

APR 1990

Mayor demands schools publish salaries



Mayor Dan Martin

Mayor Daniel L. Martin today issued a demand to the Rahway Board of Education to publish the salaries for all school management positions. In a letter to all Board Members, Martin asserted that "the public is entitled to and has the right to full disclosure of all compensation paid by tax dollars to all school management personnel."

"The days are over," Martin declared, "when the schools can hide the salaries they pay their management employees. The citizens of Rahway might go into a state of shock if they see this information, but I fully intend to see that it is published by whatever means necessary."

Noting that City government publishes its salaries every year, the Mayor stated "it's not fair that our employees bear the brunt of criticism arising from the concerns of taxpayers, when in fact the salaries and benefits paid by the Board of Education are by far the biggest part of a taxpayer's bill. As Mayor I don't tolerate anything in City government being hidden from the taxpayers, including salaries, and neither should the schools."

The Mayor explained that "neither I nor the City Council Members control the school system in

Rahway. It is a totally separate operation, with its own elections. "Unless the School Board Members are afraid for the public to see this information or can't defend it," Martin said, "there is no reason they shouldn't immediately publish the compensation for every management and supervisory position in the school system."

Citing the example of the City Administrator's compensation of \$82,733, the Mayor noted that the schools pay out compensations "much higher than this. And, unlike in the schools, our Administrator does all labor negotiating for the City, saving the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees."

As another example, the Mayor pointed out "there are many school supervisors who are paid more than, say, the City Chief of Police, who get paid even

more than the Chief gets paid. "It's time for School Board Members to clean up what they're paying," the Mayor commented, adding "I'm going to press this issue and fight for the right of the people to have this information."

"The salaries paid by the

Rahway Board of Education are more responsible by far for taxes in this community than anything else."

The Mayor concluded, "It's high time the citizens got the benefit of full disclosure from the schools; they shouldn't have to dig this information out."

Residents say NO (!) to school budget

Citizens agree with unprecedented mayoral opposition

by Pat DiMaggio

Voters overwhelmingly defeated Rahway's Board of Education budget when they went to the polls in the school election on April 24. A total of 1,334 residents voted in opposition of the district's spending plan while only 467 voted in favor of it.

"Enough is enough" said Mayor Daniel Martin in a letter he sent to residents dated April 18. "In my opinion the school budget and property tax increase to be voted on deserves to be defeated." This is the first time in recent history that a local mayor publicly opposed a Board of Education budget and asked residents to do the same.

The \$22.2 million budget will now go before the City Council for possible reductions. Ward totals are as follows: Ward 1, Districts 1 and 2 — yes 31, no 78; Ward 1, Districts 3 and 4 — yes 23, no 54; Ward 2, Districts 1 and 2 — yes 31, no 157; Ward 2, Districts 3 and 4 — yes 23, no 98; Ward 3, Districts 1 and 2 — yes 54, no 126; Ward 3, Districts 3 and 4 — yes 42, no 202; Ward 4, Districts 1 and 2 — yes 23, no 29; Ward 4, Districts 3 and 4 — yes 19, no 41; Ward 5, Districts 1 and 2 — yes 31, no 68; Ward 5, Districts 3 and 4 — yes 49, no 122; Ward 6, Districts 1 and 2 — yes 75, no 161; Ward 6, Districts 3 and 4 — yes 59, no 179. Absentee votes — yes 5, no 9.

Three candidates were also voted in to fill three seats on the Board of Education: Incumbent Eugene Moran drew a total of 1,086 votes, incumbent Jacqueline Pagan garnered 1,046 votes and Peter Karavites totalled 1,005 votes.

Fulcomer: 'Martin-Hartnett spending plan would increase city taxes by 15.5 percent'

Republican Mayoral candidate James J. Fulcomer today charged that the Martin-Hartnett Democratic spending plan for 1990 is so extravagant that it would increase municipal city taxes by 15.5 percent — "more than three times the rate of inflation."

"Instead of being honest with the people, the Martin-Hartnett administration has put an imaginary increase of \$1,439,593 in Municipal Revitalization aid in their budget. This \$1.4 million deception obviously was invented by Mayor Martin and Administrator Hartnett to deceive the people prior to the Democratic Party Primary Elections," said Fulcomer.

"Without an enormous increase in state aid from the Municipal Revitalization program (formerly called 'Distressed Cities' aid), Rahway municipal purposes taxes will increase \$1,940,104 from \$12,512,782 to \$14,452,886. The fact is that long before the Martin-Hartnett budget was submitted to the City Council, Governor James Florio announced that there will be no increase in the Municipal Revitalization program this year," said Fulcomer.

"Instead of being honest with the people, the Martin-Hartnett administration has put an imaginary increase of \$1,439,593 in Municipal Revitalization aid in their budget. This \$1.4 million deception obviously was invented by Mayor Martin and Administrator Hartnett to deceive the people prior to the Democratic Party Primary Elections," said Fulcomer.

Mayor candidate Fulcomer said that he would avoid such unethical deceptions in his budgetary practices as mayor and that he would avoid the unnecessary spending of the Martin-Hartnett administration.

He said that during his 12 years as a councilman, he consistently voted against the unnecessary spending of the Martin-Hartnett administration. These "extravagant Martin-Hartnett spending plans" must be cut so that good citizens will stay in Rahway instead of leaving Rahway for less expensive communities, he concluded.

Kennedy: Establish an Economic Development Authority in Rahway

Democratic Mayoral Candidate James J. Kennedy has outlined a major economic development initiative to improve City planning and the decaying downtown central business district. He stated that "Rahway ranks 3rd highest in percentage of municipal tax dollars when compared to 20 Union County municipalities. The Union County Administrator has certified Rahway's municipal tax percentage rate as being 39% for 1989."

Kennedy noted that "Rahway's tremendously high property taxes have put the city at a significant competitive disadvantage with respect to its Union County neighbors. The Martin-Hartnett Administration increased the Rahway municipal budget from \$14,813,883 to \$19,175,369 from 1987 to 1989. This increased cost of operating city government has placed a tremendous property tax burden on both homeowner and businessman."

"We must establish an Economic Development Authority which would develop an action blueprint for revitalization of the City. The opportunity for future development and revitalization must examine the underlying problems of the City, including use of residential units, parking availability, the lack of major retailers, high store vacancies, safety, vagrants, availability of services and office use in prime downtown retail space, and the preservation of municipal parkland."

Kennedy claimed that "there has been a long string of unsuccessful attempts for the development of the 11-acre site behind City Hall over the past 20 years. We must guarantee that the extent and type of retail uses in any proposed development behind City Hall have a strong complimentary economic relationship with the downtown business district and the entire City."

"There are 62 acres in the downtown area with significant opportunity for sensible long-term development. An Economic Development Authority composed of dedicated community leaders would establish a comprehensive grid of recreational plans for the downtown and entire City."

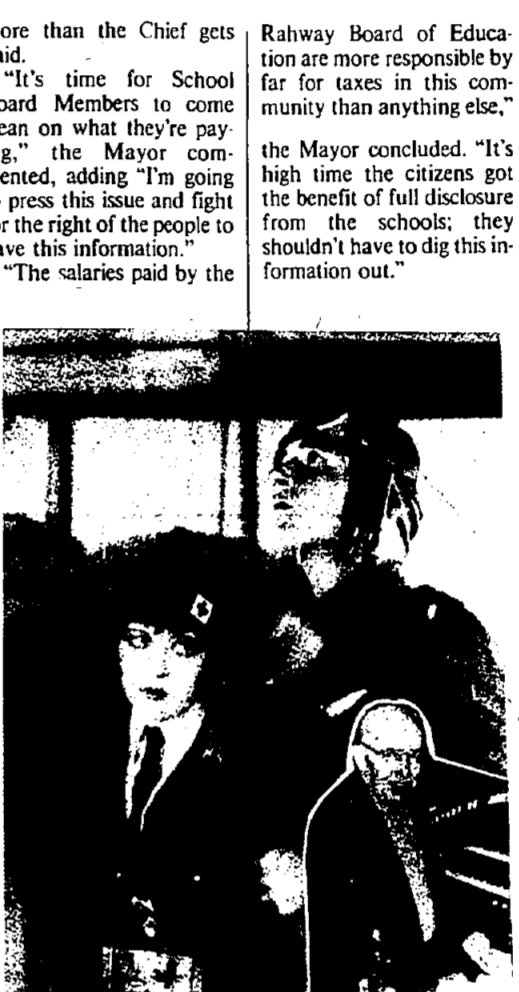
"Many cities have been revitalized through sensible planning and cost effective city management. Now it can be Rahway's opportunity," argued Kennedy.

"Cranford has a municipal property tax percentage of only 24% compared to Rahway's 39% municipal property tax percentage, yet Cranford has dramatically improved the quality of life through intelligent community planning. Rahway has been drifting for too long. We must begin through an Economic Development Authority to plan where Rahway will be in the 90's," stated Kennedy.

"Through a public-private partnership in the Economic Development Authority, we can plan for a sensible Rahway future. The goal is a vicious economic cycle of soaring Rahway municipal budgets. Local businesses and homeowners are moving out of Rahway due to unplanned escalating municipal taxes," argued Kennedy.

Kennedy concluded, "We now have over 200 'for sale' signs throughout Rahway. If we do not restrain the growth of City spending and begin intelligent development through an Economic Development Authority, we will quickly force a significant percentage of the city's population to re-evaluate whether they can afford Rahway municipal government."

"Seniors on a fixed income and young families are finding it increasingly difficult to afford thousands of dollars in municipal tax increases due to failed planning and unrestrained spending over past years."



INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER... That's acting legend Gary Cooper looking skyward in one of his first movies. The gal with the worried look is star Colleen Moore. The picture is "Liac Time," produced as a silent in 1928-the year the palatial Rahway Theatre opened. The R.T. is now the Union County Arts Center (1601 Irving St., Rahway), and on Saturday April 28, at 8 p.m. the curtain will rise again on "Liac Time" complete with pipe organ accompaniment by the celebrated Lee Irwin (inset). For ticket information, call 499-8226.

Arts Center officers introduced at open house

The Union County Arts Center on Rahway's Irving Street was favored with a balmy Sunday afternoon for its April 22 open house and annual membership meeting. The dues-paying arts center members who attended and the curious who had seen the welcoming sign at the front entrance were introduced to the center's new volunteer officers.

Tom Connell, the city's Director of Community Development, is the new president, replacing Eric L. Rickes, who had held the post for two successful years.

What had been a single vice-president's post has, under revised by-laws (revised for attendees by Trustee Alex Shipley), now

Celebrate Earth Week: Plant a tree

The City of Rahway is donating pink and white dogwood trees to any organization, church or civic group, interested in participating in the Earth Week "Plant a Tree Program" now through April 28. The ornamental trees are approximately 5-6 feet in height and are available in pink or white blossoms.

The trees were purchased through Clean Communities Program Grant. Arrangements to obtain the trees including delivery, can be made by contacting the Mayor's office at 381-8000.

Special Board meeting

A Special Meeting of the Rahway Board of Education will be held tonight (April 26) at 8 p.m. in the Louis R. Rizzo Board Meeting Room in the Intermediate School. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss personnel matters which will be done in closed session.

Any action regarding the above referenced personnel matters, such as reappointment and non-reappointment of staff, will take place in public session at the conclusion of the closed session, or at a later date.

Seeger completes recruit training

Marine Pvt. Raymond A. Seeger, son of Lillian Seeger of Rahway has completed recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C.

During the 13-week training cycle, Seeger was taught the basics of battlefield survival. He was introduced to the typical daily routine that he will experience during his enlistment and studied the personal and professional standards traditionally exhibited by Marines.

He participated in an active physical conditioning program and gained proficiency in a variety of military skills including first aid, rifle marksmanship and close order drill.

NEW PRESIDENT

In addition to his duties as Rahway's Director of Community Development, Tom Connell is the Union County Arts Center's new voluntary president.

Union County Comparison of 1989 Tax Rates			
	School's % of Tax Dollar	Municipal % of Tax Dollar	
1. Scotch Plains	62	1. Hillside	48
2. Westfield	60	2. Roselle	44
3. Winfield	59	3. Elizabeth	39
4. Fanwood	58	4. Garwood	39
5. Clark	57	5. Rahway	39
6. Berkeley Heights	55	6. Union	37
7. Cranford	55	7. Winfield	37
8. Kenilworth	54	8. Roselle Park	35
9. New Providence	52	9. Linden	30
10. Mountainside	51	10. Springfield	30
11. Roselle Park	50	11. Summit	29
12. Springfield	49	12. New Providence	27
13. Linden	47	13. Kenilworth	25
14. Rahway	45	14. Cranford	24
15. Summit	45	15. Fanwood	24
16. Garwood	43	16. Clark	22
17. Elizabeth	42	17. Berkeley Heights	21
18. Roselle	42	18. Union	21
19. Union	42	19. Westfield	18
20. Hillside	37	20. Scotch Plains	17

NOTE: The 24 hour NARCOTIC HOTLINE for Rahway is 388-1553

CORRECTION—Although this correction is too late to be meaningful, the word "municipal" in the headline of last week's front page story on the school elections should have been "school." The headline referred to the \$22.2 million school (not municipal) budget. We apologize for the error.



PLANTING... Outgoing Chamber of Commerce President Jim Kennedy and Board of Director member Sam Sturges, MAS Tardies, planted a customary palm tree in the Public Chamber park in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the \$22.2 million school (not municipal) budget. We apologize for the error.