

# Former NFP intern Courtney Corbetta finds her voice

BY CARSON HARPER

Special to Niagara Frontier Publications

If there is one lesson Lewiston native Courtney Corbetta has learned in her professional career, it's to amplify your voice for yourself and your community.

The Western New York community is something that Corbetta has always kept close to her heart.

When asked how to describe Western New York, there was only one word that came to Corbetta's mind: Home.

Corbetta was born and raised in Lewiston and attended Niagara University, majoring in communication studies. Her first internship was with one of her professors, Joshua Maloni, and Niagara Frontier Publications.

"Interning with Niagara Frontier Publications introduced me to this industry, and that is where I really began my love for journalism/broadcast. This is where it all began," Corbetta said.

Under Maloni's wing, Corbetta began a weekly web series on stories in the Greater Niagara



Region. While meeting different people around the area, Corbetta found her niche in Buffalo lifestyle news.

"Buffalo is truly the city of good neighbors. There are good people here. That's what makes Buffalo

truly special, the people and the community," Corbetta said.

After a few internships with Pegula Sports & Entertainment, Spectrum News and the Rockland Boulders baseball team, Corbetta began working as a feature reporter for "AM Buffalo." This is where she learned how to handle the everyday stress and pressure of the news world.

"When I was working for 'AM Buffalo,' my producer left unexpectedly for a few months. I had to step in as producer for the show as well as be on the couch hosting the show. Looking back, I think, 'Oh my gosh, I used to do that,' but I am happy I did, because now I have the skillset to bring to my

next position or to mentor," Corbetta said.

However, Corbetta was quick to point out that the news world is not all sunshine and rainbows. She believes it is tough to stand up for yourself, and you have to have thick skin – especially as a woman in a male-driven industry.

"You really have to form a thick skin, and that is something I had very young because of this. I learned you have to have a voice and stand up for yourself even if you are the youngest employee," Corbetta said.

While it may not be easy being the youngest employee in a small market, Corbetta preaches a determination to amplify your voice,

Niagara University Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement and Buffalo Sabres in-arena host Courtney Corbetta recently served as guest speaker in professor Joshua Maloni's communication and media studies course at Niagara University.

along with your community, to make true change possible.

After a few years with "AM Buffalo," Corbetta knew it was time for her to venture out into new opportunities. With the interest and offers from other news outlets, Corbetta said she felt it was time for personal growth. However, the coronavirus pandemic provided a setback. In true Courtney Corbetta fashion, she did not let this set back stop her.

Corbetta became the in-arena host for the Buffalo Sabres and the assistant director of alumni engagement at her alma mater, Niagara University. It is no coincidence that Corbetta finds herself back where she had found her love for the news world.

Corbetta looks to further her education toward a master's degree to hopefully be able to teach the next generation of aspiring media.

"In the next 10 years, I would like to continue my pursuit of my masters and teach full time," Corbetta said.

The Western New York Community is near and dear to her heart, and Corbetta is looking to give back to the community that has given her so much.

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## 'In the Loop': Lew-Port budget, BOE vote, May 17

BY DANIELLE MULLEN

President, Lewiston-Porter Board of Education

The Lewiston-Porter Board of Education work session on Monday featured the public presentation of the 2022-23 school year budget. In addition to that, a "Meet the Candidates Night" event occurred, officially introducing the four BOE candidates to the public.

The budget presentation is the final result of a long process that starts with budget development. The development process is detailed and thoughtful and begins by reviewing the district's strategic plan to ensure budget priorities align with the district's mission. Building administrations take part in careful planning to ensure that expenditures support instructional programs within their schools. State aid and local revenues are estimated. Revenues must equal planned expenditures, and this leads to a tax levy analysis. The final tax rate is calculated by dividing the share of the tax levy into the taxable assessed value of the township after the vote.

Budget goals for the 2022-23 school year include sustaining programs and staff; continuing one to one computing availability for all students; providing a physically and emotionally safe environment for all students and staff; developing a fiscally responsible budget; and focusing on Lewiston-Porter's strategic plan and student progress. The budget focus is on providing the necessary funding to keep our students safe and secure, maintaining and ensuring our facilities are up to date, directing funds to increase student learning, and prioritizing social and emotional wellness for

our students.

Careful balance of revenues and expenditures were calculated while developing the budget. Revenue increases include the tax levy, state foundation aid, state building aid and state BOCES aid. Revenue decreases include day school tuition, interest and earnings, and ERATE funding from the Tech Project.

On the expenditures side, increases were seen in health insurance costs, natural gas and fuel costs, and wages and cost of employment. Decreases in expenditures were seen in international student programs, the cost of trash disposal and capital outlay expenses.

The proposed budget of \$53,117,598 is composed of \$28,843,951 from the tax levy, \$70,330 from PILOTS (payments in lieu of taxes), \$19,335,129 in state aid, \$2,368,188 from other revenue, and \$2,500,000 from appropriated fund balance. Administrative costs represent 9% of the budget; capital costs represent 25% of the budget; and program costs represent the remaining 66% of the budget.

Some budget items that are neutral from the 2022-23 school year include universal pre-K, textbooks, software and hardware, some school library materials and the school lunch program. These items are either state or federal funded.

Continued planned initiatives for the next school year include Access Math; American Reading; Big Brother-Big Sister; the Community Education Program; Leader in Me; "One District, One Book"; restorative justice; diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives; the strategic plan work; and the

APEX credit recovery program.

Proposed programs to help support Lew-Port students include, K-12 reading and math specialists, summer learning camp for grade K-5 students, classroom technology enhancements, innovative learning classroom furniture and design, new grade K-second grade and sixth-eighth grade math curriculum, and a personalized learning cohort.

The proposed budget calls for a 2.69% increase to the tax levy, which is under the state tax cap. In Lewiston, the 2.69% tax levy increase would equate to a 39-cent increase in taxes for every \$1,000 of assessed value. In Youngstown and Porter, it would equate to an 89-cent increase in taxes for every \$1,000 of assessed value.

Should the budget fail to pass and is sent to a re-vote that did not pass, the district would be forced to adopt a contingency budget. The contingency budget would force the district to cut an additional \$758,312 in expenditures, which would be devastating to Lew-Port programs and students. This would require an elimination of all furniture and equipment, conferences, field trips, modified athletics and intramural sports.

In addition to the budget vote, the district is holding an election to fill three board of education seats. Candidates Chuck Barber and Savana Bevacqua and incumbents Anika Fetzner and April Saks are on the ballot.

The budget vote and Board of Education Election will take place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 17, in the Community Resource Center multipurpose room.

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