

Opinions

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Picking up the pieces

BY KEVIN R. HARDWICK
Erie County Legislator
4th District

The world has changed in the last month. The pandemic now dominates every news cycle and almost every personal conversation. Our response to this crisis will go a long way toward determining the kind of community we will have once life returns to some semblance of normal. For the time being, we all have to determine what role we can play in combatting the virus. For some, this is obvious. Health care workers and first re-



County Legislator
Kevin Hardwick

sponders are on the frontlines of this battle and have never been more appreciated by us all. Add to them the many grocery store workers, utility workers, truck drivers, delivery persons, reporters and others who have kept our society functioning and we have much for which to be grateful.

Elected officials are used to being on the news, leading the charge, announcing grand plans and proposals. But we are now at war and in a war, politicians need to step back and let the generals lead. Fortunately, from what I have observed, County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein and their team are up to the task. My job is to make sure they have the resources to get the job done and get out of their way. That is why last month I implored Dr. Burstein to ask for whatever

additional funds she needed to supplement her budget to save as many lives as possible. The \$5 million that the legislature subsequently approved in a special session will hopefully be enough. If it isn't, we will need to determine if more is required. Either way I trust the money will be well spent. It makes no sense, however, for legislators to micromanage the Health Department in the midst of this crisis.

We will have a much larger role, of course, in picking up the pieces once the immediate crisis passes. The pandemic and resulting quarantine have blown holes in budgets from the Federal level all the way down to the smallest village. In Erie County, we are seeing sales tax revenue plummet as businesses are shuttered and people do not spend money.

This will prove disastrous for Erie County as we will lose tens of millions of dollars in sales tax, our largest source of local revenue. This will also impact the cities, towns, villages and school districts in Erie County with whom we share our sales tax revenue. The decisions we make regarding how to plug the budget gaps will have great consequences and we need to get it right.

Each municipality will have to make their own decision. In the county, we will have to choose among some combination of cuts, increased taxes and borrowing. These choices will be difficult as putting more people out of work will only exacerbate our economic problem and increasing taxes will be adding insult to injury to those who have already lost their jobs or are on fixed incomes. This is

where the legislature must play a major role in representing the wishes of our constituents. Until then, however, we need to let the medical professionals do their jobs, because we cannot solve our financial problems until we resolve our health care emergency.

If you have thoughts you would like to share, I would love to hear from you. I can be contacted by phone at 858-8672 or via email at kevin.hardwick@erie.gov.

Kevin R. Hardwick is chairman of the Erie County Legislature's Government Affairs Committee, the Community Enrichment Committee, and is a member of the Finance and Management Committee that oversees the budget.

From the Desk of the Town Supervisor

Making progress vs. COVID-19

BY JOHN C. WHITNEY, P.E.
Supervisor
Town of Grand Island

During this COVID-19 pandemic, we are finally making progress as evidenced by the opening of phase I in Western New York under the state's metrics required for reopening. We have also been holding press conferences with other municipi-

palities asking the federal and state governments to help the towns with financial aid. There are 933 towns in New York, and as of this writing only two have qualified for aid. Hopefully, we'll be successful.

Progress has been limited, but after the last two months, I'll take it. Hopefully, we will soon reopen Town Hall on a limited

basis. Entrants will be tested by an infrared thermometer and they must wear masks. We are going to limit the amount of people in any specific area.

We are keeping in line with the governor's mandates and striving to keep our services up to the level you expect and deserve.

On another note, we have received 10,000 masks from Erie County. They are available for pick-up at the Golden Age Center, 3270 Whitehaven Road, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We are limiting the amount to two masks per person. Everyone

receiving masks does not need to be present; in other words, a family member can pick up masks for the entire family.

Let's remember to shop local. We have many great restaurants that need our support. Also, don't forget that the VFW is hosting its third Chiavetta's chicken barbecue on Wednesday. It's been a sell out the last two times.

Because of the drop in metrics required to fully reopen, I had to extend the state of emergency last Friday. Due to this, we will be forced to hold a greatly reduced Memorial Day celebration. I hate that we're missing

these important days. The ceremony will be streamed live on the town's YouTube page and posted on the town's website.

Continue to be safe.

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Grand Island

CHURCH DIRECTORY

ST. TIMOTHY LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Evangelical Lutheran Church In America
1453 Staley Road, Church Office 773-4400
Child Care Center 773-9249
The Rev. Kris Bjerke-Ulliman, Pastor
www.StTimothygrandisland.com

Sunday Worship.....8:00am & 10:30am

Sunday Church School

Children Ages 2 Years - Grade 610:30am
Professional Child Care provided during the 10:30 service
Holy Communion All Services
Day Care Ministry Operates Monday-Friday 6:00am - 6:00pm

BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1650 Love Road (Just off Beaver Island Pkwy.)
773-7303
Pastor: Rev. Kevin M. Backus, Ph. D.
Assistant Pastor: Rev. Andrew R. Wann, M. Div.
www.biblepres.org

Sunday School-Classes for all ages9:30am

Worship Service 10:45am
(Nursery, Children's Church)

Evening Worship Service..... 6:00pm

Wednesday

AWANA - 3 yrs old thru Gr 8 during school year.....
6:30pm-8:15pm

24/7 program for Sr. High youth.6:30pm-8:15pm
Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7:00pm

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CENTER

1136 Baseline Road • 773-3748
Rev. Calvin VanderMey
www.bfcgi.org

Regular Service at Bible Fellowship.....8:30 & 10:15am
Youth Group ages 8 & up - Mondays.....6:30-8:00pm
Adult Prayer & Bible Study - Tuesdays6:30pm
Adult Bible Study - Fridays7:00pm

CORNERSTONE CHURCH

1290 Whitehaven Road • 773-1004
cornerstonechurch.life

Join us Sundays at 9:00am and 10:30am
Worship Service
Discovery Island Children's Ministry
RockStars (Special Needs) and Nursery

Middle School Youth Group.....Thur 6:00pm
High School Youth Group.....Mon 6:30pm
Kids Club (K-5th during school year).....Wed 6:30pm
MOLO (Moms of Little Ones during school year) Wed 9:15am

Find more info on ministries for all age groups at
Cornerstonechurch.life



SHARE YOUR MESSAGE IN OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY

CALL 773-7676

CROSSRIVER TABERNACLE

2920 Grand Island Blvd. • 716-229-8000
Pastor: Michael Chorey
CrossRiverMinistries.org

Sunday Morning Worship Service..... 10:00am
(Nursery & Children's Church Provided)

Revolution Youth Rally for Teens
(Grades 7-12) 6:30pm

Wednesday Services

Prayer Meeting 6-7:00pm
Worship and Bible Study 7-8:15pm
Kid's Bible Club (Ages 5-11) 7-8:15pm

TRINITY CHURCH

"Welcome Home"
2100 Whitehaven Road, Grand Island, NY
www.TrinityGrandIsland.org • 716-773-3322
Pastor: Kevin Slough

Join us in Worship

Traditional Worship 8:00am
Contemporary Worship 10:00am

U-Turn Youth Groups*
Rooted Children's Groups*
Adult Bible Studies*

*Please check website for time and details
Handicap accessible/Nursery care

Believe + Belong + Build

Believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
Belong to the Lord Jesus with your whole heart and soul
Build on your relationship with Jesus through worship, prayer and service

Voting by mail would solve problems

Voting by mail should replace voting at the polls in its entirety. The two institutions that can definitely be trusted is the County Board of Elections and the United States Postal Service. The money saved by eliminating the need for poll workers could be used to offer free postage on the envelopes used to vote by mail. The person voting would also have more time to consider what they are voting for and would not be confined to the hours of the polling place. It would also prevent unwanted entry to schools and churches from anyone trying to harm someone. In addition, the voter would not be harassed by someone trying to place unsolicited campaign literature into their hand. The additional revenue would boost the Postal Service and perhaps keep it afloat until we as a country are able to vote online. Voting by mail would solve the registered voter problem and guarantee safe passage of the ballots to the County Board of Elections.

Joe Bialek
Cleveland, Ohio