

Chippewa Valley Schools names new leaders

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By Thomas Franz

Posted January 17, 2017



Beth Pyden

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — After securing re-election to the Chippewa Valley Board of Education by voters this fall, Beth Pyden has been elected by her fellow board members to be the district's new school board president.

Pyden, a member of the board since 2012, was named president for the first time following a unanimous vote Jan. 9.

"I'm beyond honored, especially because four of our board members have decades of experience on the board and have taught me an awful lot about being a school board member and being a leader," Pyden said. "I'm humbled, to say the least."

Pyden, 41, is an attorney and a 1993 graduate of Chippewa Valley High School. One of the first issues she will be tasked with tackling is a \$90 million bond proposal that may come before district voters this May.

If approved by the state treasury department, voters would decide whether to raise their property taxes by half of a mill for technology enhancements and site work throughout the district.

"First, I want to hopefully lead the district through a successful bond campaign," Pyden said. "We just approved the language for the bond. I think the passage of the bond opens a lot of doors for our students and affords them a lot of opportunity."

The seven-person board selects new officers at the start of each year. Board members are elected by the public to six-year terms. In 2016, Pyden, former board President Frank Bednard and Treasurer Jill DeMuyneck Zech were all re-elected. The remaining four members were not up for election.

Bednard had served as board president for the last three years.

Longtime board member Denise Aquino was named vice-president of the board, and Laura Cardamone was named secretary.

Aquino, a board member since 1997, has held every position on the board.

“We’ve adopted a mindset that we were going to let everyone have opportunities to be officers so that everybody can rotate and understand what each role does,” Aquino said. “Overall, we receive the same information at the same time, except for the president, who does interact with the superintendent the most and acts as a spokesperson for the board.”

Aquino said that the board’s unanimous votes for Pyden’s election, as well as her own, show the board’s unity in working together.

“We work hard to come to a consensus and look at the issues. We respect one another’s opinions and different perspectives,” Aquino said. “We typically don’t nominate people against each other. We would rather work together collaboratively, because there are some issues that become challenging at times, so it’s better if you try to work together and try to respect one another’s opinions and perspectives.”

Pyden earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan and law degree from Wayne State University. She is a member of the board’s Personnel Sub-Committee and Finance Sub-Committee.

Aquino has two children who both graduated from Dakota High School. She is chairperson of the board’s Personnel Sub-Committee and serves on the Curriculum Sub-Committee.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Staff Writer Thomas Franz covers Macomb Township, Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for the Macomb Township Chronicle. He also covers sports primarily for the Shelby-Utica News. He has worked for C & G Newspapers since 2013 and attended Michigan State University.
