

Making changes to encourage more people to consider county employment

When I began my professional career – which seems like just yesterday, but is more years ago than I care to count – I was an entry level clerk in the Niagara County Clerk’s Office. I’ve always appreciated that job because it really provided me a baseline understanding of the day-to-day functioning of county departments, especially those that regularly interact with the public.

From there, I was able to take promotional exams and apply for other opportunities as I progressed through my career. Today, as many of you know, beyond being the chairman of the Niagara County Legislature, my day job is deputy commissioner of jurors.

The point of this is that there are open positions across county government at all levels of experience and expertise that offer people a pathway toward a successful career. Yet, the number of people applying for these positions and taking the civil service exams seems to be at an all-time low, as least as far as I can remember. The issue is that, with fewer people taking these exams, the hiring lists are smaller and can be exhausted quickly. This means vacant positions go unfilled for longer periods of time, to the detriment of both the county and jobseekers.

That is why we are attempting to make some changes that we hope will encourage more people to consider county employment. Recently, Niagara County Civil Service announced an effort to streamline the hiring process with the implementation of “continuous recruitment” across five different job titles. Continuous recruitment means applications



Becky Wydysh
Chairwoman

are accepted year-round, not just at certain times of the year. This allows tests to be given more frequently, as well.

I have often heard from people who have said they would have liked to apply, but were not aware of the application deadline, which in many instances meant it could be a year or more until the test came around again. The positions that are part of this continuous recruitment initiative are account clerical I, custodian, clerical I, clerical II and public health technician. The clerical I and clerical II attract a decent number of candidates, so that exam will now be given twice a year, rather than just once. For the other three positions, which attract far fewer candidates, exams will be given on walk-in basis once a person completes their application. As soon as the exams are scored, candidates will be immediately added to the existing hiring list.

Not only are these positions a high need for the county, they are all entry-level, which means they serve as the jumping-off point for future opportunities with the county.

I think my own experience, as discussed above, is proof of that. The bottom line is we want more residents to have more opportunities to seek employment with the county.

Along with streamlining our process when we can, stepping up our outreach efforts to make residents aware of job openings

is of paramount importance. This begins with the employment section of our website, which lists all job openings and upcoming civil service exams. Just go to www.niagaracounty.com and click on the employment tab.

Our civil service team also just relaunched its Facebook page, which posts the most current information on all things related to jobs and careers with the county. The name of that page is Niagara County Human Resources/Civil Service.

But the easiest way to stay informed is to sign up for email notifications. Our notification system allows residents to choose from more than two-dozen job categories (you can pick as many as you want) that are of interest to them. The county will then send an email notification when new job opportunities, and civil service exams are posted in a person’s areas of interest. Just enter your email at this link, <https://niagara-portal.mycivilservice.com/emailnotification>, and then choose the categories.

One final note: Applications are currently being accepted for one of our most popular exams, deputy sheriff/police officer. The deadline for completing the application is Aug. 4, 2023, and the examination will be held Sept. 9, 2023. Be sure to go to the county website to view the requirements and sign up. Don’t miss this opportunity to represent and serve your community with pride. As I have heard Niagara County Sheriff Mike Filicetti say many times, the Sheriff’s Office is looking for the best of the best to join the team, and that person could be you!

Niagara County primary election results

The Niagara County Board of Elections had released unofficial vote counts from Tuesday’s primary election. Among the local results:

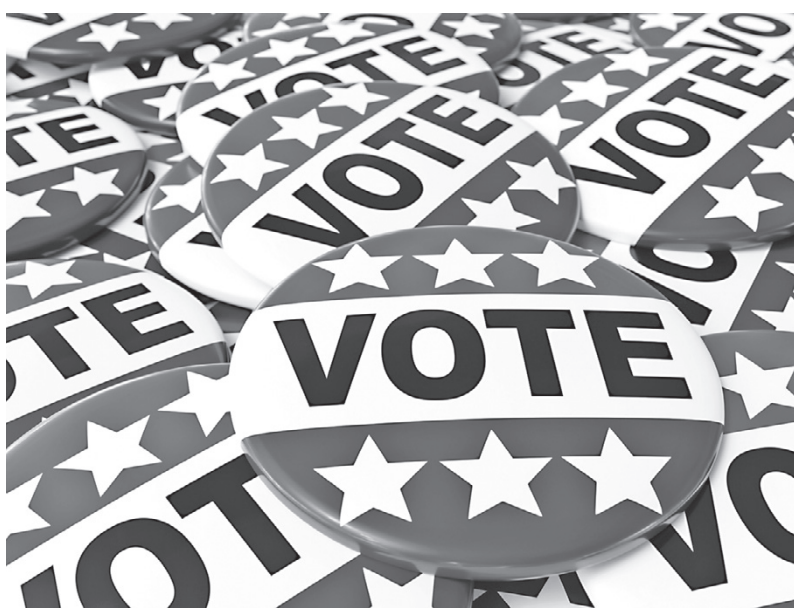
- William Burg (330 votes) and Jason Myers (311) won the Republican primary in the race for Town of Lewiston councilman. Edward Lilly finished third (254). Charles Ortman (25 votes) and Steven Shoecraft (25) won the Conservative Party line for Town Board. Myers (20) finished third.

- Michael Lee (146 votes) and Johnny Parks (145) won the Democrat primary in the race for Town of Niagara Town Council. Roger Spurbach (99) finished third.

- Robert Restaino (1,323 votes) won the Democrat line in the primary for mayor in the City of Niagara Falls. Glenn Choolokian (1,009) finished second.

- Brian Archie (1,524 votes) and James (Jim) Perry (1,064) took the Democrat line for City of Niagara Falls Council. James M. Abbondanza (978) was third.

- Robert Schmigel (153 votes) won the City of North Tonawanda



Ward 1 alderman Republican primary. Robert Brennan (148) was second.

- Frank DiBernardo (211 votes) secured the City of North Tonawanda Ward 2 alderman Republican primary. William (Will) Schulmeister Jr. (92) was second.

- Christopher Voccio (39 votes) won the Conservative Party vote for in the Niagara County Legisla-

ture District 6 race. Gaelan Baillie (5) was second.

- Richard Abbott (24 votes) took the Working Families vote for in the Niagara County Legislature District 13 race. Bernadette Smith (12) was second.

The Board of Elections reported 7,261 ballots were counted, representing 5.15% of registered voters.

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