Manorhaven recount set

Village trustee candidates separated by just few votes

BY SCOTT EIDLER
scott.eidler@newsday.com

The Manorhaven Village election remained unresolved for another day after the Nassau County Board of Election officials impounded voting machines yesterday.

Incumbent Rita Di Lucia received 438 votes, more than any other candidate in the race for two trustee spots in Tuesday's election, village clerk-treasurer Leslie Gross said. But the remaining three candidates' tallies were within four votes of one another: challenger and former trustee James M. Avena received 415 votes; Deputy Mayor Lucretia Steele, 412; and challenger John S. Popoleski 411.

Three ballots received early Tuesday were in dispute and a state Supreme Court Justice ordered them kept unopened unless counting them could alter the results of the election, Gross said. Two absentee ballots also are in dispute, she said.

The elections board impounded the machines and a bipartisan group of officials from the Nassau County Board of Elections will begin recounting the votes today, said David Gugerty, the Democratic commissioner for the elections board.

"An undetermined number of paper ballots have been delivered today to the Board of Elections from Manorhaven, and the machines that were used in Tuesday's election have all been returned and have been locked in a secure area at the Board of Elections," Gugerty said.

Election results in nearby Great Neck were much clearer with the defeat of four-term incumbent Mayor Ralph Kreitzman, who yesterday promised to assist his successor in the transition.

Dr. Pedram Bral, director of minimally invasive and robotic gynecologic surgery at Maimonides Medical Center, unseated Kreitzman, 1,040-391.

Bral, 45, said in an interview yesterday that he would convene town-hall-style meetings "to get everybody's input... I'd like to know their concerns."

Kreitzman, 69, an attorney, thanked residents of what is known as the "Old Village" among nine on the Great Neck Peninsula in an emailed statement. He said he was "humbled and proud of our many accomplishments and of the significant resident involvement" during his tenure as mayor of the village of roughly 10,000 residents.

"I do not know how to adequately express my feelings for my dedicated and hardworking trustees," he said.

Bral's running mates on the Voice of the Village ticket, Anne Mendelson and Raymond Plaskis Jr., unseated trustees Mitchell Beckerman and Jeffrey Bass. Bral and Mendelson in 2013 were part of a surprise write-in slate that nearly ousted Kreitzman and his running mates.

Anne Mendelson said in an interview yesterday that "we hope to implement the different ideas we talked about during the campaign."

Rebecca Rosenblatt Gilliar, 72 and a village resident for 43 years who managed Bral's two campaigns, said candidates had reached out to homes on 145 village streets.

"Every street in this village was covered on foot," Gilliar said.

Nat'l Grid fined for missing key PSC targets

BY MARK HARRINGTON
mark.harrington@newsday.com

National Grid's natural gas operations on Long Island will pay an $8.9 million penalty for failing to meet two important state measures of performance in 2014. National Grid missed state Public Service Commission targets for customer satisfaction and the number of complaints received, according to the state agency.

Information provided by the state said the utility blamed cold weather, its 2014 separation from the Long Island Power Authority and a billing system conversion for the problems.

The penalty will impact National Grid shareholders, not ratepayers.

"The rules in place establish strong standards for performance and put significant amounts of shareholder earnings at risk for nonperformance," PSC chairwoman Audrey Zibelman said in a statement.

National Grid in a statement said it "just missed the PSC performance mark by less than 2 percent and we are working diligently to address the areas that require improvement to ensure customer satisfaction."

"Our goal is to meet or exceed all these targets every year," National Grid spokes- woman Wendy Ladd said. "We are focused on making solid progress on improving our customer satisfaction results in 2015."

One National Grid customer who complained to the utility for months this year over an inflated bill said he agreed with the state's assessment of the utility.

Faisal Zakaria of Jericho in May received a $4,493 gas bill, more than 10 times his normal usage. While telephone representatives acknowledged a mistake, he said, correcting it took months.

"Initially, it was horrendous," he said. "Every time I called I went through the same phone tree and had to go through the motion of telling the next person the same story."

National Grid resolved the problem last month.