

Essex pays ex-official \$125,000 as consultant

By LAUREN ROBINSON

The Essex County freeholders yesterday approved a \$125,000 consultant contract to retain Joseph Galluzzi, the county's former treasurer and acting finance director.

Galluzzi, who submitted his resignation on June 30, said he relinquished his \$66,000-a-year post to rededicate himself to his private accounting firm in Irvington.

"I have mixed emotions about not being involved in the day-to-day operations anymore," he told the board yesterday. "Once I get a job on my way, I like to stick with it and see it through."

"The time has come now where the demand on my time... goes far beyond what I had ever anticipated," Galluzzi continued. "We did accomplish an awful lot. At this point, I've run out of steam and would like to go back to my practice."

Galluzzi, who is credited with saving the county millions of dollars by re-vamping such systems as financial data networks and the old employee pension plan, agreed to act as a consultant after the idea was proposed by County Executive Nicholas Amato.

The contract, which also grants Galluzzi \$1 per \$1,000 par value for the underwriting of negotiated bond issues, was opposed by Freeholders Monroe Lustbader and Arthur Clay.

While there was no debate over Galluzzi's expertise or qualifications as a financial consultant, the two opposing freeholders called the \$125,000 fee "excessive" and the added allowance for bond services "a dangerous precedent."

"If I was a full-time department head making \$65,000 a year and saw this contract for a part-time consultant, with no hours specified, making almost double... I'd be outraged," Lustbader said.

"I think we're entering dangerous ground with the potential for conflict we are creating by giving an override fee on bond issues," he continued. "The larger the bond issue being recommended by the consultant, the larger his fee."

Clay acknowledged Galluzzi's accomplishments in allowing the county

Former treasurer stepped down to devote time to accounting firm

to operate since 1987 without raising taxes, but said the new county treasurer should be qualified enough to carry out his financial plan.

"If we approve this contract, we're contradicting what this board has gone on record for," he asserted. "For example, when Mr. (H. Curtis) Meanor was on contract, we couldn't wait for the county executive to put him on salary. In fact, we voted down a \$100,000 salary for him."

Meanor, the acting county counsel, worked as a consultant for years before assuming his post. The board is in litigation with Meanor concerning his salary and was advised by board counsel to refrain from alluding to the matter during the public session.

Freeholder James Cavanaugh said Galluzzi's ability to save tax dollars would more than make up for the fee he was charging for the service.

"It seems to me we would be throwing the baby out with the bath water if we don't somehow keep Mr. Galluzzi to monitor the innovative programs he has implemented," Freeholder President Joseph Parlavecchio agreed.

"We're talking about a unique ap-

proach to financial management. I've seen many governments taking on financial advisers in these times," he said.

Also yesterday, board members approved a resolution requiring the county clerk to add a nonbinding referendum concerning auto insurance reform to the Nov. 7 ballot.

Clay, who introduced the resolution on behalf of New Jersey Citizen Action, said he hoped voter feedback would pressure state officials to act on a problem that affects most residents.

The question asks if the freeholders should adopt a resolution advising the state to roll back auto insurance rates by 20 percent, to abolish the Joint Underwriting Association, which covers motorists who cannot obtain policies on open market, and eliminate related surcharges.

It also asks if the resolution should advise replacement of the JUA with a system that allows "good" drivers to choose their insurance companies and establishes an assigned risk plan for drivers who do not meet such criteria.

Freeholders also accepted nominations by Amato to change five acting county directors to director status. The



Joseph Galluzzi
'Mixed emotions' on leaving

nominees, who appeared before the board for discussion before a vote next week, were:

Mark Parnes, Office of Management and Budget; Sheila Oliver, Division of Community Action; M.J. Peterson, Division of Employment Training; Anthony Imperiale, Emergency Management; and Nicholas Struble, Department of Public Works.

Irvington condemns house, moves families

By BARRY CARTER

An emergency demolition began yesterday on a five-family house in Irvington that was structurally unsafe and contained four feet of raw sewage in its basement.

The three-story house at 349 16th Ave. was condemned last week and its 30 residents were temporarily relocated to the Irvington Motor Lodge, said Mayor J. Walter Jonkoski.

Jonkoski, who was involved in having the building vacated and demolished, said his office was flooded with calls from neighborhood residents complaining about the smell of the raw sewage.

"You couldn't stand out here," said Jonkoski, who was at the site yesterday. "The odor was so great."

The sewage was pumped out of the basement last week after fire and health department officials inspected the building and ordered it condemned.

Jonkoski said a pipe had burst and the sewage leaked into the basement. Structurally, Jonkoski said the stairs were separated from the walls, and the walls were leaning.

The residents were living in the building rent-free for the last three months after the owners abandoned the property.

According to officials in the tax assessors office, the owners are Michael Shaler and Virginia Rodgers, who listed the deteriorating property as their address.

Henry F. Blank, director of the Office of Community Development and Planning, said the displaced residents will be housed in the lodge for about two weeks.

He said financial assistance will be offered when they find another place to live, and each renter will receive \$1,000 a year for four years to help offset any increase in rent at a new apartment.

Yesterday, workers began tearing apart the third floor of the house manually, and heavy equipment will come in Saturday to finish the job, Jonkoski said.

A small one-story dwelling next to the building also will be razed.

The \$40,000 cost to demolish the building will be paid out of the township's demolition fund.

Essex college guard killed by stray bullet

By KINGA BORONDY

A security guard employed by Essex County College was shot and killed by a stray bullet early yesterday as he talked to friends in the lobby of an apartment building on West Kinney Street, police said.

Cleveland Darren Butler, 23, of

When Officers Ronald Lucas and Henry Moore arrived, they found the victim alone in the lobby, Collins said.

Newark Detective Gary Miller and James Gold of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office are seeking witnesses and are asking anyone with information to call police.

Described as a person who "doesn't know how to get tired" by Lt. Anthony Harris of the Essex County Police Department, Butler had worked as an unarmed security guard at the college for about a year.

"He worked very hard and was well-liked. He will be missed by the department and the people here," Harris said.

Butler applied for the job in the hopes of eventually becoming a police officer at the college, Harris said, explaining that the officers are usually hired from among the guards.

"He knew there were no guarantees to becoming a police officer within a certain time period and accepted that," Harris said.

Butler always offered to work overtime and help out if the college needed him.

"When we had fights among the kids from Central High School who were cutting across the property, he was always out in the parking lot or gym area, where he could help subdue the problem," Harris said.

"He had a great attitude toward the public," Harris added.

Butler was working two jobs, with the college and with another security firm in Newark.

"He just lived in a neighborhood that wasn't desirable," Harris said, adding he had lived there all his life. "He was talking about it being time he got his own place. A move may have been in the works."



Cleveland Butler
Shot while in apartment lobby

338 W. Kinney St. died at 10:25 a.m. yesterday after being struck in the forehead by a bullet meant for someone else, said Detective Dan Collins, a police spokesman.

Butler was speaking with friends in the lobby of the high-rise apartment building where he lived with his parents about 1:15 a.m. when an unknown gunman ran by chasing someone, Collins said.

As he drew even with Butler, the man fired and the bullet struck Butler.

Orange man seized in child sex assault

Orange Police arrested a 25-year-old man Tuesday and charged him with sexually assaulting a 7-year-old girl, said Police Director Charles Cobbett.

Rickie Wells was arrested at his Central Avenue residence at 9:30 p.m. and charged with aggravated sexual assault.

An investigation by Detective Dominick Scarola and the state Division of

Family and Youth Services also found that the girl was sodomized.

Cobbett said Wells was a former boyfriend of the child's mother, who called police in July to report the incident.

Wells is being held without bail and is scheduled to be arraigned today in Orange Municipal Court.

Hillside-to-Newark chase ends in crash

By KINGA BORONDY

Erratic driving attracted the attention of two Hillside police officers who tried to stop a vehicle and then followed it into Newark, where it crashed early yesterday, leaving two Newark men in critical condition, police said.

Gregorio Soto, 24, of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the driver, was in critical condition in University Hospital, while Martin Cruz, 24, also of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, was in fair condition, said Roger Ramsey, a hospital spokesman.

Hillside Officers Michael Katsoudas and David Swider saw the car run a red light on North Broad Street at 1:15 a.m., said Capt. Henry Cenken.

The car was being driven without lights and the officers followed it through Hillside, trying to stop it, only to have the driver evade the patrol car.

"It was a slow-speed pursuit," Cenken said, adding the chase through parts of Elizabeth and Newark did not exceed 25 or 30 miles an hour. "At one point, when they drove across a ballfield in Weequahic Park, it was down to 10 miles an hour."

The officers noticed something being thrown from the car and continued the pursuit. "The officers were about six blocks away when they saw a flash of light and when they arrived, realized the suspects had crashed," Cenken said.

The men were charged with eluding police, reckless driving and motor vehicle violations, Cenken said.

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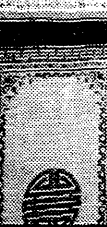
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