

Valentino to seek reelection

Salamendra said she's not running; many others have not made decisions

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GENEVA — The last four years haven't been the easiest time to be the city's mayor. However, that's not stopping incumbent Democrat Steve Valentino from wanting

to do it again.

Valentino disclosed this week that he plans to run for another four-year term.

"I do intend on running in this year's election," he said. "I remain excited

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about the city of Geneva's continued growth. Getting through covid, hiring a city manager and comptroller were no easy tasks for this Council. I am looking forward to working closely with staff and the next City Council to capitalize on several opportunities and initiatives that are in our future.

"Reflecting on my many years on Council, I am nothing short of proud to have been part of the city's resurgence."

As for the eight others currently serving, only one who responded to an email from the *Times* is a definite no. That's Ward 5 Councilor Laura Salamendra, a Democrat, who has had numerous disagreements with Valentino and other councilors.

"God, no," she responded. "This city is sick. Unfortunately the business of the city of Geneva only serves business owners, lifelong Genevans, property owners and its employees. The people have been left out. I thought shining a light on the inequality running rampant here would inspire change. I thought folks would want to identify and solve problems but that's not how most



Valentino



Salamendra

of Council views its role. Most of Council thinks it's about wearing rose-colored glasses and standing for the Pledge (of Allegiance). The real work to transform Geneva will take place outside of this dysfunctional Council and that's where I'll be. As for the next Council, I hope the folks running will do their best to stop the steady flow of our taxes to cops' bank accounts so we might get a little recreation around here."

Here's where some others stand:

- Ward 1, Tom Burrall (an independent who ran with Democrats): "No decision yet."

- Ward 2, Bill Pealer Jr. (Republican): Unavailable.

- Ward 3, Jan Regan (Democrat): "Serving as a city councilor has been a very gratifying experience for me, even with the challenges we faced as a group. I am currently talking with constituents and members of the Democratic Committee to help decide what I will do regarding another run."

- Ward 4, Ken Camera (Democrat): Unavailable.

- Ward 6, Kyle Brimm (Republican): Running.

- At-Large, Frank Gaglianese III (Republican): "I'm not sure about running yet. I've been talking to family, friends and the Republican Committee. There are a few options for me right now."

- At-Large, Anthony Noone (Democrat): "As we are now in our fourth year of service, I continue to explore the various options I have moving forward — running again and in what capacity or not seeking reelection. I remain focused on my current term on Council and addressing the many challenges

we face as a city."

City Republican Chairwoman Ethel Peters said the selection process has begun.

"We do have a committee that is looking for candidates," she said. "We're doing fairly well, but there are some gaps. We do have some people that I know will get support by the full committee."

She said the GOP will announce its slate when it's set.

Peters noted that the nomination process has moved from June to the end of March, putting considerable pressure on the city's political committees to form a slate. The dates were changed by the state Legislature.

On the Democratic side, Chairwoman Eileen Buckley said the selection process is not complete.

"We are still recruiting, asking current ones for firm decisions, just starting interviewing, so no names yet," she said, acknowledging that Valentino informed her that he is running again.

Valentino and Noone have sided with Republicans on a number of issues, including the Police Review Board, which was disbanded after state Supreme Court Judge Craig Doran ruled against the local law. Valentino was a key vote in the decision by City Council to not appeal Doran's decision, which came after the union representing a majority of Geneva police officers sued.

Buckley said Valentino's and Noone's alignment with council Republicans on a number of issues will be taken into consideration when it comes to getting endorsements from the Democratic Committee.