

#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd

# Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

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## Artpark pivoting from music to nature for summer season



### Using artistic innovation, embracing social distancing in natural setting of Niagara Gorge

Artpark is churning with activity and fresh initiatives that will allow visitors to interact with the public park in new ways. In the face of multiple concert cancellations and postponements, Artpark has been actively developing new and adapted programs designed to bring the community both relief and inspiration while practicing social distancing and all COVID-19-related precautions to keep visitors safe at all times.

Artpark & Company Executive Director Sonia Kozlova Clark said, "Like everyone else, Artpark and our community have been living through an unprecedented time of major sacrifice and loss. Such a time calls for a special kind of action, strategy and attitude. Right now, all on the Artpark team are focused on handling the ramifications of the unpredictable and managing what is under our control."

SEE ARTPARK, continued on Page 4

## EAT OUTSIDE

Cuomo: Outdoor dining at restaurants permitted in phase two of reopening



Outdoor seating is available at Gallo Coal Fire Kitchen in Lewiston.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday announced outdoor dining at restaurants will be permitted in phase two of reopening. Restaurants in the seven regions that have already entered phase two – the Capital Region, Central New York, the Finger Lakes, the Mohawk Valley, the North Country, the Southern Tier and Western New York – can reopen for outdoor dining beginning Thursday. Outdoor tables must be spaced six feet apart, all staff must wear face coverings and customers must also wear face coverings when not seated. "COVID-19 is still a real threat and we're still battling it. I know it's not on the front

pages today, but it is still in people and in society," Cuomo said. "But thanks to the people of New York and the nurses, doctors and essential workers, today we have the lowest number of hospitalizations ever and we have the lowest death toll ever. We are continuously evaluating activities that can be safely reopened, and today we are adding outdoor seating at restaurants to phase two."

### State Leaders Respond

In response to the restaurant news, New York State Sen. Rob Ortt and Niagara County Legislator Rich Andres urged local governments in Niagara County to

SEE SLA, continued on Page 5

## Grupka details proposed \$49.092 million Lewiston-Porter budget

Plan reflects operations increases, pandemic, state aid impacts

BY TERRY DUFFY  
Editor-in-Chief

With the Lewiston-Porter School District in lockdown mode for the balance of the school year, the Board of Education held its annual budget/board candidates session Tuesday evening via Zoom for community members. In her remarks, Dr. Patricia Grupka, Lewiston-Porter assistant superintendent for administrative services, discussed the development process for the proposed \$49,092,666 Lewiston-Porter budget for fiscal year 2020-21.

"This has been a very challenging year as you can imagine," Grupka said. She explained the budget's primary goals are to maintain current Lew-Port programs and staff. These include continuing one-on-one computing availability for students, the utilization of a tech director, and continuation of Lew-Port AP, honors and enrichment programs for students – while providing a safe environment for students and staff members. "It's really important that focus on delivering a fiscally respon-

sible budget," Grupka said. Coupled with that is Lew-Port's focus on updating its strategic plan and student progress initiatives. "Every year we get together and look at our strategic plan, talk about it in the district and community – what's important and set goals." Grupka then turned her attention to budget concerns impacting the district. Included are: salary and benefit increases, including minimum wage and contractual increases for staff; the issue of unfunded mandates covering transportation and facili-

ties requirements; the 2% tax cap; and the latest concerns stemming from the coronavirus pandemic, including numerous expenses to the district from the various adjustments required (including providing student lunches during the closure, and the purchase of masks and hand sanitizers, etc., for staff); and the resulting fiscal impact to New York state and school districts. "Every year, salary and benefit increases will happen," she said. "This year, we are facing minimum wage increases that

are above the 2% cap, so, when you have salaries (and associated costs) increase ... it's very difficult to manage on a 2% tax cap, when the imposed increases are more than that. "Every year we look at unfunded mandates; the special costs went up last year extremely. We were not unique in that. Every district faced big impacts to special education budgets (and) we are no exception." Other increases include transportation costs that are expected

SEE PROPOSED, continued on Page 6

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