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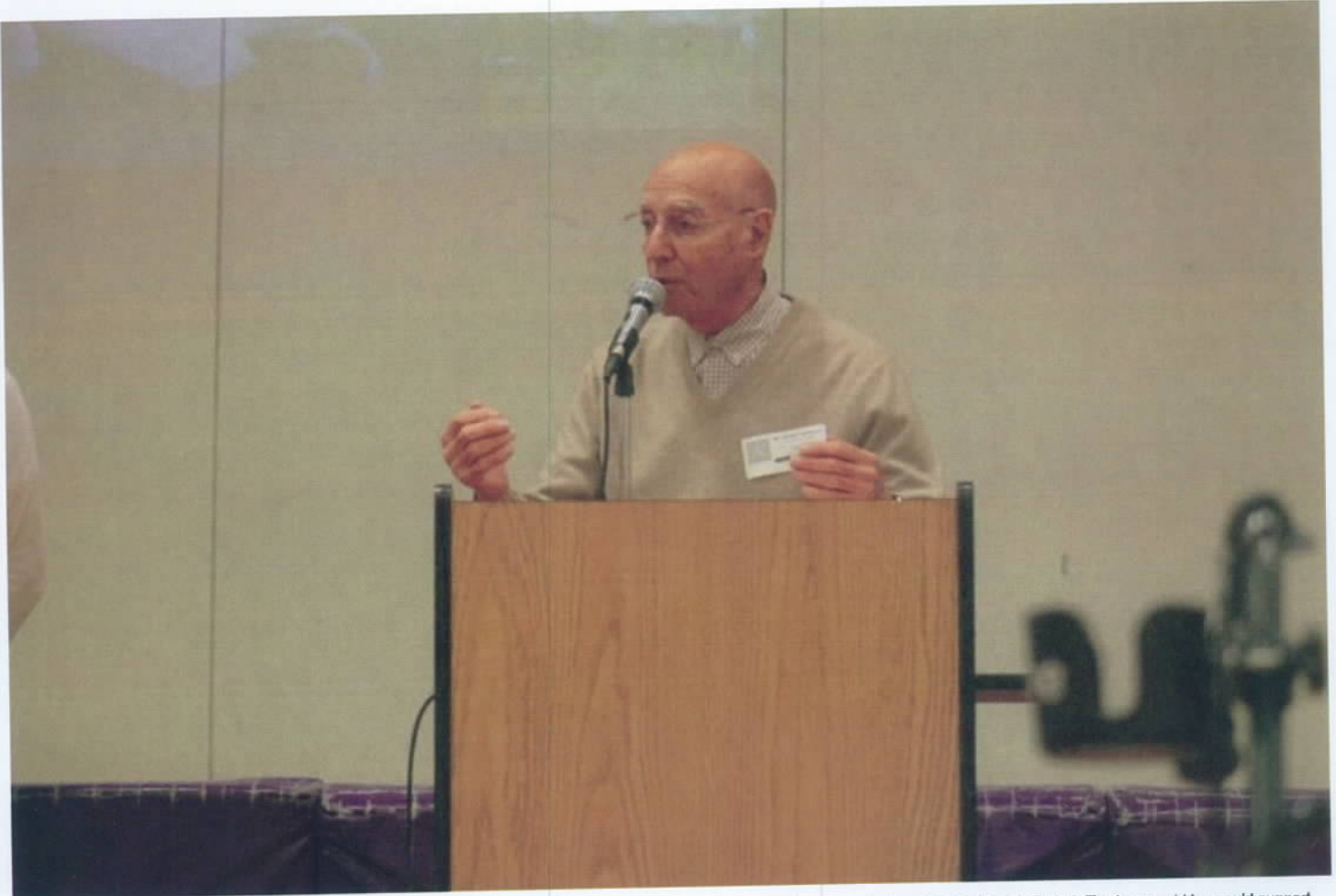
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TOP STORY

Monroe mayor says he supports \$147.1M referendum; asks voters to do the same

BY Christopher Lang, Correspondent, @topherlang2 Feb 6, 2019 Updated Feb 6, 2019



In this file photo, Monroe Mayor Gerald Tamburro talks at a Jan. 25 event at Woodland Elementary School raising money for the Hode family. On Feb. 4, Tamburro said he would support the upcoming March 12 referendum to build a new middle school and a high school addition. He also encourage township voters to support both projects.

Christopher Lang for MonroeNow.com

MONROE – The township mayor Monday night issued a statement saying that he will support the school district's March referendum that could potentially cost taxpayers \$147.1 million.

"I love this township and all of our residents," he said in his statement during the Feb. 4 council meeting. "I hope you will join me in voting 'yes' on this referendum on March 12."

The mayor's public support comes a little more than a month from the scheduled public referendum vote about building a new middle school and addition to the high school.



"I would like to thank Mayor Tamburro for his public statement at the February 4 Township Council Meeting endorsing the upcoming Monroe Township School District referendum on March 12," said board President Kathy Kolupanowich. "His support is appreciated by the Board of Education and will go a long way to help the community understand the need to come out and vote on this much-needed project that will benefit not just the school district, but the entire Monroe Community."

The March 12 referendum is a joint question. While the portion asking to build a new middle school is a simple majority vote, the high school addition is dependent on the outcome of the first question. If voters support building a new high school, but reject the middle school, both questions fail. To get the high school addition, voters have to approve the middle school, which district officials have deemed as the top priority.

The middle school portion would cost taxpayers \$75.6 million. For an homeowner that would cost \$48.81 per \$100,000 of assessed property value. If both projects are approved, the tax impact would be 92.76 per \$100,000 of property value.

"Together with our partners at the Board of Education, we have built these facilities while still maintaining the second lowest overall tax rate in all of Middlesex County and using very little of our bonding capacity for a community of 43 square miles," he said. "The strength of our school district has a direct and positive impact on property values and the quality of life for all Monroe residents. The investments we make today will allow us to continue our community tradition of excellence, value and achievement for generations to come."

The district has proposed building a new middle school and high school addition to address a growing student enrollment. Both schools are currently over the capacity level. Both plans call for housing an additional 1,000 students, as well as making some upgrades.

Both proposals have received some criticism from residents in part about the cost and more recently having the high school proposal tied to the success of the middle school referendum vote.

"I would like to thank Mayor Tamburro for making his statement supporting our district referendum at the Township Council meeting," said acting Superintendent Robert Goodall. "His continued support of our school district should speak to our residents to the importance of a collaborative approach to building a preeminent school system for the children of Monroe Township."

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