

New Genoa fiscal officer says efficiency is priority

Sunday, March 25, 2007

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As the new Genoa Township fiscal officer, Darrell Kem said he hopes to make the office run "more efficiently" and said he sees it as a way to serve residents.

Kem was appointed to the position following the March 1 resignation of Tina Ciacchi.

He first took the fiscal officer's seat during a trustees' meeting on March 14.

Kem, who ran for trustee in 2005, said in an e-mail to *ThisWeek* the two roles are "completely different offices, but I think holding this position gives me the opportunity to serve the residents of Genoa Township in a larger way than I have so far.

"It also gives me the chance to learn more about the township and get insight into how it is run."

Kem said the biggest challenge he has encountered in his short time as fiscal officer is "learning the systems used by the office."

He said while he is learning quickly, the lack of an assistant means there is "little help in the transition."

Kem hopes to alleviate such difficulties for any future fiscal officers by hiring a full-time assistant.

"In addition, I plan on returning all responsibilities of this office to this office," he said. "Since there was no assistant, there were many fiscal responsibilities delegated to other office staff members. The assistant will ensure consistent workflow and improved communication."

Kem said he also plans to work closely with the administration and the fire and police departments "to improve communications and increase efficiency" between those departments and his office.

Two township department heads complained of increased feelings of low morale among township employees as they submitted their budget requests for 2007.

Some residents also have said there is a palpable level of tension in the township's administration building, referring to recent accusations against Trustee John Rielly and Zoning Inspector Leslie Warthman.

In September, several residents accused Rielly of violating open meetings laws and forcing the resignation of township employees. Rielly said he will fight those accusations.

At the last trustee meeting, members of the zoning commission complained about Warthman. (See related story on page A1.)

Kem said he thinks honesty and open communication could help alleviate tension and low morale in the township.

"I think each elected official has a responsibility to be open, honest and straightforward," he said. "I believe it is important to remember that we are servants of the citizens of Genoa Township and that the best interest of the residents is paramount. We have been honored by being placed in elected positions to represent the citizens of Genoa Township and we need to do just that."

Kem, who has lived in the township more than five years, is married to Deanna. They have two sons, Joshua and Nathan.