



November 4, 2009

Legislation needed to cap benefits

Long Branch was on the front page again with the highest employee payouts for unused sick and vacation days in Monmouth County. ("N.J. owes \$1B to retiring employees," Oct. 24.)

The Press reported it as \$10.4 million, to be paid by city taxpayers. Middletown, a municipality roughly twice the size of Long Branch, has incurred only \$6.6 million — about 40 percent less.

Being analytical about the huge property tax issues affecting our city and state is necessary for an eventual solution. We need to stop the silly name-calling and political posturing and do something aggressive to address the real causes of runaway city taxes.

We need to persuade state legislators to allow waivers from NJSA 41A:4 and permit municipalities to utilize the strictest, most professional accounting standards, known as GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles).

Also, we need to work with our state legislators to draft legislation capping the accrual of unused sick and vacation time for all employees, including all professionals, and all union contracts.

I have asked the mayor, city attorney and City Council to invite our legislators to work with us in a public forum to tackle this issue and come up with effective legislation that will allow cities and towns to cap the millions of dollars wasted on lush employee benefits.

Councilman Brian Unger

LONG BRANCH
