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NEW LOCAL LEADERSHIP NAMED

Kenosha County GOP chair, board members resign following midterm victories locally, nationally

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The Republican Party of Kenosha County has new leadership following resignations of six members following this month's midterm elections.

The party quietly introduced new members to its board leadership with Matt Augustine taking over as chair and Zach Stock, recording secretary, currently the only two officer positions, according to the local GOP website. Stock is a Kenosha County Board supervisor. Six others were also named as members at-large including: Pamela Mundling, Ed Hibsich, Amy Nordloh, Zach Rodriguez, also a County Board supervisor, Tom Stanczak and Sandy Verges.

Former local GOP Chair Erin Decker, vice-chair of the County Board, along with five others resigned on the heels of a largely successful general election campaign at the local, state and national levels. Along with Decker, recording secretary Kaylynn Schuetzner, Don Diehl, Sue Swanger, Elinor Decker and John Poole resigned earlier this month. Poole is currently a County Board Supervisor. Local GOP board member Katie Verzal stepped down in August, while Vice Chair Gabe Nudo resigned in October. Nudo is currently the Kenosha County Board chair.

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Decker declined to state specific reasons for why she and some of the previous board members resigned after the election. She said, however, that her resignation and the resignations of the others were not due to a now-settled defamation lawsuit brought by Joe Clark against her. Clark won a \$10,000 settlement stemming from a social media post made in 2020 by Decker on the party's Facebook page. As part of the settlement, the post was also required to come down.

"It had absolutely nothing to do with the Joe Clark case," said Decker, who had been the local party chair the past seven years.

An email from Schuetzner shared by Decker indicated an "overly reactionary" group had "hijacked the party over time" and had led the party's former recording secretary to leave the party's leadership. Schuetzner said the group was angry about election integrity and "RINOs", or Republicans in Name Only, in office and assumed the party and particularly the local county party was at fault. She said in-fighting and "vote-splitting" along with bad strategy decisions resulted.

"They saw themselves as the saviors of freedom — in reality they were nothing but obstructionists," she said. "No matter how we tried to explain to them the consequences of their desires, they continued to see more veteran members of the Republican Party of Kenosha County board and Republican Party of Wisconsin as the enemy."



The midterm elections featured victories by local Republican candidates, including State Rep.-elect Amanda Nedweski of Pleasant Prairie, who will be replacing former Rep. Samantha Kerkman, R-Salem Lakes, in the Assembly representing District 61. Nedweski easily won vs. Democratic candidate Max Winkels. Nedweski, a County Board Supervisor, will remain on the board.

In April, Kerkman won the county executive's position, defeating Rebecca Matoska-Mentink, a Democrat, who retained her seat as Kenosha County Clerk of Courts in a close race against Republican candidate Rodriguez in the Nov. 8 election. Republican Sheriff-elect David Zoerner also defeated newcomer James Simmons, a Democrat. Zoerner is replacing Republican incumbent David Beth, the county's longest-serving sheriff, who will retire in January.

While state, clerk of courts and sheriff's positions are partisan, County Board and county executive positions are non-partisan.

Local Republicans were also instrumental in returning candidates for national office including U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, who narrowly defeated out-going Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes; and U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, who won against Democrat Ann Roe in the First