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EVANS

Vote to reduce Town Board set for June 3

By Michelle Kearns
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Voters in Evans will join those in West Seneca on June 3 in deciding whether to cut two seats from their towns' boards.

During a news conference Thursday in the Liberty Building, activist attorney Kevin Gaughan praised the development.

"Citizens, not politicians, are going to decide the cost and size of local government," Gaughan said. "I think it's exciting. I think it's healthy. I think it's democratic, and I also think it's a little bit magical."

Wednesday, the Evans Town Board, which now has five members, scheduled voting from 11 a. m. to 9 p. m. More than 1,000 residents had signed petitions requesting the referendum.

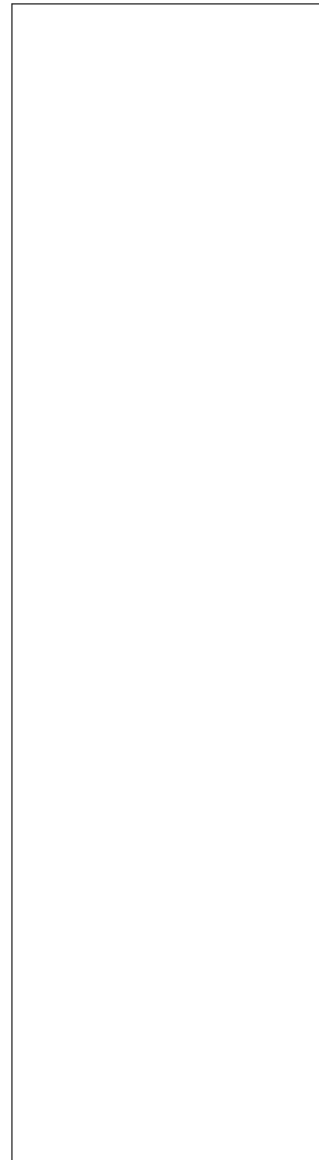
The West Seneca Town Board has yet to set voting hours for that town's June 3 vote.

Gaughan, who ran unsuccessfully for Buffalo mayor four years ago, has made some progress in the last 2-1/2 years since he began his campaign to trim the elected boards of area municipalities.

Since then, the villages of Depew and Lancaster have shed two seats each from boards that had consisted of seven members.

Gaughan conceded the resistance, noting other elected boards in Erie County have refused his request to let voters decide whether they should be trimmed. As a result, he organized the petition movement for referendums.

Such petitions are being circulated in Amherst, Cheektowaga and Blasdell, and soon will be in the towns of Alden and Hamburg, he said.



Some disagree with his campaign.

“The citizens are voting to give up their rights,” said Evelyn Hicks, a West Seneca resident and an account supervisor for a firm in the Liberty Building. As a member of Concerned Citizens for Responsible Growth in West Seneca, she said she worried that fewer board members would mean less efficiency in government work.


But Gaughan argues that smaller boards will result in efficiency and savings.

“What’s harder is to ask citizens to continue to pay these taxes,” Gaughan said. “It’s an endless cycle that’s strangling.”

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