

# May festivals not likely, but hope remains for summer

Continued from Page 1

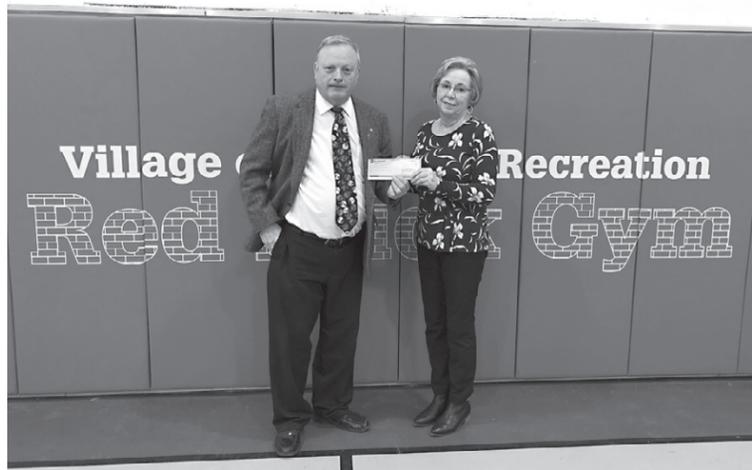
Youngstown all chipped in a few years ago to buy a new sewer jet. It's a water jet that we clean the pipes with. So, we have to go down to the sewer plant, get the sewer jet, and then start jetting the pipes. Now, once we clean the pipes, the grease ends up in the wet well lift station down on Water Street. And then I have to hire Modern Disposal to come in and suck the grease out of the wet well, and out of several manholes in between," Wills said. "And also on top of all that, we spent \$100,000 on pumps down there a few years ago that we're trying to save their lives for, because they're so expensive; and the grease is what tears up everything."

This is where the cleaning process becomes even more expensive.

"It's roughly \$1,500 to \$2,000 every time I have Modern come in to suck the grease out of the manholes and the wet well down at the lift station. And I do that approximately twice a year," Wills said.

The DPW checks in with each village restaurant to monitor the grease traps, so staffers know which entities are properly disposing of grease.

Moreover, "What we have down at the sewer plant is a camera. It's a robot camera that walks down the sewer main. We can operate that camera in the sewer main and then we can determine which sewer lateral is all caked up with grease, and how many are caked up with grease."



Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt presents a check in the amount of \$350 to Mayor Anne Welch for the inclusive playground project.

In addition to equipment fees, penalty amounts also could be determined based on DPW manpower and hours. Wills said his department uses a state rental regulation.

"In other words, the sewer jet – the sewer jet is approximately \$250 an hour to operate," he said. "Even though we already own it, we figure out the rental rate per New York state laws. And so, I add the \$250 an hour times a couple hours, and then I have, say, three or four people – the employees – they're getting paid by the hour. And, of course, there's regular time, then there's time-and-a-half. And then, of course, on holidays there's double time."

"That's how we figure out that rate."

Wills emphasized most Lewiston restaurants are compliant with the grease trap regulations.

"A lot of restaurants have had grease traps for many years," he said. "There wasn't really much of a regulation on what size grease trap that you were able to have years ago. And, as long as you had a grease trap, you were fine – that's how it was years ago. Well, nowadays, they realize that the bigger grease traps catch more grease at a farther distance away from all the hot water. That's what's helping to keep grease out of the system."

"We've been trying to work with a lot of restaurants for a few years now, and most of them are complying, and we only got a handful of restaurants left that have not complied."

"We're just trying to be fair. We've been working on this for years. And, you know, some people work with you, and some people don't."

## Festival & Events Update

The Village Board approved two summer festival event requests from the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce. Permission was granted to close Center Street from Seventh to Fourth streets for the Northwest Jazz Festival, set to take place Aug. 27-28. Event organizers can use the International Peace Garden, DiCamillo Courtyard and Hennepin Park for performances, and Academy Park for overflow parking.

Coronavirus restrictions are still in place, and vaccinations have been slow-going. Accordingly, this request had a proviso that, "If large festivals are not permitted, there are secondary plans in lieu of a street festival to focus on small performances at The Peace Garden, Hennepin Park or Academy Park."

A second motion was approved for the Lewiston Harvest & Hops Festival. The Chamber of Commerce asked to close Center Street (from Eighth to Fourth Street), Niagara Street (Center to Plain Street), North Fifth Street (Ridge Street to Center) and South Fifth Street (Center to Plain) on Sept. 25-26. It also requested use of Hennepin Park and the Peace Garden for events, and Academy Park for overflow parking (weather-permitting).

Following the meeting, Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly said, "No official word on (if the Jazz Festival) will happen until March, by the Jazz board. By then the board will have an outlook on if a festival is possible (not only looking ahead on if NYS would allow it, but logistical planning as well as

sponsorship, musicians, etc.).

"We are planning for a Harvest & Hops Festival but of course it depends on NYS guidelines and regulations. If NYS guidelines and restrictions do not change, we obviously will not have a festival, but planning has to start now for all of those events."

In a column submitted for last weekend's newspaper, Pauly said the May festivals – Smelt and Taste of Lewiston – are not happening in 2021.

Next on the festival/large event calendar is Memorial Day.

Norm Machelor, who chairs the committee spearheading the parade and luncheon, said, "We're considering it, but it doesn't look good."

That said, Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487 Cmdr. Bill Justyk assured, "We are going to have our ceremony. I can guarantee you that."

In November, the VFW held a small, socially distanced Veterans Day ceremony at the new "Circle of Honor" memorial at Academy Park.

## Eydt Donates to Playground

Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt donated \$350 to the new inclusive playground to be built in Marilyn Toohey Park, behind the Red Brick Municipal Building. He said this is in honor of his granddaughter, Zoie.

"My main objective was that my granddaughter's had some learning disabilities. I had some extra money; I wanted to give it to the park, because she loves going to the park," Eydt said Wednesday.

## IN THE NEWS

### Jacobs: Almost \$100,000 in grant funding for firehouses

Congressman Chris Jacobs announced more than \$96,000 in grant funding awarded to fire departments through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program.

"Local fire departments provide vital emergency services and support to our local communities. We all owe them a debt of gratitude for continuing their tireless work bravely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic," Jacobs said. "These grants, provided through DHS, will be instrumental in aiding our local fire departments in purchasing PPE and other safety equipment so our firefighters are better protected and can continue safely serving our community."

The grants were awarded through the Department of Homeland Security's fiscal year 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The program is administered by DHS in conjunction with the U.S. Fire Administration. The funding is awarded to support the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safety supplies to aid with first responders' COVID-19 response.

- Grants awarded in NY-27:
  - ✓ \$46,095.24 to Adam's Fire Co. in North Tonawanda
  - ✓ \$32,776.62 to Big Tree Volunteer Fireman's Co. in Hamburg
  - ✓ \$7,528.57 to Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1 in Lewiston
  - ✓ \$5,889.94 to Town of Niagara Active Hose Co. in Niagara Falls
  - ✓ \$2,976.05 to Millgrove Volunteer Fire Department in Alden
  - ✓ \$1,294.12 to Harris Hill Volunteer Fire Co. in Williamsville

"Personal protective equipment is extremely important to protect the health of our firefighters, and it has become increasingly harder to find and expensive to purchase," Adam's Fire Co. Safety Officer and President James Mihalko said. "Our personnel

use PPE on every single call, so this grant funding will be very helpful in ensuring we are protected and can continue to safely answer calls and support the community."

### School district tax levy cap below 2% again

Property tax levy growth for school districts will be capped at 1.23%, down

from 1.81% last year, according to data recently released by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

"School district and municipal officials must remain fiscally cautious to stay under the cap as they prepare their budgets," DiNapoli said. "The financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with a levy growth rate of 1.23% and below 2% for the second year in a row, means they must examine their budgets more closely

to control expenses."

The 1.23% cap affects the tax cap calculations for 676 school districts and 10 cities with fiscal years starting July 1, 2021, including the "Big Four" cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers.

The tax cap, which first applied to local governments and school dis-

tricts in 2012, limits annual tax levy increases to the lesser of the rate of inflation or 2% with certain exceptions, including a provision that allows school districts to override the cap with 60% voter approval of their budget.

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