

Changes announced at YBPA: Buteras stepping down; planning underway for 2024



BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief
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Tuesday marked a time of change for the Youngstown Business and Professional Association.

YBPA members assembled at Ray's Tavern to hear that Mark and Cheryl Butera, owners of Anchor Spirits in Youngstown – and officers at YBPA since the early 2000s – would be stepping down.

This departure marks a significant chapter for the Buteras, who have held officer posts at YBPA since 2011, as well as for the association that has part of the River Region fabric since its inception in 1976.

The Buteras also announced this week they would be putting their long-held Anchor Spirits liquor store operation up for sale and retiring.

Interim YBPA President Melissa Kudel, right, discusses the association's future with members. She is shown with departing officers Mark and Cheryl Butera.

"One of the only sure things in life is change, and change is coming to the Youngstown Business and Professional Association," the YBPA stated. "After 13 years of volunteer service to the YBPA, Cheryl and Mark are stepping down as officers. The list of accomplishments is long under Cheryl and Mark's tenure, including a membership growth that started in the teens to currently 79 active members, with 13 new members this past year."

"It is with dragging, dragging feet that I agreed to do this," said Melissa Kudel, co-owner of Bandana's Bar & Grill, who announced she has agreed to take over as interim president of YBPA from Cheryl Butera, who held that office for many years.

Member Maggie Steyn agreed to take over Mark Butera's position, as secretary, on an interim basis.

YBPA announced it is accepting member nominations for the positions of president, vice president, secretary and two board seats.

"They've done so much for us," Kudel said as she pointed to the

continuing growth of the YBPA and its promise for the future.

The announcement was one of many made Tuesday, as YBPA's attention turned to planning for 2024.

Among the many discussion items in planning, YBPA said it would again hold its ever-popular St. Patrick's Day parade, complete with decorated shopping carts down Youngstown's Main Street, on Saturday, March 16. Other items included discussions on a local eclipse celebration in the village; the annual Street Dance and Car Cruise set for Thursday, June 20; ideas for YBPA's participation in the William G. Mayne community grant improvement program; creation of YBPA's brochure of business and attractions in the River Region; the July Porter on the Lake Summerfest; and YBPA's yearly recognitions for business of the year and community service members.

For more on the YBPA, its plans and membership opportunities, email YBPA@youngstownny.com or visit its pages on Facebook.

Growing Business & Community: Upward Niagara Chamber ready for 2024

Many not-for-profit organizations operate on a calendar year for governance and financials. This means that a new budget and new board of director terms com-

mence in January. It's a time for organizations to make a lot of "re" words happen – refresh, regroup, reorganize ... the list goes on! After a busy second half of 2023,

I had a chance to relax and take time off in December. This gave me an opportunity to enjoy my family and focus on how I wanted the year to begin at the Chamber.

The executive board met last week in preparation for our first meeting of the year, which will take place this week. A first of the year agenda is full of regrouping. Many organizations go over

meeting dates, policies, conflict of interest forms, committee structures and other aspects of board duty. We do as much of that as we can prior to the first meeting so we can spend time on productive discussions.

The chamber board of directors is made up of members in good standing who are volunteers. They represent a variety of industries in the region and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience.

At the December membership meeting, the following members were voted in to serve new terms or as new board members/officers commencing in January.

•3-Year Terms Commencing 2024

- ✓ Bryan Plunkett – Equitable Advisors
- ✓ Jim Fittante – Fittante Architecture P.C.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Jennifer Pauly
President

- ✓ Kyle Heath – KeyBank
- ✓ Lisa Lannon – Lisa Lannon Licensed Real Estate Sales Person
- ✓ Sara Liberale – Alpha Align Agency
- ✓ Carolyn Moore – Catholic Health // Mount St. Mary's Hospital & Health Center
- Executive Board – 2-Year Term
 - ✓ Matt Villnave – chairman
 - ✓ Jim Fittante – second vice chair

The full list of the current board of directors is available online at www.UpwardNiagara.com.

A special thank you to our outgoing board members – Fred Blue, Lucy Muto and Kris Trunzo – for all of their time and dedication served on the board. Bill Geiben will also be missed as an ex-officio liaison to the Town of Lewiston.

Thank you to those who volunteer on boards of not-for-profit organizations. Your commitment to the mission of the organizations you support is important in creating the unique fabric of the communities we live, work and play in.



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