



The Journal



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TUESDAY
April 28, 2015

Morley Raises Land Conflict

By LARRY ROBINSON

The city's deputy mayor is asking for state Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman's office to weigh in on whether City Councilor Jennifer Stevenson has a conflict of interest in voting on a proposal to create an adaptive reuse district affecting approximately

60 properties in the municipality.

Councilor Michael D. Morley, who also serves as the city's deputy mayor, asked City Manager John M. Pinkerton to contact the state Office of the Attorney General to try and get a definitive answer on whether Ms. Stevenson has a

real or perceived conflict of interest in voting on the proposed ARD, or on other matters pending before the council pertaining to the former Lincoln Elementary School on Knox Street.

Ms. Stevenson's company, Blue Heron Realty, 731 Ford St., facilitated the Ogdens-

burg School District's sale last year of its former Lincoln Elementary School building and campus to Step By Step, Inc., a nonprofit mental health organization at 103 Ford St. The school district sold the building to the organization for \$15,000.

Mr. Morley said he has con-

cerns that Ms. Stevenson's involvement with the purchase could constitute a potential conflict of interest and leave the municipality open to a future legal challenge by citizens should she cast a vote on the measure.

See MORLEYA3

TODAY **WEDNESDAY**

Warmer with partial sunshine
HIGH 59 to 65

Intervals of clouds and sunshine
64 to 70
39 to 45



Brier Hill Fire Department Holds Annual Banquet

LOCAL, A10



OFA Golfers Win Season Opener; M-W Earns Split

SPORTS, B1



Junior firefighters crawl through a house of folding tables Sunday during a victim search simulation at the Hermon Fire Department. For story, please see page C1.

PHOTO BY MELANIE KIMBLER-LAGO

County OKs Filling Jobs

By SUSAN MENDE

CANTON — A committee made up of all 15 St. Lawrence County legislators voted Monday in favor of filling several county jobs, including replacing an assistant district attorney who resigned two weeks ago and hiring an assistant county administrator.

At their Finance Committee meeting, lawmakers voted 10-4 to authorize District Attorney Mary E. Rain to fill an assistant district attorney position formerly held by Otis Simon. Absent from the meeting was Donald J. Hooper, R-Ogdensburg.

Mr. Simon left April 17 to join a private law firm with attorney James Monroe, Canton. Legislators will vote again at their May 4 board meeting.

Paperwork submitted by Ms. Rain stated that the assistant district attorney "has resigned to address a number of family obligations."

Addressing the board at the meeting, Ms. Rain said, "He realized his family was way too important to him. He truly wanted to stay, but he just couldn't."

"The office of the district attorney is currently running at a dangerously low staffing level," the resolution states.

Both Mr. Monroe and Mr. Simon worked as assistant district attorneys under former D.A. Nicole M. Duve.

Mr. Simon was paid \$56,240 a year in salary plus an estimated \$31,494 in employee benefits.

See COUNTYA3

Peterkin Refuses Plea Deal Attempts

By W.T. ECKERT

CANTON — An Ogdensburg man is facing 44 years in prison after refusing several opportunities at a plea deal in St. Lawrence County Court Monday.

Joseph A. "Drama" Peterkin Jr., 33, of 1105 Mechanic St., is accused of violating his March 10, 2014 interim probation sentence for drug sales on new charges of drug sales.

On March 23, Mr. Peterkin, formerly of Brooklyn, was charged by Ogdensburg Police Narcotics Enforcement Unit detectives with three counts of third-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance and three counts of third-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, all felonies.

Detectives allege that Mr. Peterkin sold crack cocaine in Ogdensburg on multiple dates.

In court Monday, County Court Judge Jerome J. Richards offered Mr. Peterkin the opportunity to admit to violating his probation and plead guilty to one of the six new felonies lodged against him and be sentenced to prison for a total of 11 years.

Mr. Peterkin declined the offer.

Judge Richards told Mr. Peterkin that if he didn't accept the deal, he could face eight years on the violation and, if found guilty at trial, face 12 years on each of the six new counts, adding an additional 36 years to his prison sentence.

Again, Mr. Peterkin declined the offer.

The judge, again, warned Mr. Peterkin of his prison exposure, adding that if her were sentenced Monday on the violation, unless he got his own clothes, he would return for trial on the new charges in his prison garb. He said although the jury is not supposed to consider that at the time of trial, he has no control over what they discuss at the time of deliberation. Additionally, he told Mr. Peterkin that with good behavior and merit time, he would serve less than eight years in prison on the current deal.

"Does that make a difference for you?" Judge Richards asked.

But Mr. Peterkin wouldn't

bite.

After speaking with his fiancé and his attorney, Assistant Public Defender Alison B. Appleby, Mr. Peterkin requested an adjournment of his sentencing and a hearing on his new charges.

"For the last eight months I've done everything I'm supposed to do," Mr. Peterkin said. "The only problem I had was a traffic violation."

Mr. Peterkin went on to tell the judge that since his interim probation sentence he had been working as a babysitter, watching over five children.

"Babysitting these kids is the best thing that ever happened to me," Mr. Peterkin said. "It got me thinking about

See PETERKINA3

City Man Gets Year In Jail For Psych Center Stabbing

By W.T. ECKERT

CANTON — An Ogdensburg man was sentenced to nearly a year in St. Lawrence County jail in County Court Monday for stabbing two people while he was in a psychiatric center.

James E. Davis, 27, of 1 Chimney Point Drive, was sentenced to 330 days in jail for his Feb. 26 guilty plea to two counts of misdemeanor third-degree assault.

On July 15, Mr. Davis stabbed Thomas McDougal, a therapy aide at St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center, in the left

cheek with a metal butter knife. On July 19, Mr. Davis also stabbed Chinyere Ukoma, a psychologist at the center, in the neck with a pencil.

The two were treated at the emergency room at Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center, Ogdensburg, and released.

Mr. Davis told County Court Judge Jerome J. Richards that he had become paranoid when he had stabbed both men and said he believed by stabbing them it would alleviate his paranoia.

In addition to his jail sentence, Mr. Davis was ordered

to pay \$250 in court fines, fees and surcharges.

In other court action Monday:

Jason A. Clookey, 35, of 131 Andrew St. Apt. 3, Massena, was sentenced to up to four years in prison for his Nov. 3 guilty plea to fourth-degree grand larceny. At the time of his plea, Mr. Clookey made admissions that he unlawfully used a credit card issued to Danko Construction in December 2013.

Judge Richards said he was committed to recommending Mr. Clookey be included in the

prison system's shock incarceration program. If deemed eligible by the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, he would spend six months in a military-style treatment program and then serve the balance of his sentence on parole.

In addition to his prison sentence, Mr. Clookey was ordered to pay \$2,169.37 in restitution and \$375 in court fines, fees and surcharges.

Joshua J. Ouellette, 23, of 257 county Route 26, Harrisville, was sentenced to 180 days in St. Lawrence County

jail and 10 years of probation for his Feb. 24 guilty plea to third-degree rape. According to his original arrest, troopers received a complaint on June 16 in the town of Edwards alleging that Ouellette had sexual intercourse with a 14-year-old girl sometime in April 2014. No additional information was available.

In addition to his jail and probation sentence, Mr. Ouellette was ordered to pay \$1,425 in court fines, fees and surcharges.

See CITYA3

BRIEFS

Woman of the Year

Since 1956 "The Woman of the Year" recognition dinner has been held at the Ogdensburg First United Methodist Church to honor one of its women with this title and crown for her work in the church and in the community.

The dinner starts at 4:45 p.m. on May 2.

Adult tickets are \$5, children ages 6 to 12 are \$2, and children 5 and under are free. For reservations call Grace Rodgers at 393-3342 or Mildred Dillenbeck at 393-4914.

Good Morning
Zelpha LaFlair
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