that I was wearing didn't look good. I had a gut and my face was really fat, and I was really out of shape because I have a small frame which really, really made me look out of shape.

"So what I did was I prayed about it because I knew that it wasn't something that I could do by myself. I had that talk with God. I said, 'I want to lose this weight, but I can't do it on my own I need your help!' I was then moved to go on the internet and do some research. I found out my ideal height and weight for my body type; the best things to eat, how much sugar and salt intake and things like that. ...

Read this article in its entirety at www.localtalkweekly.com and type The Observation Booth, Andrea Dialect and/or Entertainment Section in the search bar. If you are interested in participating in a challenge, project sharing a topic, news or if you have any questions, comments or concerns, send them to localtalkandrea@gmail.com.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

Hanover police. They said the two males and their car matched the accounts made by workers at a Route 10 West Shell station near Reynolds Avenue some 15 minutes earlier and 11 miles east.

While a handgun was used in both robberies, it was not fired. No one has been physically injured.

WOPD later found the BMW abandoned in town - and that it and the two suspects have also

his gas stations in Union and Se-caucus. No descriptions of the suspects have been posted as of press time.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - Those who were hoping that South Orange-Maplewood School District would reconsider their abandoning courtesy school bus service for the 2022-23 school year left the SOMSD Board of Education meeting here July 18 disappointed.

"After reviewing the analysis and discussing the options with

the administration and our attorneys," BOE President Thair Joshua told the gallery audience that Monday night, "it's clear that the district cannot provide additional transportation at this time."

Joshua's statement came after he and the board had listened to public statements from South Orange Village President Sheena Collum and affected parents to reinstate courtesy busing Sept. 1.

The board had approved the district's 2022-23 in May which reduced its transportation line item to \$117,000. The allocation

effectively eliminates courtesy busing for elementary and junior high students within two miles of their assigned schools and high schoolers within 2.5 miles of Columbia High School.

The 2020-21 school board, citing the district's building and integration plan, had intended to drop courtesy busing in the 2021-22 budget - but had extended it to that year.

One resident, Jeffrey Bennett, may be presenting a petition in August to urge the board to conduct a transportation sur- (Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

vey among 2021-22 Kindergarten and 2022-23 First Grade parents. The survey would tweak the algorithm that SOMSD assigns students to district schools.

Bennett had drawn signatures through Change.org.

BLOOMFIELD - A man who has been held on narcotic and weapons possession charges in 2020 has confessed in federal court July 28 to owning more firearms and drugs found later in his apartment here at 21 Lackawanna Plaza.

Cedric Lewis, 31, told U.S. District Judge Brian R. Martinotti by videoconference that Thursday that the cocaine and heroin - plus a 9 mm. and a .40 caliber pistol - found in a Sept. 25, 2020 warrant search were his. He added that he had intended to distribute the said drugs.

That search had also discovered an extended magazine for each of the said guns, \$800 cash, a scale and related drug paraphernalia. The warrant was served in the wake of Lewis' Sept. 20, 2020 arrest on the Newark-Elizabeth border, where he and/or his car held an AR-15 rifle, 30 rounds of .300 caliber ammunition plus more cocaine and heroin.

Elizabeth police had originally pursued a 2012 Jeep Cherokee, with passenger Lewis holding a rifle, chasing another vehicle, Sept. 20, 2020. EPD followed the Jeep onto Newark's Frelinghuysen Avenue where it was later abandoned with the AR-15 inside, on Van Vechten Street. Lewis would be found and arrested in Atlanta in December 2020.

Lewis, on July 28, has pleaded guilty of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Each charge carries a maximum 10-year prison sentence and a \$250,000 fine. Each narcotics charge carries a 20-year maximum sentence and a \$1 million fine.

Lewis' sentencing is set for Dec. 6. U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger thanked the Bloomfield and Elizabeth police departments, the Essex County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Marshalls in Newark and Atlanta and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for their assistance.

MONTCLAIR - Township Council members began apologizing to the few remaining gallery audience members about their 2.5-hour executive session, before ending their regular session before 11:59 p.m. July 26.

There were around 20 people in the

gallery when Mayor Sean Spillar started the meeting at 7 p.m. that Tuesday night. Spillar and the council had completed their presentation of proclamations when he and the council agreed to hold an executive session at 7:30 p.m.

When Spillar resumed the public regular meeting after 10:30 p.m., the gallery audience was down to a literal handful. Councilman Robert Russo had also departed - some said in anger - so that he could support workers' unionization efforts at the Church Street Starbucks.

Fourth Ward Councilman David Cummings started the apologies, during his council member comments, for the executive session's inconveniencing the public. Cummings, Councilman Peter Yacobellis and Spillar said that "a couple of urgent matters had come up" and the executive session speaker was only available at that time.

"I think, in general, in the future when we have such a packed night, I'd advocate that we start earlier," said Yacobellis. "Voting on important business until nearly midnight isn't anyone's dream scenario. There were a lot of questions I withheld in the interest of time - and I don't think that's ideal either."

Spillar and the council have recently abandoned live public speaker participation by Zoom and had denied a petition for its resumption. Spillar called conducting the pandemic-era hybrid meetings "a disaster."

The mayor added that the agenda change had been posted on the township's website, been e-mail and text-blasted.

BELLEVILLE - The township's latest Chief Financial Officer, Frank DiMaria, has been reconciling line items within Belleville's \$70 million Calendar Year 2022 budget since his hiring by the Township Council on July 12.

The council approved DiMaria's \$100 an hour, 10-to-30-hours a week contract that Tuesday night. The 30-year veteran, fresh from being an auditor for Lodi and Hackensack, was Bogota's CFO 2014-17.

DiMaria is Belleville's third CFO in as many years.

DiMaria succeeds the resigned Kimberly Kientz. Kientz was hired in 2019, when Judith Curran left to become Bloomfield's tax collector.

It is not clear whether Mayor Michael Melham's criticism of how the water rates were calculated in 2020, in the wake of that year's increase, was a factor in Kientz's departure.

NUTLEY - A 142-year-old house, slated for demolition since May 4, will be used for Nutley Fire Department training prior to its leveling.

NFD may have been practicing on 285 Nutley Ave. since July 20. The Township Commission, the night before, approved an agreement for such use between "Nutley's bravest" and property owner Jeff Blank and Joseph Haines. The agreement has the township providing general liability insurance until NFD's training there is done.

The Nutley Planning Board approved Blank and Haines' application to replace the 2.5-story house with two smaller houses on its .48 acre corner lot.

NPB's 9-1 vote also granted variances on lot setback and width. A 1,418-signature petition to deny the variances, which would have scuttled the subdivision, was also presented to the board.

The co-owners, who bought the property for \$600,000 Dec. 31, had originally sought subdividing the property into thirds.

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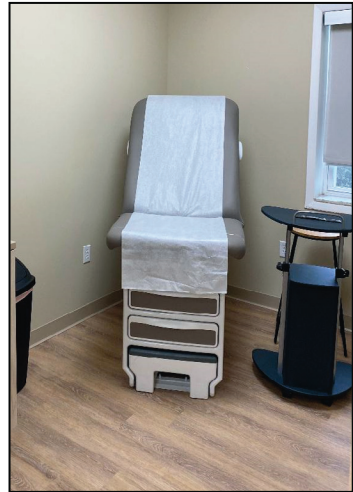
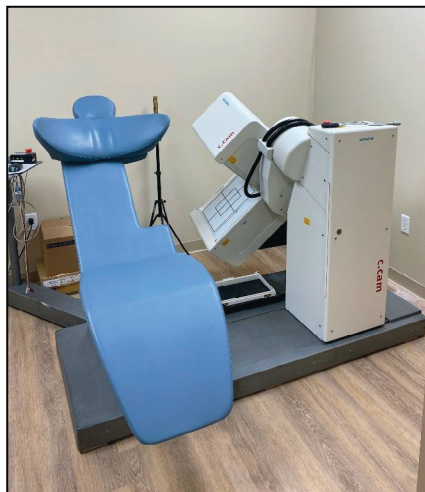
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