



Finger Lakes Times

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Thursday's weather

High: 41
Low: 27



Breezy, cooler

Midday winners
893, 4119

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Opinion

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City Dems choose slate

Four candidates likely to face primary challenges on June 27

By **STEVE BUCHIERE**
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GENEVA — After naming Ward 3 Councilor Jan Regan to receive its mayoral endorsement earlier this month, the city Democratic Party Committee has announced the rest of its slate for the upcoming City Council election, along with District 1 su-

pervisor. “We interviewed and discussed several qualified, interested individuals and the current slate of candidates represents the true diversity of Geneva,” Committee Chair Eileen Buckley said. “We are excited about our candidates, as they possess the experience and passion to lead Geneva for-

ward. More importantly, this team is willing to work cohesively and respectfully with each other while addressing the city’s challenges.” The Democratic-endorsed City Council candidates:
• Ward 1: Chris Lavin. Lavin holds diplomas from DeSales High School and Hobart College, along

with an honorary doctorate from Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He is a former reporter and editor who worked at the *Finger Lakes Times*, *Rochester Times-Union*, *St. Petersburg Times*, and the *San Diego Union-Tribune* during a 40-year journalism career. He is

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The Chickel!
Gale-Wyr
Chicken BBQ

Runnings Parking Lot 3191 Co R

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currently director of the Boys and Girls Club of Geneva and its Geneva Community Center.

- **Ward 2: Cassie Sneider.** Sneider moved to Geneva from Brooklyn in June 2020. She is a 2007 graduate of Stony Brook University with a BA in English. The committee said Sneider spent much of the next several years touring the country with her comics and memoir before getting custody of her niece and two nephews in 2017. Sneider recently opened a toy store in Syracuse named Total Recall.

- **Ward 3: Terri Brinson-Gwynn.** Brinson-Gwynn returned home to Geneva in 2012 after her family moved to Connecticut when she was a child. She is an Army veteran and graduate of Finger Lakes Community College. She is a certified nursing assistant at Finger Lakes Health and a minister. Democrats said she is behind numerous initiatives, including clothing and toy drives and hospital and prison ministries and is also a motivational speaker.

- **Ward 4: RJ Rapoza.** Rapoza serves as co-director of a personal and professional development program at LeMoyne College. Over the last 25 years he has worked for Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES, Finger Lakes Community College, as well as Hobart & William Smith Colleges. Democrats said he is well-known for his work with the Geneva Theatre Guild and Seneca Community Players. Rapoza works with children through GTG Youth Theatre and at Geneva High School.

- **Ward 5: Wil Wolf.** Wolf is a Palmyra native and has been a “resident and presence in Geneva’s downtown for over a decade,” said Democrats. He worked at Joe’s Hots and Kashong Creek and was manager of Geneva’s longest running tattoo shop. Wolf currently serves as a surveillance agent in the casino industry, with a special interest in money-laundering detection and prevention.

- **Ward 6: Scott Bowes.** Bowes is an Army veteran who served in combat in both Panama and Iraq. He has volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club, the Musselman race and has marched multiple times with Black Lives Matter and the Geneva Women’s Assembly. He has acted with the Headless Sullivan Theater, the Speakeasy Society, and directed a play at the Smith Opera House. Bowes works for HEP Sales as store manager.

- **At large: John Brennan.** Brennan retired from City Hall in 2018 and currently serves as board president for the Business Improvement District and is a member

of the Historic Districts Commission. Democrats said Brennan is an advocate for the preservation and restoration of Geneva’s architectural gems as a way to build tourism. He said he is committed to economic development to improve the quality of life for all residents as well as increasing recreational activities at the lakefront.

- **At large: Ahmad Whitfield.** Whitfield, a behavioral health therapist, is involved in many organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club, the African American Men’s Association, the NAACP and the Martin Luther King Committee. In 2017, he founded Daddies Do Care, a group that helps fathers become more involved with their children. He has served as chair of the Policy Council at Head Start and worked for Catholic Charities as an emergency assistance caseworker.

In addition, the city Democratic Party Committee endorsed Jim Kennedy as its choice for the District 1 (Wards 1, 2) seat on the Ontario County Board of Supervisors. Kennedy was appointed by City Council in September 2022 and is running to complete the remaining two-year term of retired supervisor Dom Vedora. He is a mental health clinician for FLACRA in Penn Yan and has served on numerous nonprofit boards, including Ontario ARC, Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes and several state-level health care committees.

Buckley said many of the endorsed candidates are expected to have Democratic primary challengers who have already received GOP endorsements. They would be on both ballot lines in November if they defeat endorsed Democratic candidates.

Incumbent Mayor Steve Valentino, a Democrat who did not get the party’s endorsement but did receive one from city Republicans, is expected to challenge Regan in the June 27 primary.

According to Buckley, other Democrats expected to be challenged by Republican-endorsed candidates in the Democratic primary are Rapoza in Ward 4 (by Peter Gillotte); Wolf in Ward 5 (by Jim Petropoulos); and Whitfield and Brennan for the at-large council spots (by incumbent Anthony Noone).

“The Geneva Democratic Committee urges all registered Democrats in the city of Geneva to vote in the June 27 primary, which will determine which candidate is on the ballot in the November election,” Buckley said.

Buckley noted that candidate nominating petitions must be submitted from April 3-6.