

Town of Lewiston announces changes

Bax named town attorney; Morreale rejoins Town Board

Town announces new ad hoc committee on police reform

BY TERRY DUFFY

Editor-in-Chief

Changes for 2021 continued Monday with the Town of Lewiston.

Following on last week's Town Board reorganizational session, Supervisor Steve Broderick reported changes within the town attorney's office and on the board itself. Broderick said 2020 attorney for the town, Thomas Seaman of Seaman Norris, would be restructuring his duties with the town for '21 and continue on only as a consulting town attorney.

"He was unable to do this role with us," Broderick said of Seaman's departure. He noted Seaman would continue to serve the town as an independent counsel with the town's Planning Board and its Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as other town functions.

In his place would be Councilman Alfonso Marra Bax, a practicing attorney and 15-year Town Board member who officially resigned his board position Monday to take on the new role.

"Please let this letter serve as my formal resignation as councilman for the Lewiston Town Board effective Jan. 11, 2021," Bax wrote in a letter to the town. "It has been an honor and privilege to serve on the board for the past 15 years."

Soon after, Bax was appointed to cover the town's legal responsibilities for 2021 in the newly created position as town attorney at a salary of \$39,000 annually. The appointment takes effect immediately.

In his place as town councilman, Broderick and the board moved to approve the appointment of Rob Morreale to fill the remaining term on Bax's seat. A popular former Town of Lewiston councilman who opted earlier not to seek reelection, Morreale's appointment takes effect immediately. He now joins John Jacoby as one of the town's two Democrat office holders on the board.

Both took their oath of office in a brief swearing-in ceremony by Town Clerk Donna Garfinkel.

Helipad Update

Next up, the board held a public hearing to consider construction of a helipad on the property of Mount St. Mary's Hospital on Military Road. The new facility would enable the hospital's Cardiac Center to better work with similar centers in Buffalo-Niagara in the transferring of cardiac patients as needed. It would be constructed on one of the hospital's parking areas with modifications done. MSM officials were seeking changes to the town's planned unit development zoning to allow for the project.

The hearing itself saw no comments from attendees at the Town Hall session or on Zoom, save for some concerns by Town Building



Monday's sessions saw oaths of office taken by newly appointed Town Councilman Rob Morreale, left, and Town Attorney Al Bax. (Photos by Terry Duffy)

Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer Tim Masters, who spoke of the potential loss of up to 80 parking spaces in the hospital's parking lot.

"With the reconfiguration, there is going to be 696 parking spaces, which meets the minimum requirement for the hospital," said MSM spokesman Edward Perlman of Magaveran, Magaveran Grimm LLP. He said the construction would result in the loss of approximately 80 spaces, but added the hospital has had an excess of parking spaces. The planned reconfiguration, he said, would better suit hospital needs while satisfying the minimum parking requirements under state law.

Masters commented the current MSM parking specifications fall under provisions of an outdated town code, and suggested in the future the hospital would have to review these, with additional parking modifications in mind.

"There's some availability of the west side," Perlman said. "We'll do whatever we can to comply with state codes."

Soon after, a negative declaration was approved with respect to State Environmental Quality Review specifications for the project, as well as the planned unit development and detailed plan approval for the helipad.

Hospital officials said the project would be going out to bid and a spring construction startup was anticipated.

Police News

In other news, the Town Board revealed a planned ad hoc committee, mandated by the state to

consider reforms for the Lewiston Police Department.

"We'll be scheduling meetings for this week," Chief of Police Frank Previte said.

Ad hoc committee members include Broderick, newly appointed town attorney Bax, Previte, Lew-Port Superintendent of Schools Paul Casseri, Niagara-Wheatfield Superintendent of Schools Daniel Ljiljanich, Village of Lewiston Mayor Anne Welch and Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt, Jennifer Pauly of the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, and James Bissell, representing the Tuscarora Nation.

According to Seaman, who was at the session, the purpose of the ad hoc committee "would be to solely investigate police reform as outlined in the governor's executive order 203."

According to Section 203, approved and signed into law by Gov. Andrew Cuomo last June in re-

sponse to the police-involved death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and the resulting national protest, "Each local government entity which has a police agency operating with police officers as defined under 1.20 of the criminal procedure law must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color."

The committee is expected to remain in place is until the state requirements are fulfilled.

Wrapping Up

•The board approved an \$8,300

expenditure, covering rental of an excavator and related transit costs from Villani Constriction. The equipment would be used by the town Highway Department for work on the upcoming River Road Park project.

•The board approved for Recreation Director Mike Dashineau to begin planning for the town's 2021 summer Recreation Department's offerings of 21 programs, including summer hires and program registrations. Currently, the summer rec program remains in a moratorium under state COVID-19 restrictions. The town is expected to review this matter further as the state's COVID return to business continues.

Clerk's Corner correction

Lewiston Town Clerk Donna Garfinkel informed the Tribune-Sentinel this week that her column in the Jan. 8 issue contained some misinformation with regard to tax collections at Lewiston Town Hall.

Garfinkel said taxes are being collected at Lewiston Town Hall, with the correct schedule from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays. This year, town's tax office will also be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 27, and from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 30.

"Tax season is upon us. If you have not received your 2021 town/county tax bill, please call 754-8213, ext. 235 or 222," she said.

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Alternative Weight Management

Many overweight people diet to no avail or gain back more weight once the diet is over. Therefore, diet must not be the only solution. The nutritional chemistry of the trillions of cells of the body is provided for by the foods you eat after they are broken down by proper digestion. Following the use of these proteins, carbohydrates and fats, the cells of the organs, must then eliminate the waste for proper healthy function to continue to occur. Additional toxins can come from the environment and can be absorbed into the body through the skin, air we breathe, liquids we drink or processed food we eat. If these waste products are not removed, they are diluted with water and stored in the spaces between the cells. Over time this accumulation can add up as weight gain.

In alternative health care, the doctor's task is to keep the patient's whole body in good working order. It is gradual lifestyle changes that make the difference.

Food choices are important as well as when and how often you eat. Cleansing must occur at the proper gradient and over time to ensure the body does not get overwhelmed by more toxins being released than the body's eliminative systems can handle. **As the body gets healthier, it returns to its normal size and shape.**

There is hope and we can help. **Rose Chiropractic, P.C. is a natural health care practice focusing on health improvement through designed clinical nutrition and chiropractic, located at 435 Ridge St., Lewiston. Call 754-9039.**

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Mail Payments to: Kathleen Harrington-McDonell, Town Clerk
2800 Church Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Pay in Person: Wheatfield Town Hall, Town Clerk
2800 Church Road
Mon-Tues -Thurs-Fri 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Wed- 9:00 am – 7:00 pm January only

There is a drop box located at Town Hall for your convenience

LAST DAY TO PAY WITHOUT PENALTY IS February 1, 2021.
All Taxes received after such date, there shall be added interest of 1% to 03/01/21 and 2% to 03/31/21, after such date all County Taxes are payable to the county Treasurer with 5% penalty and interest calculated at a rate of 1% per month on the tax and penalty.

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