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Worker injured in marina fire undergoes surgery

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

COEYMANS — The worker injured in an explosion and fire at the Coeymans marina underwent his first surgery Thursday, Town Supervisor George McHugh said.

Eric Allen was injured in a blast at Coeymans Landing Marina Services on Jan. 20.

McHugh said at Thursday's meeting of the town council he had spoken with Allen's father and that surgery was performed that day.

"[He] told me that Eric had not been able to go into surgery until today because they were trying to stabilize his lungs — there was some damage to his lungs and they felt he was stable enough to have a short surgery today," McHugh said.

Allen sustained severe burns in the fire but is battling his injuries, McHugh said.

"He's a tough guy, he is a hard fighter so he is fighting it, but certainly a lot of damage was done, inside and out," McHugh said. "Spirits are up but it's going to be a long road."

The community has rallied to support Allen in his recovery and the family appreciates the support of local residents, McHugh said.

"Today was a better day than yesterday," the town supervisor said of Allen's initial surgery. "It was a step in the right



File photo

The worker who suffered severe burns in the Jan. 20 marina fire has undergone his first surgery, Town Supervisor George McHugh said Thursday.

direction. Keep him in your prayers, please."

The cause of the explosion Jan. 20 appeared to be sparks from welding that was being done near a waste oil tank, according to the preliminary investigation, Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple said.

Allen, 56, was airlifted by LifeNet to the University of Vermont Medical Center for treatment of his injuries.

The explosion and fire sent plumes of black smoke over the hamlet and drew mutual aid from six area fire companies, as well as the Coeymans department.

McHugh said he has also spoken with Carver Laraway, the owner of the Coeymans Industrial Park, and an official from the Coeymans fire district to see how businesses in the industrial park can help in providing firefighting support in the future.

"We talked a little bit about volunteer firefighting and EMS recruitment," McHugh said. "The industrial park, including Mr. Laraway and some of the tenants there, want to do what they can to assist the local fire companies in making sure that they've got enough people to fight fires during the day."

The effort was spurred by the marina fire, McHugh said.

See FIRE A2

Mayor's race sets off firestorm in village

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

RAVENA — In many election cycles, political caucuses take place with nary any attention.

Not so in Ravena last week, where the often-mundane business of caucuses set off a firestorm of controversy in the village.

Both major political parties held their caucuses last week for the village elections, to be held March 15. Three positions are up for grabs — mayor and two seats on the village board, currently held by Mayor Bill Misuraca, a Republican, and Village Trustees Linda Muller and Mary Ellen Rosato, both Democrats.

Rosato has opted not to run for re-election.

The Republican committee held its caucus last Monday at Senior Projects of Ravena on Bruno Boulevard, and the Democratic committee conducted its caucus Tuesday at the Ravena firehouse on Main Street.

It was anything but business as usual.



Above left, Democrats nominated their slate of candidates for the village elections March 15, including Republican Mayor Bill Misuraca, center. Also pictured are incumbent Village Trustee Linda Muller, left, and political newcomer Caitlin Appleby, right. Appleby was also nominated at the Republican caucus.

Above right, Republicans nominated Dominic Ruggeri, left, to run for mayor on the GOP ticket, along with village trustee candidates Barbara Tanner, center, and Caitlin Appleby, right. Appleby will appear on the Democratic ticket as well.

At the first caucus, held by the Republicans, caucus voters opted to reject incumbent Mayor Bill Misuraca, a Republican who has been at the village's helm for eight years, instead choosing



Dominic Ruggeri, who once ran for village justice before the village court was eliminated by the village board.

Ruggeri was nominated for mayor by Tyler Ruggeri, with the nomination sec-

onded by Shona Ruggeri. Misuraca was nominated by Caitlin Appleby — who was eventually chosen by both parties to run for one of the two available seats on the village board — with the nomination seconded by Patricia Rudolph.

Ruggeri received 24 votes to Misuraca's 12 to take the GOP nomination.

"I raised my family in the village and I felt that I have a great vision for the village and I want to see if we can make some progress and change things around," Ruggeri said after winning the GOP nod.

He said that if elected he will look to make improvements to the village's infrastructure.

"The first thing I want to do is change the infrastructure," Ruggeri said. "We have some outdated water and sewer lines — I have one of the best grant writers working with me that can bring in some great grants. That is something

See RACE A2

Mask rule remains in RCS schools

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

RAVENA-COEYMANS-SELKIRK — A pair of conflicting court decisions last week left families wondering whether face masks would continue to be required in schools.

Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk District Superintendent Dr. Brian Bailey said at press time the mask rule remains in place in all RCS schools.

On Friday, Gov. Kathy Hochul extended the face mask mandate as the COVID pandemic continues. Originally set to expire Feb. 1, Hochul

extended the mandate to Feb. 10 as the court's review of the case takes place.

Masks have been required in all schools in New York state since schools returned to in-person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Masks are considered one component of a tiered response to the pandemic in local schools, along with social distancing, virus testing and quarantining for those testing positive, among others.

On Jan. 24, State Supreme Court Judge Thomas Rademaker struck down the state's Department of Health

emergency regulation that required face masks in all public indoor spaces, including schools, finding the department did not have the authority to enact the rule.

New York State Attorney General Letitia James appealed the ruling and the next day, Jan. 25, the Appellate Court ordered a stay on the lower court's ruling, reinstating the department's mask regulation pending further review of the case.

James lauded the stay of the court decision to strike down the mandate.

"Nearly three years into the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that wearing a

mask saves lives," James said. "This mandate and today's decision are critical in helping to stop the spread of this virus and protect individuals young and old. We will continue to do everything in our power to prioritize the health and well-being of all New Yorkers."

A final decision has not yet been made — the Appellate Court must still rule on the merits of the case, and at press time had not yet done so.

Until a final decision has been made, Bailey said the mask rule will continue at all RCS schools.

"The rule remains



Contributed photo

Face masks are still required in the RCS district and in all schools statewide despite conflicting court cases last week.

in effect and the mask mandate remains in place for all schools in New York state until a formal decision is issued by the Appellate judge concerning the conflicting lower

court rulings," Bailey said Friday.

State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa

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SPORTS:



Indians dominate late in win against Greenville
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