

Conde, Gibson reelected in Lewiston

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

Incumbent Republican trustees Nick Conde and Dan Gibson were reelected to the Village of Lewiston Board on Tuesday. They will be sworn into office Monday, ahead of the 6 p.m. monthly meeting at the Red Brick Municipal Building.

In total, 212 ballots were cast – about 100 fewer than the June 2016 election tally. Gibson was the top vote-getter with 167. Conde was a close second with 156. Keith Casey Ahlas netted 69 votes. All 10 absentee forms were verified and counted.

Trustees are elected to a four-year term.

The Village of Lewiston has 1,960 registered voters from a population of 2,701.

Conde was first elected in 2012. Gibson was appointed to replace then-Town of Lewiston Supervisor Dennis Brochey in January 2014, and was reelected in June of that year.

The two men were reelected in 2016 with 185 and 163 votes, respectively. Ahlas also ran for office that year, and garnered 112 votes.

This year's election was postponed because of the coronavi-

rus pandemic.

At the Red Brick, entry and exit doors were propped open. Participants entering the building to vote were required to wear a facial covering, use hand sanitizer and stay socially distanced from others. Lines were marked on the gym floor indicating 6 feet intervals. People were given single-use pens and paper ballots. Masks and gloves also were available.

Nick Conde and Dan Gibson are shown after the 2016 election in this file photo.



Porter Board hears resident concerns over garbage services

STAFF REPORTS

Residents' confusion and frustrations over refuse pickups in the Town of Porter continued at Monday evening's regular Town Board meeting.

At issue are recent announced changes in the town's garbage collections service for residents with Modern Disposal. The town and Modern reached an agreement over past months that prompted a variety of changes. This includes new, larger 95-gallon trash totes delivered to the town's 1,973 residences, which now provide for auto-loading trash pickups by newly designed Modern trucks, plus changes covering larger trash needs as well as bulk pickups.

This is latest in a series of

changes from the town's residential services contract with Modern, agreed to by the two parties over the past year. As a result, the town now assigns a \$203 annual garbage fee to property owners of single-family, double- and triple-family residences throughout Porter. Previously, all residential trash services were provided to residents at no charge, with all service costs to Modern covered under the town's annual budget.

Modern has attempted to explain the various trash pickup changes through public information releases that continue, including a detailed "Trash Talk" mailer sent to all residences in the town. (See detailed articles from the Aug. 3 and Sept. 4 Tribune/Sentinel issues at www.wnypapers.com).

However, residents have said information resulted in more questions and frustrations over the new collections arrangement. Many told Supervisor John "Duffy" Johnston and the Town Board on Monday they now view it as a decline in Modern's weekly garbage pickup and bulk trash services.

"This was a surprise to the community – the garbage change to these cans and the rules and regulations," resident Jennifer Summerfield said. She questioned the change made by the town and raised the issue of a lack of community input. "The town did not tell us anything and today we get a mailer from Modern: 'Here's the change.'"

The residents' claim of a lack of communication by the town was disputed by Johnston and board members, who said they repeatedly announced scheduled

public discussion sessions on the proposed service changes, with very little if any response or interest from residents at Town Board meetings held on the matter.

Summerfield continued, "We want to find out more about that (the new Modern service contract). What was the decision-making and cost analysis of that, because the service that we're receiving is greatly reduced. The cost has gone up and service has declined."

"We're really unhappy on what the board decided on this."

One unnamed resident told the board, "The devil's in the details, and these details do not meet our needs."

In response, Johnston said the town's discussions with Modern began in October 2019. Prior to that time, "Modern allowed the town to work two years without a contract, which had cost Modern \$175,000 ... working without contracts until we could figure it out."

He said Porter provided four community notifications to residents via news announcements and on its website for scheduled meetings "to voice your concerns" on the town's garbage services contact discussions. Johnston also explained the town posted requests for proposals inviting bids from all Buffalo-Niagara area trash providers – Modern, Waste Management, Pinto, Republic, etc. Modern was the only company that responded.

Discussing the town's handling of its contract negotiations with Modern, Johnston continued, "We went through everything; we looked at smaller totes" for

residents. He said the town determined consideration wasn't deemed practical, as residents could move and the trash needs at a certain address might change.

Johnston also said a number of Niagara County communities are finding themselves in a similar trash services predicament as Porter, with limited trash service options. He indicated that reflected continuing changes in the local and national garbage and recycling services industry market.

"The Town of Porter is not the only one. They (Modern) put out a right for proposals out (for similar trash pick up services). It's called a consortium. It's Newfane, Pendleton, Cambria, Middleport, Somerset and Barker (that are signing up). All are going the same one-cart system, doing the exact same thing" as Porter, Johnston said.

He noted the Town of Lewiston does not operate in the same fashion, because it has a host community agreement with Modern.

Johnston said Porter and Modern are striving to accommodate residents' trash needs, with options for larger trash pick-ups (i.e. "additional capacity tags" offered by the town, and extra trash totes available to residents for purchase (with an added fee charged). Also, the town's offering of two "dump permits" issued yearly to residents allowing for bulk trash drop-offs on the first Saturday of each month at the Modern landfill in Lewiston, with the town handling all related costs.

Throughout the public comments session, the town repeatedly attempted to address concerns.

On the matter of cost, Town

Attorney Mike Dowd explained, "For many years, residents in the Town of Porter enjoyed no garbage fees. ... When the contract expired with Modern Disposal, we put out an RFP. We wanted other people to participate; we wanted to get as many proposals as we could. We got one."

"In that quote, that's what they (Modern) offered, and the board had to make a decision. Because now we have to pay; now you're paying out of your pocket because there is a district charge for garbage. If what you wanted to have done ... by Modern Disposal (additional trash services) ... the cost of it would have been way astronomical" for the town.

"The board is charged in trying to do the best we can with what we have. Modern brought an offer and we did have some discussions with them, about these things in particular," Dowd said.

In response, he said Modern emphasized it is available to assist with any particular need for residents, should that need arise. "That driver will assist them."

"So we're doing everything we can," Dowd said. "But that's really it. You're left with one person (Modern) putting in a response. ... So we're going to do what we can, to help going forward. But decisions had to be made."

The town closed by announcing the new Modern trash services program would take effect on Oct. 1. For more information, residents are advised to consult the "Trash Talk" mailer, contact Porter Town Hall at 745-3730, Modern at 800-330-7107, or visit Modern's website at www.ModernCorporation.com.

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Niagara County to hold 'walk-up' career fair

The Niagara County Department of Employment and Training will hold a "mini" walk-up career fair next Thursday, Sept. 24, for those seeking employment. Eight companies with open positions have signed up to participate and more are expected to take part.

"Niagara's WorkSourceOne is all about connecting job seekers with

employers and, like so many other things, it has been a challenge during the pandemic," said Niagara County Legislator Jesse Gooch, chairman of the community services committee. "That's why we are excited to be able to offer a mini walk-up career fair, which may not be as expansive as some of our past events, but allows us to help those

looking for jobs while maintaining proper safety protocols."

Director of Employment and Training Donald Jablonksi said the event will be held on the front lawn of the Trott Access Building at 1001 11th St., Niagara Falls (weather-permitting). Those who attend will be required to wear a mask. Participating businesses include: Home Depot, Remedy Staffing, Express Employment Professionals, Panera Bread, New Directions, Seneca Niagara, Empower and the NFTA.

"The employers taking part are looking to fill a wide spectrum of positions, so there are real opportunities for job seekers," Jablonksi said. "And there is no appointment necessary, so simply come join us on the front lawn at the Trott Access Building and let our WorkSourceOne team help you get hired."

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