

# Summit PBA endorses Mike Vernotico for Mayor

For the first time in the history of Summit, the Policeman's Benevolent Association has endorsed a candidate for office and the Summit policemen and women like Mike for Mayor. In announcing the unprecedented action, PBA representative Michael Freeman released the following statement:

"Every member of our organization is fully supportive of Mr. Vernotico in his campaign for Mayor of Summit. The decision to endorse a candidate was difficult because we have always remained neutral in local politics. Mike Vernotico has earned this endorsement with his unwavering position to maintain the highest level of public safety, through the Police and Fire departments. He has demonstrated his ability to listen to those entrusted to provide public safety issues, and then make decisions that he knows are in the best interest of the City's residents and its police officers and firefighters. Mr. Vernotico speaks truthfully from the heart, without regard for partisan politics, and we believe he is the best candidate for Mayor. The members of the Summit Policeman's Benevolent Association would be honored to serve this City under his leadership."

"I am both humbled and thrilled by this endorsement," said Councilman Mike Vernotico. "There is no one I respect more than our first responders, those who keep us safe. It is an honor to be respected by those whom you respect."

Councilman Vernotico went on to say, "The Chief of Police reports directly to the Mayor in



**Summit PBA Executive Board** members and Mayoral Candidate Mike Vernotico mark the endorsement by the Summit PBA with a photo. From left are: Craig Finnegan, Lou Lyons, Vernotico, Michael Freeman and Mike Byrne.

Summit and while clearly it is the Chief who runs the Department, this endorsement demonstrates an incredible trust by our police in me as a leader."

"Our police officers and fire fighters are an integral part of our Community," added Vernotico. "They consistently go above and beyond. First and foremost is the Police Athletic League and all they do. Then there is the Officer Trading Card Program which our children love and my own personal favorite the Police Youth Academy, all funded by Summit's PBA. They are at all our events. I could not be more proud of them."

Vernotico, along with Mayor Glatt and Councilman Murphy have continued to battle against

cuts to both the Police and Fire Departments. "Our patrol force is down from a high of 54 to 46 because of this Council — the same Council that just wasted \$50,000 on yet another useless parking study and the same Council that tried to spend \$15 million in tax dollars to build a parking garage on Woodland Avenue. Last year, the PBA willingly offered to renegotiate and extend their existing contract and give back \$145,000 over the next three years. All they asked for was to not reduce their compliment by two more," said Vernotico. "By rejecting the PBA offer, this Council cost the City some \$75,000 more in overtime, did severe damage to morale and we still don't have a contract. The

PBA pleaded with this council all year right through December to re-open negotiations. Instead, this Council is now wasting money in salary arbitration. We should be hiring police officers rather than wasting \$800,000 on parking equipment. More importantly, the cuts in staff and overtime made by this Council have resulted in far too many shifts when we only have one or two officers on patrol. That jeopardizes the safety of our city and the safety of our officers. Union Township has just realized the folly of this logic and has hired back four officers with an estimated savings to the taxpayer of \$24,000 a year. As Mayor, my number one priority will be to keep us safe."