

Betting

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sary 14.
 "From the first time I heard about this proposal, I had grave concerns about it," said Sen. Brian J. Bushweller, D-Dover.

Many Dover Downs Hotel & Casino employees live in his district, he said, and he wanted to ensure the legislation would not affect their job security.

But the compromise gave him peace of mind, he said.

"My belief is that those changes have pretty much erased those concerns," Sen. Bushweller said.

Although it passed overwhelmingly, many senators said they felt it was something they had to do for financial reasons as opposed to something they wanted to do.

"I don't think any of us are happy," said Sen. Robert L. Venables, D-Laurel.

He represents the "Bible Belt of Delaware," he said, where very few support the bill.

"In all my years here, I've never seen a situation where it was needed as much," Sen. Venables said.

In a press conference directly following the vote, Gov. Jack A. Markell commended the senators for acting quickly, but warned that many more tough decisions would still have to be made.

"This is an important first step, but we've obviously got a long way to go on the budget," he said.

After the governor signs the bill, which is expected to happen sometime this week, Delaware will become one of only three states in the country to allow sports betting — and the only state east of the Mississippi River.

Despite having what Gov. Markell has referred to as a "competitive advantage," the owners of the state's three casinos still remained fearful of the legislation.

"It is what it is," said Denis McGlynn, president and chief executive officer of Dover Downs Hotel & Casino. "We'll try to do our best to work with the administration."

Staff writer Leah Burcat can be reached at 741-8250 or lburcat@newszap.com.

NEWS BRIEFS

Haynes, Dietz-Sass, Clark win school board seats

DOVER — Kathleen J. Haynes won in the Caesar Rodney School District, Kay M. Dietz-Sass triumphed in Capital, and Jeffrey J. Clark won in Smyrna in area school board elections Tuesday night.

Ms. Haynes captured 146 votes, Robert J. King 80 and Brauncy L. Jenkins 54 in the five-year term Caesar Rodney vote. Ms. Dietz-Sass took 129 votes, Jennifer Vaughn 33 and Donna M. Wysopal 6 in the one-year term Capital election.

Mr. Clark won the five-year term Smyrna election with 331 votes, followed by Steven Artz with 38 and Beinn Cassel with 21.

Five hurt in school bus crash

MILLSBORO (AP) — Five Millsboro Middle School students were hospitalized

What Happens Now?

Sports Betting:

The state will release an RFP to look for a sports betting vendor; also work with casinos to develop regulations.

The casinos will create sports betting facilities at their venues, hire and train any additional staff necessary.

When both are complete, sports betting will be up and running, possibly as early as the start of the NFL season.

Table Games:

A representative of the Delaware casino industry, the Secretary of Finance Gary M. Pfeiffer, and the Controller General Russell T. Larson must meet and within 75 days determine a process by which the table games revenue be split between the state and the casinos, as well as how they should be regulated.

According to the legislation, table games will be up and running in the state "as soon as possible" after their report is received by the General Assembly.

Who Didn't Vote

- President Pro Tempore Sen. Thurman Adams Jr., D-Bridgeville: conflict of interest — serves on the Delaware State Fair Executive Committee (The Delaware State Fair owns 76 percent of Harrington Raceway & Casino)

- Senate Minority Leader Sen. F. Gary Simpson, R-Milford: conflict of interest — serves on the Delaware State Fair Executive Committee

- Rep. Pam Thornburg, R-Dover: conflict of interest — serves on the Board of Directors for Harrington Raceway & Casino

- Rep. Earl Jaques, D-Glasgow: religious reasons — he is opposed to gambling, but would not be opposed to the raising of taxes upon the casinos

- Rep. E. Bradford "Brad" Bennett, D-Dover: conflict of interest — his company provides security for Dover Downs International Speedway

Tuesday afternoon after their school bus flipped on its side after it was hit by a car.

None of the injuries was serious. The children were taken to Beebe Medical Center in Lewes.

Police said the bus was traveling northbound on U.S. 113. It could have been a lot worse than it was," Millsboro Police Chief John Murphy said.

54 swine flu cases reported

DOVER (AP) — Delaware public health officials have confirmed nine new cases of swine flu. One patient was hospitalized, and was released and is recovering. The rest are recovering after mild symptoms.

The new cases, reported Tuesday, bring the total of swine flu cases to 54. They include two 7-year-olds from Wilmington, one 7-year-old from Milford and an 8-year-old whose residency is not known.

Dover

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"This is the leanest (budget) I've seen," Councilman Reuben Salters, a 20-year council veteran, said later. "As we review this budget, we may have to make additional cuts."

Mr. DePrima acknowledged that council may question his proposals to furlough the city's approximately 300 unionized workers one day a month without pay and deny raises to its approximately 100 non-union workers. The nonunion personnel would not be furloughed.

The potential furloughs helped draw about two dozen employees to Mr. DePrima's annual budget presentation to the news media, which usually attracts a handful of reporters and few others.

"We have an extra-large crowd this year," he said as he opened the afternoon meeting. "We have a lot of guests from various unions and some management folks."

One of the managers, Police Chief Jeffrey Horvath, said afterward that losing each of his officers for a day each month is bound to affect police response to complaints.

"People are going to wait a little longer to get a cop there, unfortunately," he said, adding that he will try to minimize problems by scheduling furloughs for times when demand for services ordinarily is relatively low.

"That could be very challenging to get all those (furlough) hours in."

Among nonunion workers, the absence of an annual raise might be a first for many. Senior City Administrator Teresa Tieman said the last year without a pay hike was 1992, but employees at that time received a one-time payment in lieu of a raise. No such payment is proposed this year.

The budget also includes no contribution toward future health care costs for retirees — for which \$500,000 was budgeted in the current fiscal year — and little money for new vehicles or equipment. A hiring freeze would continue.

Councilman Salters said council is in general agreement with Mr. DePrima's approach.

But a union leader said Mr. DePrima may be optimistic in expecting aid from the state government to help with street repairs and continued work on the proposed library. Noting the state, like the city, faces diminished revenues as construction and business as a whole continue to falter, David Spicer, president of the city's Fraternal Order of Police lodge, asked, "How are they going to afford to chip in?"

Mr. Spicer, a police detective, reiterated his contention that residents' quality of life may suffer if city workers spend less time on the job. "You can only rob Peter to pay Paul so much," he said.

Mr. DePrima said he has directed department heads to try to limit the furloughs' effects on residents. "We hope there will be little or no impact," he said.

His proposed water-rate increase would be spread over two years, with most of it implemented July 1. It would cost a household an additional \$21 a year in the next fiscal year and \$5.16 atop that in the following 12 months, assuming the use of 7,000 gallons of water per month.

"That's a high-end user," Mr. DePrima

Budget highlights

City Manager Anthony J. DePrima's proposed budget for Dover includes:

- \$157 million in revenue
- No change in property tax rate
- One day per month of unpaid leave for the city's approximately 300 unionized employees
- No pay increase for its approximately 100 nonunion workers
- Continued progress toward a new library
- Water-rate hike, but no change in sewer or electric charges
- Hiring freeze
- No contribution toward future costs of retirees' health care

The full proposal can be accessed at cityof-dover.com.

said. "That's got to be a family of four or five."

Even at the new rate, Dover residents would pay less for water than do people in most jurisdictions cited by the University of Delaware in a December report on Delaware and neighboring states.

The added revenue from the rate change would help pay for additional efforts to eliminate so-called "brown water."

"We're finally starting to see success in that area," Mr. DePrima said.

Mr. Spicer suggested water revenue also be spent on keeping city workers working their current schedules. "I think it's time to turn on the spigot," he said.

Staff writer Bruce Pringle can be reached at 741-8233 or bpringle@newszap.com.

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