



The Long Hill Ledger

Message from the Mayor:

Summer is over and the kids are back in school. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer and had a chance to unwind.

On July 26 the Township Committee approved Ordinance 402-17, which puts the sale of the Township's wastewater system as a referendum question on the ballot in the November 7 general election. I can't emphasize enough the importance of everyone getting as much background information as possible on this referendum in order to make an informed decision.

The other really important thing is to ensure you are registered to VOTE. October 17 is the LAST day you are able to register to vote in the November general election. Please make sure you are registered! Information about registering to vote, obtaining a vote-by-mail application, deadline dates and other issues can be found on the Morris County Elections Center web site – <https://elections.morriscountynj.gov/>.

The sale is a decision for the residents but you must cast your vote, so please mark your calendars – November 7, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Cornel Schuler, Jr.
Mayor



Long Hill Township Welcomes Nancy Malool



Long Hill Township has welcomed Nancy Malool as our new Business Administrator. Her first day was August 21.

Nancy came to Long Hill with an impressive background. She most recently served as Assistant Town Manager of East Windsor Township in Mercer County. In that position she was deeply involved in procurement and RFPs for public services; employment and compensation, including collective bargaining; grant program administration; open space; affordable housing; and ordinances and resolutions.

Prior to her two years as Assistant Town Manager, Nancy spent three years at the Division of Local Government Services within the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, first as Director of Shared Services, then as Assistant Division Director.

Nancy began her career in government in 1991 as a Policy Analyst at the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission before taking the position

of Chief of Staff/Chief Legislative Aide for Assemblyman Alan Augustine, a position in which she served for seven years.

While with Assemblyman Augustine, Nancy attended Seton Hall School of Law and earned her law degree. (She also holds a bachelor of arts degree in political science and a master of public administration degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University.)

"I loved government and the law and went to law school to further my career in government," she said. "When I passed the bar I was so excited I thought I would practice for a while."

Nancy spent a brief period with the law firm Hueston, McNulty, Mueller & DeGonge, P.C. before opening her own practice in 2004.

"But I really wanted to get back into government and had that chance in 2012 when I started at DCA," she said.

However, even while running her law firm Nancy was not completely out of government. She served as a Council Member in Scotch Plains, Union County, from 2002 to 2009 and as Mayor from 2009 to 2012. She still resides there.

Nancy's passion for government really took shape while serving with Assemblyman Augustine.

"I like being able to make a difference, make a change," she said. "When I worked for the assemblyman I found it very frustrating to see all these bills introduced and very few signed into law. What are you really accomplishing?"

However, Nancy relished the opportunity to work one-on-one with constituents who needed help with an issue, something that allowed her to make the difference she was seeking. Now she has brought that passion to Long Hill.

"There is nothing that touches people's lives more than local government," she said. "I really like helping residents and local officials make their municipality a better place to live. My door is always open. I consider myself a good listener and I'm happy to help whenever I can. I'm really looking forward to this."

Nancy can be reached at 908.647.8000, ext. 224 or administrator@longhillnj.gov.

Administrator's Corner

Northfield/Main/Central Sidewalks: Sidewalk and driveway work is complete but residual landscaping work is ongoing. The contractor has a maintenance bond to insure all work is completed to the Township's specifications.

Mitchell Road Drainage: The Township has received permit approval from the DEP for Phase 2. This will consist of stabilization of the channel downstream below the existing 24-inch pipe and where the drainage from Mitchell Road and Daugherty Road has been completed.

Redevelopment Zone-Valley Road: Survey and engineering work are underway as part of the planning application process to satisfy DEP requirements.

Neighborhood Traffic Concerns: The Ad-Hoc Committee composed of Township officials and residents has met and provided the Township Committee with a recommendation regarding Oaks Road. Several additional areas of concern will be the subject of future meetings.

Old Millington Schoolhouse: After nearly a decade of work the restoration of the Old Schoolhouse is complete. There are some residual engineering questions to be worked out with the contractor and architect. The Township is looking for tenants for the office section of the building.

Valley Road/Meyersville Road: The county will mill and pave Valley Road from the Somerset County line to Mountain Avenue in September when the road settles. The county also will mill and pave Meyersville Road from just west of Meyersville Circle to Fairmount Avenue this fall.

Gillette School Crossing: The Township has been working to improve the crosswalk on Valley Road in front of Gillette School. The effort will increase pedestrian safety for residents with the destinations of Gillette School or the Senior Center. The Township has performed the necessary engineering work to install electronic signaling equipment to alert drivers to the crosswalk and installation is planned to coincide with the county paving project along Valley road.

Long Hill Opioid Task Force: The Task Force has met and is working on a sustainable plan to address this issue. We plan to work with county, state and federal officials to coordinate our efforts.

Wastewater (Sewer) System Sale: The referendum question will be on the November 7 ballot and residents will have the opportunity to vote on the sale. Please see insert for more details.

Guy Piserschia – Committeeman
guy@longhillnj.gov

Free Bus Service for Long Hill Senior Citizens

Attention Long Hill Seniors: Please consider taking advantage of our free bus services for seniors, available Monday-Friday. We provide transportation to shopping, meetings and more! Monday and Friday service stops at the Senior Center for lunch provided courtesy of Morris County Nutrition Program. First and third Wednesday service is for the Senior Club meetings at the Senior Citizen Center. The last Wednesday every month is Out-of-Town Shopping Day and there is weekly service every Thursday to Shoprite in Stirling. To reserve a ride call Grace Nemes at 908.604.2223 two days in advance.

Welcome Michael Vitarello



The Long Hill Township School District welcomes Michael Vitarello as our new Principal of Central Middle School.

Michael comes to Long Hill with a depth of experience in education and administration. He most recently served as Principal of the Long Branch Middle School (with an enrollment of 1,200), a position he held for six years. He began his career in education as a teacher in the Long Branch School district for three years before becoming an instructional coach and then Principal.

In a letter Michael posted on the Long Hill Township School District website, he said, "I will work my hardest to provide our students with a safe, healthy and challenging academic experience. Also, I am looking forward to building relationships with the community, parents and students."

Michael believes his strong suit is his organizational and collaborative skills.

"One of my goals is to foster a school environment that believes in itself and is rooted in collaborative teamwork at all levels," he said. "I feel it is so important to make students feel safe and welcomed. I want to ensure all students are academically challenged to meet or exceed the standards."

In Michael, parents should expect a partner.

"Someone who's open to listening and working collaboratively with them, being an advocate for students and someone who is going to find common ground," he said.

Students should expect a supporter.

"Someone who's going to hold them to high expectations, both socially and academically, and someone who will believe in them," he said. "Someone who believes that we all need to lead by example. When we lead by example we all help foster a school with a positive environment and high expectations."

Michael holds a bachelor of arts degree in history and education and a master of educational administration degree from Monmouth University. He is a resident of Fanwood, Union County.

“Fall Into” Parks & Recreation



Our 2016 Halloween Parade.

The fall season brings many fall sports to Kantor Park, including field hockey (grades 5-8) and local soccer programs through the Watchung Hills Soccer Association (WHSA). Tennis programs through Skyline Tennis will continue at Kantor Park through the fall. Also, make sure to join us for our Town Obstacle Course this fall, where residents will compete for the coveted title.

Basketball programs through the Parks & Recreation Department will be offered in the schools.

Our more competitive Travel Teams (grades 4-8) will begin try-outs in October. Our Saturday Recreation Basketball Program (open to Long Hill residents grades 1-8) will begin mid-November and run through the end of February. Our Adult Basketball Program will be offered again beginning in October.

Our Fall Lake Dance (Long Hill residents grades 6-8) is scheduled for Friday, September 8, at Stirling Lake.

Our yoga programs will start up again in September at the Millington Schoolhouse. New this fall – we are offering a special workshop on yoga for high school athletes.

Mark your calendars for our Annual Halloween Parade on Sunday, October 22, at 3 p.m. at Kantor Park.

Why not sign up for a First Aid and CPR course and become certified? Red Cross classes will be offered every month at the Long Hill First Aid Squad Building through a cooperative effort between the squad and the Parks & Recreation Department.

More information about all these events and other programs can be found on our website at www.longhill-nj.gov on the Recreation pages. Registration for programs is online though Community Pass.

Lisa Scanlon – Director, Parks & Recreation
recreation@longhillnj.gov

Dept. of Public Works

The Department of Public Works will continue delivering double ground hardwood mulch to residents until supplies run out. Delivery charge is \$100.00 for five cubic yards.

We will be milling and paving the following streets this year: Northfield Rd., Somerset St., Windsor Way and Summit Ave.

The Public Works Department offers monthly curbside collection of electronics, TVs, scrap metal and appliances on the last full week of every month. Please call 908.647.0070 in advance of the collection to schedule a pickup. We also have a recycling drop-off center located off Valley Road in Stirling for township residents. Items that may be dropped off include branches, logs, grass clippings and leaves, electronics, scrap metal and appliances, fluorescent light bulbs, Styrofoam, lead acid batteries and automotive tires. The hours of operation are Monday through Thursday 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Friday 6:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We also are open on certain designated Saturdays from April through December; see the Township calendar or website for specific dates.

We can be reached at the Department of Public Works offices at 908.647.0700 or the below email.

Tom Sweeney – Director of Public Works
roads@longhillnj.gov

Public Safety

Bus Safety Tips

By Police Chief Michael Mazzeo

The greatest risk to your child is not riding a school bus but approaching or leaving one. Teach your child to:

- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early and stand six feet back from the curb. Do not play at a school bus stop.
- Wait for the bus to fully stop, the doors to open and the driver to say it's okay to get on before approaching the bus. Use the handrails.
- Never walk behind a school bus. When crossing the street, cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can watch. If you drop something, don't bend to pick it up; tell the driver.

Motorist:

- Look for children when backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage.
- Slow down. Look for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks.
- Watch for children congregating at bus stops and be alert for late-arriving children.
- Yellow flashing lights mean the bus is preparing to stop – prepare to stop.
- Red flashing lights and extended stop arms mean the bus has stopped – you must stop.

Community Events Calendar

Gentle Yoga

Thursdays starting Sept. 14 • 10:15 am - 11:15 am
Millington Schoolhouse
10-week series Viniyoga for all levels
No experience necessary!

Mystery of Mysteries at the Library: Jack the Ripper

Sunday, October 15 • 2:00 pm
Presented by clinical psychologist and self-proclaimed “Ripperologist” Dr. Mark Vogel. Join us for this fascinating inquiry into a compelling mystery. Due to the gruesome nature of the topic and the accompanying images in Dr. Vogel’s presentation, the program is open only to adults ages 18 and older.

Halloween Parade

Sunday, October 22 • 3:00 pm • Kantor Park
(rain date October 29)
Costume contest, prizes and giveaways. Fun for all!

Annual FORCE Tiger Tracks 5K Race

Special Halloween Run *New for '17*
Sunday, October 29 • 7:30 am • Central Middle School
Register to run or come out to cheer. Proceeds benefit Long Hill K-8 schools enrichment programs.

Rutgers S.A.F.E.T.Y. Class

Fall Classes • Millington Schoolhouse
Coaches, this three-hour certification program meets minimum required safety standards.
\$35/person; all class materials provided.
See the Township website Recreation pages for schedule/dates.

Election Day

Tuesday, November 7
Come out and vote! Polls are open 6:00 am - 8:00 pm

LHT Library Book Club – Meets monthly

While joining a book club is a great way to share a love for reading, it's also a friendly way to meet new people, socialize and have a laugh! The Long Hill Library Book Club meets on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm. Book Club books are available for check-out at the Front Desk several weeks before the meeting. We invite you to join the Book Club (or just stop by!).

Visit the Township website for a complete listing on:

Important community announcements, Committee meeting schedule, Recreation program information and more – www.longhillnj.gov



Wastewater Sale

By Cornel Schuler, Jr., Mayor

As I mentioned in the Message from the Mayor, on July 26 the Township Committee voted unanimously to place a referendum question on the ballot in the November General Election. This single question will decide whether or not the wastewater system is sold to a private entity or whether we as a Township keep it.

Over the coming months there will be numerous informational outreach programs with various civic groups throughout town. And as always, residents are welcome to come to any Township Committee meeting to ask questions or make comments. Throughout the next few months you will hear discussions with some people calling it the "wastewater system" and other people calling it the "sewer system." They are in fact the same thing. Most people get a "sewer bill" so the average person calls it a sewer system, or sewer plant, but the more technical term and commonly used term in legal documents is "wastewater system."

Regardless of which term is used, the wastewater system is composed of many different components, ALL of which are included in the sale. There is the treatment plant, the collection system and various pumping stations.

Below are some questions and answers to help you better understand the issue.

Q. How many bids did the Township receive?

A. Technically speaking, two bids. One from New Jersey American Water (NJAW), which was the winning bid, and one from another entity stating they were not submitting an offer.

Q. How much money was the bid for?

A. \$11 million and an additional \$250,000 to reimburse the Township for the costs that the Township has incurred in connection with the proposed sale. For example, legal fees, the capital improvement study and valuation that was performed.

Q. What happens to the money if the referendum passes?

A. Per New Jersey Statute, the money must first be used to pay down any direct sewer-related debt, followed by any general debt of the Township. Long Hill currently has approximately \$14 million in total debt obligations and, as such, the entire revenue from the sale will be used to pay down debt.

Q. But if all the debt is paid off can't the Township Committee just go and borrow again?

A. Yes, it could. Bond Ordinances (debt) require four affirmative votes to be approved; it is not a simple majority vote. So if only four members are present and one votes no, the bond Ordinance would fail even though it was a 3-1 vote. Borrowing requires four "yes" votes regardless of the number of members present.

Q. I heard that the system was valued at \$25 million. Why was the offer only \$11 million?

A. When the Township Committee issued its request for bids, it included a number of conditions, many of which have significant costs associated with them.

Q. What kind of conditions?

A. Full details are in the bid document (which is on the Township's website) but, in summary, NJAW must:

- Make any capital improvements necessary to lift the Township's sewer ban within five years of closing.
- Have capacity to satisfy the Township's affordable housing obligation.
- Extend service to cover at least 95% of the Township within five years of closing.
- Keep the current senior discount program in place.
- Make capital improvements to the Morristown Road and Clover Hill Pump Stations within two years of the closing date.
- Interview current employees for employment.
- Increase the capacity to accommodate future growth as necessary.

Q. What about the areas in town that have septic systems or cesspools?

A. Part of the agreement requires the Buyer to provide sewer service to at least 95% of the homes/businesses in town within five years.

Q. I have a septic system/cesspool. Will I get sewer?

A. You may or may not. NJAW will not begin analyzing which homes will get sewer service until after the referendum passes. For those locations that NJAW decides are part of the increase in coverage, the extension must be done within five years of closing.

Q. I have a working septic system/cesspool. Will I be required to connect to the sewer system?

A. Yes. Per existing Ordinance, residents who are within 200 feet are required to connect to the sanitary sewer system within 180 days after it becomes available.

Q. But I just put in a new septic system. Will I be required to connect?

A. There is an exception under the current Ordinance where any property with a septic system installed while under the sewer ban can remain un-connected for a period of 20 years from installation.

Q. What about rates?

A. NJAW has committed to keeping rates below 2017 rates for a period of three years from closing and then seeking a rate increase no higher than 3% compounded annually back to the year in which the transaction closes (about 9.273%). NJAW would then hold that new rate until five years after closing.

Q. Why not just raise the rates 3% instead of waiting and compounding?

A. If the referendum passes, once the transaction completes, rate increases will be subject to review by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU). The review process typically takes nine months or more to complete and is an expensive process to undertake. As a private utility subject to BPU oversight, NJAW has historically adopted a policy of seeking rate increases every few years.

Q. What about rates after five years of closing?

A. NJAW can set whatever rates they like after the agreement period ends. However, any rate increases must be approved by the BPU just like any other rate increase for any other utility in the State of New Jersey.

Q. But NJAW has to make money and the Township can run the system at cost. Why sell it?

A. That is a very complicated discussion with no clear answer. Every time the Township wants to undertake improvement work there is a complicated process that legally must take place. Engineers and architects need to design and draw, specification documents need to be prepared and lawyers need to draft bid documents for just about any capital improvement project. Those "soft costs," as they are called, typically add up to 5-10% of the overall project cost, or more. NJAW is a company that does this for a living. For many bits of work, it may be as simple as picking up the phone and calling the appropriate team and sending them out to do their specialty. In many cases, there are no soft costs and if there are, those costs are much less than what the Township can do it for. Remember, the engineers, architects, lawyers and other professionals we hire today are also doing their jobs for a profit, as well. Many of those roles are on staff at NJAW.

In addition, there likely are some economies of scale. NJAW will be buying and doing things in much larger quantities than Long Hill does. This should translate into lower overall costs for NJAW.

In the discussions we had with various parties leading up to today, we learned that utility companies are looking to make around 10% on their capital and that is what the BPU typically looks for (allows) when evaluating rate increases. The question is whether NJAW will be able to drive more cost out of the process than they want to make as profit.

Q. That projected sewer rate chart that I've seen if we keep the system doesn't look realistic. How can you double rates in one year?

A. Rates might or might not double. If the referendum does not pass, next year's Township Committee will need to decide whether or not it wants to do all, some or none of the work that was outlined in the 20-year capital plan. The chart represents doing the work in full that the engineering firm recommended and assumed no financing options or costs associated with financing.

Q. Why not bond for the work that needs to be done?

A. That is an option. Bonding Ordinances require four yes votes from the Township Committee, however, and since the money is borrowed there are interest charges that are incurred. Because there also are additional legal costs each time a Township issues bonds, bonding is generally reserved for larger and less frequent expenses. A possible scenario would be bonding \$6 million every four years instead of spending \$1.5 million every year. Bonding this way would make the initial rate increase about 50%, at the expense of rates that peak at 150% higher in nine years' time. The chart representing pay-as-you-go holds at 100% for 20 years.

Q. Why not issue Notes instead of Bonds?

A. Also an option. Unlike Bonds, Notes are easily issued year-to-year without overhead expenses. However, outstanding Notes re-issue every year at the then-prevailing interest rate. If interest rates go up, the Township would incur higher interest charges for all Notes outstanding. As borrowing would be occurring every year, the total cost of interest and principle would increase every year to a rate higher than the pay-as-you-go rates. Typically, borrowing in this manner for continuing expenses is not a viable long-term strategy because of the inherent risk around increasing interest rates. More details around borrowing options will be posted on the Township website and discussed at future information sessions.



Please remember to get out and vote for or against the sale on November 7. Don't assume the outcome of the referendum will be what you expect. If you aren't sure if you will be around, get a vote-by-mail application. Information about voter registration and important dates can be found on the Morris County Elections Center website (<https://elections.morriscountynj.gov>).

More detailed information and documentation is available on the township's website www.longhillnj.gov.