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ON THE WEB



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Wednesday



Assembly hopefuls talk waste, spending at candidates night



Photo by Daniel Freel/New Jersey Herald

Rose Ann Salanitri, independent candidate for the state Assembly in the 24th District, speaks during a Meet the Candidates Night at the Ogdensburg Firehouse Tuesday.

By **JESSICA MASULLI REYES**

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OGDENSBURG — When one Ogdensburg resident asked the candidates in the crowded Assembly race how they would reduce spending, most agreed that fraud needs to be wiped out, but beyond that their penny-saving plans diverge.

The six candidates for two Assembly seats in the 24th District debated this and other topics at a Meet the Candidates Night at the Ogdensburg Firehouse Tuesday.

Republican incumbent Gary Chiusano told stories of the excessive fraud and abuse he saw in New Jersey. He cited school officials in Elizabeth who enrolled their

State Senate, county clerk candidates also make pitch, Page A5

children in the free lunch program, despite being well over the salary requirements.

"Folks, you should be angry about this," Chiusano said. "That is your money."

Fellow Republican incumbent Alison McHose agreed, but didn't see this as a Republican versus Democrat issue, but instead a rural versus urban problem. She said cities are being funded more than rural areas like Sussex County.

Democratic candidates Jim Nye and Leslie Huhn said cutting fraud alone was

not the answer, but instead there needed to be a focus on shared services and keeping jobs.

"Our economy is teetering on the edge right now, and we want to make sure we aren't cutting more jobs," Huhn said.

Mark Quick, an independent running under the slogan "Principle not Party," said he disagreed with all the candidates, and especially disagreed with Nye and Huhn on the need for shared services. He said shared services to save money would only collapse small municipalities.

Rose Ann Salanitri, an independent running under the slogan "Tea Party Proud," said she plans to balance the budget just as she would when paying her own monthly bills, by cutting back on expenses and then planning for ways to bring in more money.

All six candidates were initially given five minutes to speak, and many chose to address their goals for education in New Jersey.

Huhn said she is not a politician, but instead a mother of two Sparta public school children who have been hurt by education cuts. She started an organization called Sparta Unites for our Schools last year to lobby

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Details aired of Sparta school official's exit

By **JESSICA MASULLI REYES**

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SPARTA — The school district's business administrator who retired last month is not allowed to speak negatively about the Board of Education and Superintendent Thomas Morton, and vice versa, according to his resignation agreement.

Warren Ceurvels, the former Board of Education secretary and assistant superintendent for business, resigned last month, but will continue to be on paid leave through March 27, according to the resignation agreement. Ceurvels will continue to receive his base salary of

\$172,640 a year, which is a pay freeze for the last two years.

During the paid leave, Ceurvels will provide consulting services to the Board of Education to facilitate the transition of a new business administrator, assist in litigation, and provide information pertaining to the surplus forensic audit. After March, Ceurvels will be required, if necessary, to provide similar services at no additional cost.

Ceurvels' resignation is partially due to an unexpected \$3 million surplus that was announced in June. \$1.374 million of that surplus has been spent on technology upgrades.

The board, Morton and former board President Jennifer Dericks said that they were

surprised by the surplus and thought it was significantly smaller. Ceurvels disagreed and said that Morton was regularly updated on the surplus.

The board decided to do a forensic audit using the district's regular auditor to help determine who knew about the surplus and when it was discussed. The audit has not been completed, but it will help to determine when the surplus was realized.

The resignation contract states that Ceurvels, the Board of Education and Morton cannot "make any disparaging statements about the other party or any officer, member, employee or agent of the Board."

If Ceurvels looks for other

employment in a similar position after his retirement, Morton is allowed to provide the employer only with the dates of Ceurvels' employment and a reference consistent with the formal written administrator evaluations.

At last month's Board of Education meeting, members of the public asked if a "legal gag order" was placed on Ceurvels, but Smith was unable to answer the question. He said that the residents could request the information through the state's Open Public Records Act. The New Jersey Herald and Sparta residents requested the contract and received a copy.

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Bear attacks miniature horse in Hardyston

By **KATIE BRENZEL**

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HARDYSTON — It was by chance that Fran Bracioldieta woke up early enough Tuesday to hear her miniature horse being attacked by a black bear.

About 5:15 a.m., Bracioldieta heard a "choking noise" from her open kitchen windows, coming from the corral in her backyard. It was an unfamiliar, "bizarre" sound that caused her to bolt to her animals, she said.

Standing over her 28-year-old miniature horse, Julie, was a black bear, which was clutching the horse and gnawing on its neck.

Bracioldieta said she screamed at the bear to frighten it, then threw some rocks. The bear backed away from the horse but seemed "more annoyed" than frightened, Bracioldieta said. To shed more light on the area, she ran to bring her truck to

the corral. The bruin ran into the woods on her property.

Veterinarian Dr. Ted Spinks, owner of the Animal Hospital of Sussex County in Augusta, soon arrived to treat Julie, who was in shock. The horse was later hospitalized, where she received antibiotics and anti-inflammatories to treat puncture wounds and scratches on her abdomen, and bite and scratch marks on her neck.

Hardyston police were notified at 6:28 a.m., and Patrolmen E. Francis O'Rourke and Michael Masters responded, according to police reports. The officers were unable to locate the bear.

The state Division of Fish and Wildlife was also notified of the attack, and wildlife field officers set a trap, said Larry Ragonese, spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Protection.

It is unknown whether the black bear attacked anything



Photo by Amy Herzog/New Jersey Herald

Dr. Ted Spinks, owner of the Animal Hospital of Sussex, Augusta, examines Julie, a 28-year-old miniature pony that was attacked by a bear Tuesday.

before Tuesday. If the animal is caught, its fate will be determined based on a number of factors, including its history, Ragonese said.

The prognosis for the horse's injuries improved from Spinks' initial dreary

assessment, he said.

"This morning I would have said 'really bad,' but Julie is doing really well," Spinks said.

The horse will be monitored over the next couple of weeks to prevent infection.

Walkkill revamps dress code

By **JESSICA L. MICKLEY**

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HAMBURG — A stricter dress code policy had its first reading at the Walkkill Valley Board of Education meeting Tuesday, and a crowd of students and parents had it out about the policy's adoption.

The board unanimously voted for the 2¼-page policy. The policy will be enacted if the board approves the second reading at the next board of education meeting.

Part of the policy is a list of 12 items of dress that are forbidden, which include specifics like "shirts in which the shoulders are not covered from the base of the neck to the edge of the shoulder" and general statements like "fashion or materials which exaggerate, reveal, or call attention to anatomical details" and "all students shall demonstrate ... wholesome attitudes toward neatness, cleanliness, propriety, modesty and good sense in attire and appearance."

Superintendent Edward Bolcar and board President William Castiglione said portions of the policy were drafted with general statements to allow room for discretion.

"There's a catchall in there for anything inappropriate," Castiglione said.

"I feel like I was just time warped back to 1950," audience member Tammy Repasy said.

Repasy had several issues with the dress code policy, but was particularly vocal about the portion about a shirt's neckline.

"What is so bad about a shoulder?" Repasy said.

Evan Murphy, a senior at Wallkill Valley Regional High School, voiced disapproval regarding a portion of the policy that restricts during what time of year students can wear shorts.

"It's a little unnecessary to state that you can't wear shorts tomorrow to school," Murphy said.

"I think I'm going to wear shorts tomorrow because it's going to be pretty hot out," Murphy later said.

The active public comments session was cut short after about 30 minutes by Castiglione.

During executive session the board decided to revise the portion of the proposed dress code that stated, "Shorts may be worn until Oct. 15 and from April 15 to the end of the school year." At the second reading, the policy will state that students can wear shorts until Nov. 1 and after April 1.

"I haven't seen one (a bear attack) this bad," Spinks said.

Though she has been a Sussex County resident for 22 years, this is the first time Bracioldieta has seen a bear on her property, located on Beaver Run Road. She woke up early Tuesday after hearing her husband, Lou Ferra, leave for work. Luckily, she said, she decided to stay awake and exercise before going into work. Otherwise she might have been too late to save Julie.

"In another couple of minutes it all would have been over," Bracioldieta said.

The couple has two other horses, another miniature horse and two cows that they now feel are threatened.

"This needs to be a warning to everybody," she said, adding that livestock owners need to be wary of the safety of their animals. "People need to be alert when they

See **HORSE, Page A5**

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