

## BROOKHAVEN TOWN

# Goal: water district transfers

BY DEON J. HAMPTON

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Brookhaven officials want to pay off as much as \$2 million in outstanding debt before transferring several water districts to the Suffolk County Water Authority as part of the town's consolidation efforts.

Town board members at a meeting Thursday set four public hearings about discontinuing the separate water districts in Medford, Holtsville and Shirley, where there are two dis-

tricts. They are all operated by the county authority but are considered town taxing districts. The hearings are scheduled for Sept. 13 at Town Hall.

Officials estimate the changeover will cost between \$1 million and \$2 million. Funds for the project will come from a portion of a \$20 million state grant awarded to the town in June to help expand efforts to cut taxes by eliminating unnecessary special districts and by sharing services.

The state grant was awarded

through the first state Municipal Consolidation and Efficiency Competition, designed to encourage local governments to combine services and eliminate wasteful spending. Brookhaven bested five upstate counties to win the competition.

"We're using the grant money to pay off any outstanding debt," Brookhaven chief of operations Matt Miner said at the meeting.

Brookhaven's grant application included an agreement to transfer the water districts if the

town was awarded the money.

"We're consolidating," Brookhaven Town Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said after the meeting. "These are paper districts for the most part that . . . we are transferring to the water authority as part of our consolidation of government services."

Town officials are working to "fulfill the requirements of the Municipal Consolidation and Efficiency Plan to reduce the number of governmental and taxing authorities within the

town," according to the resolution about transferring the water districts.

The Suffolk County Water Authority has operated the water districts for nearly two decades, officials said.

"From an operational standpoint, we do nothing," Miner said.

If the transfer of the four water districts is approved, the only remaining town water district would be in Stony Brook.

"We're working the details out on that one," Miner said.

## TWO DEAD, ONE HURT IN SUV CRASH

Two men died and another was injured when their sport utility vehicle crashed in Holbrook on Saturday night, Suffolk County police said.

Jose Perez, 45, of Patchogue, was driving the 2004 Hyundai Santa Fe west on Woodside Avenue about 10:30 p.m. when the vehicle left the roadway and crashed in a wooded area. Perez and backseat passenger Luis Antonio Banegas, 39, of East Patchogue, were pronounced dead at Long Island Community Hospital in East Patchogue, police said.

Carlos Sarmiento, 34, of Patchogue, who was riding in the front seat, was taken to Long Island Community Hospital with injuries not considered life-threatening.

Suffolk police continue to investigate. Anyone with information is asked to call the Fifth Squad at 631-854-8552. — DAVID M. SCHWARTZ



Two died and a third was injured when the 2004 Hyundai Santa Fe crashed into a wooded area in Holbrook.

CHRISTOPHER SABELLA

## CRIME&courts

### UNIONDALE

#### Man attacks safety officers on NUMC grounds, cops say

Police charged a Uniondale man with assault after he attacked two public safety officers Saturday night as they escorted him off the grounds of Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, police said.

Michael Ammino, 39, of Manor Parkway, was in an argument with a hospital employee while waiting for a bus at 11:30 p.m., when two public safety officers attempted to escort him off the grounds, police said.

Ammino became combative and punched one of the officers in the face, causing pain and swelling, police said.

The other public safety officer attempted to subdue Ammino and the two went to the ground. The officer cut his hand, police said.

The public safety officers were able to hold Ammino until police arrived.

Ammino was charged with two counts of second-degree assault and two counts of third-degree menacing. Bail was set at \$75,000 bond or cash at his arraignment Sunday at First District Court in Hempstead.

— CRAIG SCHNEIDER

### FARMINGDALE

#### Man took cellphone, pulled knife on three, police say

A Farmingdale man was arrested Saturday and faces robbery and other charges after taking a man's cellphone in July

and going to his home a week later and threatening to kill three other people with a switchblade, Nassau police said.

At 11 p.m. on July 23, Ricardo Esquerette, 25, of Farmingdale, confronted a man, 21, at Hudson and Staples streets and took his cellphone as the man tried to call 911, police said.

Esquerette and the man, who police did not identify, knew each other, authorities said.

Just over a week later, Esquerette went to the victim's home at 2:30 a.m. on Aug. 1 and attempted to force his way into the home after being asked to leave, police said. A woman, 56, blocked Esquerette's way and tried to call 911, police said.

Esquerette punched, kicked and wrestled the woman for the phone and tried to break it, police said. When another woman, 21, and a man, 28, tried to help, Esquerette pulled the knife from his pants pocket and threatened to kill all three victims, according to a Nassau police news release. Esquerette fled on foot.

Detectives found Esquerette at 1:45 p.m. Saturday at 10 Birch St. E. in Farmingdale. While attempting to take Esquerette into custody, police said, he kicked and punched the detectives, though there were no injuries. Esquerette spit on the detectives while he was being transported, police said.

Bail was set at \$200,000 bond or cash at his arraignment Sunday at First District Court in Hempstead.

— DAVID M. SCHWARTZ

## Cops: Man shot at large house party

A party that attracted hundreds of people in Dix Hills Saturday night culminated in a shooting that left one man wounded, Suffolk County police said.

The homeowner and two other men were arrested on charges unrelated to the shooting.

Det. Sgt. Michael Morse said officers responded to a house party on Langhans Court about 10:30 p.m. after a man was shot once in the arm in a backyard. No one has been arrested in the shooting, a police spokeswoman said on Sunday.

"There was a party going on with what is believed to be 400 attendees. During the party, an apparent argument of unknown origin broke out between two males. It is believed the argument escalated, and at some point, one male fired at least one round," Morse said.

An unidentified man, 34, was treated at Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center in West Islip with a wound to his arm that was not considered life-threatening, Morse said.

Homeowner Rodney Jones, 45, was charged with criminal nuisance in the second degree.

Travis James, 36, of Brooklyn, and Shamel Williams, 35, of Brooklyn, were arrested and charged with obstructing governmental administration in the second degree and resisting arrest.

Arrest information for Jones was not available. Bail was set for James at his arraignment in First District Court in Hempstead at \$15,000 bond or \$5,000 cash; it was set at \$2,500 bond or \$1,000 cash for Williams.

Police asked that anyone who witnessed the shooting or has information call Suffolk police detectives at 631-854-8252.

— ANTONIO PLANAS