

Local student participates in world-class leadership program with Gen. Tommy Franks



The Four Star Leadership with General Tommy Franks announced James Terryberry of Lewiston as one of 67 students worldwide who participated in this year's leadership program, held July 11-16 in Edmond, Oklahoma. The Four Star Leadership program provides students the opportunity to develop leadership skills through curriculum, speech and writing competitions and experiences with respected leaders.

Terryberry, who attends Western New York Maritime Charter School,

was chosen due to his demonstrated leadership abilities and outstanding character.

Four Star Leadership with General Tommy Franks is a weeklong program for the top high school students from around the world to learn leadership techniques and skills from frontrunners and influential leaders in various fields. Program curriculum is designed around the four core principles that led Franks (Ret.) through his 38-year military career: character, common vision, communication and caring. The opportunity is valued at more than \$4,000 per student and is offered at no cost to selected students, including expenses, travel and programming.

"We are honored to assist the world's brightest high school students with leadership capabilities and confidence as they make important steps toward their collegiate careers," Franks said. "We are confident that these awards are just the first step in a long journey of future triumphs for these leaders of tomorrow."

For more information on the program, visit www.FourStarLeader.com.

Four Star Leadership with General Tommy Franks is a world-class leadership program developed as a partnership between the General Tommy Franks Leadership Institute and Museum and Oklahoma Christian University. Four Star Leadership offers top high school students invaluable leadership experience through an exciting and challenging curriculum at no cost to students. Since 2008, Four Star Leadership has welcomed more than 700 U.S. high school students from 48 different states and 49 international students.

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Town of Niagara delays marijuana sales; outlines plans for American Rescue Plan funding

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO

With marijuana being recently legalized in New York state for recreational use, many towns across the state are preparing for an influx of burgeoning businesses ready to sell the product. However, the Town of Niagara will not be one of those towns, at least not initially.

On Tuesday, the Town Board passed a resolution (4-1) to opt out of the newly enacted "New York State Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act." The resolution will prohibit the establishment of any retail dispensary licenses and/or consumption licenses within the boundaries of the Town of Niagara.

Following the meeting, Town Supervisor Lee Wallace said there were too many unknowns regarding the legislation and the town would rather wait and see how neighboring communities handle the change.

"Without really knowing everything – the legislation has been very vague – it's better we opt out because you can always opt in later on," Wallace said. "If we opt in and we stay in, we're stuck. So I think it's better to be safe at this point in time. We really don't know what our residents want for sure so I think that's probably the best way to do it."

The lone dissenting vote came from Councilman Samuel Gatto. He said while he wasn't too leery about the common complaints and fears surrounding associated with the product, he said he actually agreed with the majority's decision to wait but simply didn't want to deny the town from potential tax revenue.

"I agree with the board's decision on why we didn't opt in because we always have the opportunity to opt back in. But I don't like to take us off the grid as far as tax revenue, you know, because it would have to be a brick and mortar building and I like to see businesses come in and because they're going to come in the area anywhere. So, I would prefer to have them paying taxes in the Town of Niagara than anywhere else. ... But I agree with the board's decision to wait, I really do," Gato said.

Wallace said the town would reexamine the issue as more information comes out in the next year, at least as soon as after the Association of Towns meeting which usually takes place in February.

Currently, the state has not given a firm timetable for when marijuana sales will officially begin but many discussions have that expected near the back half of 2022.

The board also approved a plan for spending \$411,021 in recently received American Rescue Plan funds for 2021 as well as another \$398,422 in 2022.

"This is half the money we get," Wallace explained. "We get half this year, we get half in 2022."

Still a little cloudy as to the parameters for spending, but the money is in our special account. So we do have it to spend."

The 2021 spending plan includes \$118,000 for a town-wide drainage study conducted by GHD Engineering. The study is something Wallace said the Town has wanted to do for a long time but has been made more prescient by the recent flooding in July.

"This is a step in the right direction and we just feel it's a good way to spend some of the money that we're getting and we could never get that kind of \$180,000 on a regular budget to do something like this so it's something we probably have wanted to do for a while," Wallace said.

"This study would not have prevented what happened on July 20. There isn't a drainage system or sewer system developed that could handle that kind of water in such a short period of time. That being said, we as a board feel it is important for us to do everything we can to try and maximize the efforts we're making to try and minimize the damages that occur with something like that. ... We will go and do a complete study of every road every house, every swale, every drainage easement that we have to see if there's something we can do to improve on them. We're going to start installing some additional catch basins, but once the system gets overrun, water has no place to go but upwards, and that's kind of what happened; 4-1/2 inches of rain in 40 minutes."

Other uses for the 2021 funds include \$215,000 in reimbursements for the construction of a cold storage building which is set to begin construction next month, and \$76,000 for two new police department replacement vehicles.

Notable town items for 2022 include \$100,000 going towards additional road paving, \$40,000 in water meter replacements (\$200 per unit), \$30,000 for a pair of bilge pumps, and \$100,000 towards a pair of new dump trucks. The Town of Niagara Police Department will receive \$40,000 worth of computer repairs for systems that were "damaged due to cleaner used during the pandemic" as well as \$10,000 in new vehicle modems.

The full spending plan is available by calling Town Hall at 297-5243.

The board also passed a resolution to contract with National Grid on the conversion of all town street lights to LED in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Wallace explained, "We're a little late with this. We were going to do this last year but COVID kind of put us behind. What usually happens is we have to take the money out of our fund balance and front and then we will get it back in credits through the savings. So it's a pretty good deal that National Grid has come up with."

Jacoby steps down as NC Dem Committee chair



John Jacoby

Town of Lewiston Councilmember John Jacoby recently announced his resignation as chair of the Niagara County Democratic Committee.

In a July 27 letter to Niagara County Democratic Committee executive board members, Jacoby wrote, "It is with deep regret I am resigning as Chair of the Niagara County Democratic Committee for personal reasons effective Friday July 30, 2021."

"My first priority in life is to my family, but I also have a commitment and obligation to the residents and taxpayers who elected me to the Town of Lew-

iston Board. Recent developments have forced me to reexamine my best course of action and unfortunately resignation from the Chairmanship of the Niagara County Democratic Committee is the only viable solution.

"I would like to thank all committee members for their support and hard work. We were able to raise significant money in our initial '21 for 21' campaign and our May Fundraiser in Niagara Falls. These funds have enabled our committee to offer support to candidates throughout the county.

"I will help in the upcoming transition in any way possible and my experience assures me that the individual committee chairs will step up and help as well. Any success I have had is directly attributable to their continuing advice, counsel and willingness to work.

"To every candidate running in Niagara County I wish the best of luck and I thank each of them for their willingness to serve.

"Please accept my sincere apologies, if there were some better option that enabled me to stay on I would do it but it is simply not possible. God bless you all for everything you have done.

"From my heart, John Jacoby."

Jacoby plans to continue his service as a member of the Lewiston Town Board. He is currently a candidate for reelection to the board in the November general election.