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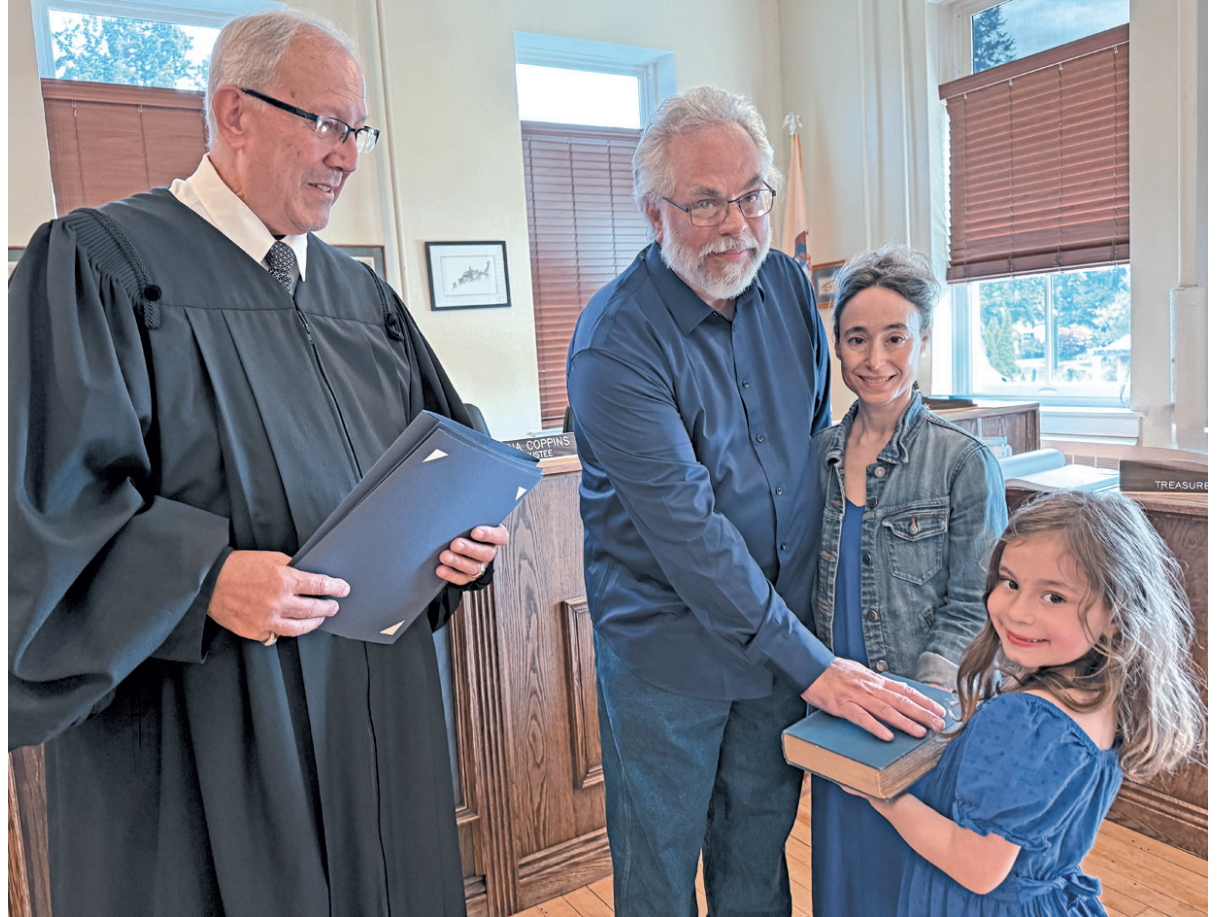
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SCAN ME!



Village of Lewiston Mayor Dan Cota is sworn into office Monday by the Hon. Hugh Gee. Cota was joined by his wife, Francesca; and by their daughter, Remi.

New Village of Lewiston mayor, board set goals for next year

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Upon being sworn into office on Monday, new Village of Lewiston Mayor Dan Cota and his board – including new Deputy Mayor Tina Coppins and Trustee Leandra Collesano – set their sights on some lofty new initiatives intended to increase communication between elected leaders and community members.

Far from easing into their first term in office together, these board members – and returning trustees Nick Conde and Jim Fittante – voted to create new committees and review systems.

New committees

•The **teen advisory committee** was set in place as “the Village of Lewiston seeks to provide opportunities for youth to participate in community discussions, share ideas, and offer recommendations on village programs, events, public spaces, and other community initiatives, while fostering civic engagement, leadership, volunteerism, and community involvement.”

Per the approved motion, “the committee shall determine its own membership and leadership structure, with administrative support and coordination provided through the village recreation director, so that youth members are given a meaningful opportunity to develop civic participation, leadership, responsibility, and self-governance.”

This group will report to the Village Board on a quarterly basis.

Cota explained, “This is important, I believe, in developing teens and starting to build a feed line for us to have more community- and civic-minded people.”

He noted the committee is open to Village of Lewiston youth ages 10-17. Those chosen will work with Recreation Director Brendan McDermott.

“If we didn’t have such a strong person in that position, I don’t think this teen initiative would be able to go forward as quickly as

it’s going to be moving forward,” Cota said of McDermott.

He emphasized, “It’s about their voice; it’s not about duplicating us.”

•The **master plan advisory committee** was created because “the Village of Lewiston recognizes the importance of long-range planning to guide future growth, development, infrastructure investment, land use, environmental stewardship, economic development, and community quality of life. ... The current master plan should be reviewed and updated to reflect changing community needs, demographic trends, economic conditions, and resident priorities. ... Meaningful public participation and stakeholder engagement are essential components of a successful planning process.”

This group will assist “in the development, review and recommendation of an updated master plan for the Village of Lewiston.” The committee will have seven members, each one appointed by trustees and “representing a diverse cross-section of the community, including residents, business owners, property owners, community organizations, and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate.”

The enacted motion notes the committee “shall serve in an advisory capacity only and shall make recommendations to the Village Board of Trustees, which retains final authority regarding adoption of the master plan. ... The committee shall remain in existence until completion of the master plan update process, unless otherwise extended or dissolved by action of the Village Board of Trustees.”

Cota said, “This is something that we’ve been talking about for a while. We’re going to get moving on it.”

He said the village will look to identify people interested in contributing ideas, particularly stakeholders such as members of the fishing industry, local business

owners and the Upward Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

“Master planning and looking at everything entails everything all the way from how the streets are landscaped and set up and designed, to how pedestrians cross them, to our zoning across the village and whether or not it’s working any longer,” Cota said. “It’s a lot of impact in a lot of different areas. But it’s important to get it done, and get it done right, with a lot of community feedback.”

He said every part of the process will be open to the public.

“Everybody will have a say, and I would really appreciate everybody saying something,” Cota said.

New initiatives

Village Board members also voted to authorize two new initiatives:

•The **waterfront improvement, dock system review, and fishing industry support initiative** authorizes the mayor “to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing dock system, immediate waterfront access needs, and potential long-term waterfront improvements, including whether simply repairing the docks in the same design is the most responsible approach or whether a different long-term solution is needed to avoid a yearly cycle of costly repairs.”

“This review shall also include improvements that support public access, boating, and the fishing industry, which generates roughly \$5 million per year in regional economic activity and contributes to the overall year-round health of the village economy.”

“This authorization permits the gathering of information, public input, cost estimates, and funding opportunities only.” No capital expenditures or contracts were or will be authorized by this motion.

•A **North Eighth Street and Center Street commercial development review** permits the mayor “to conduct a com-
SEE TRUSTEES, continued on Page 3

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