

McMurray ends up winning Grand Island supervisor race by 14 votes

‘Wow!’ is the reaction as political newcomer defeats incumbent after ballot count finishes

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Nathan D. McMurray hung on to his lead to win the election for Grand Island supervisor by 14 votes.

The political newcomer defeated incumbent and longtime Town Board member Mary S. Cooke, who was seeking her second term, 2,768 to 2,754, after all the votes were counted from the machines Nov. 3, as well as the absentee and affidavit ballots this week.

“Thank you for your well wishes and support. I’m excited to be your next supervisor and hope to live up to your expectations. Nate McMurray Grand Island Town Supervisor in-Waiting,” McMurray wrote on his blog.

A lawyer who is corporate counsel to Delaware North, he is participating in a conference in Ireland this week and was not present when the Erie County Board of Elections counted absentee ballots Tuesday and affidavit votes Wednesday.

However, Grand Island Democratic Chairman James R. Sharpe said he was keeping McMurray up to date as each vote was counted Wednesday.

“All I got was, ‘Wow! Wow!’ ” Sharpe said about McMurray’s reaction to winning the race.

Before he left for Ireland, McMurray wrote that he would like to have a large party Jan. 1.

“I look forward to a day of good cheer and healing for all of Grand Island on January 1st. Hopefully even my opponents will come by. And should I lose, maybe they will invite me to their bash?” he wrote.

“I think forgiveness and empathy are always possible, even in the worst of circumstances. And here on Grand Island we do not have the worst of circumstances. We just have two sides that do not see eye-to-eye.”

Development emerged as a major issue in the town of 20,400 during the campaign.

Cooke was elected to the Town Board in 1994, serving in that capacity for 18 years.

In 2011, she was the first woman elected as town supervisor.