

Gevaert attends less than half of council meetings; renounces pay

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

There is no gold star beside the name of Councillor Lieven Gevaert on the Town's 1999 attendance record.

For the second year running, the Ward 3 councillor has racked up a dismal attendance score, managing to be present at just 20 of the 47 town council meetings held in 1999.

But he hasn't been accepting taxpayers money in his absence.

Instead, he opted to renounce his full salary, making it retroactive to January, 1999.

A consulting job in Israel has caused his attendance to plunge over the past two years.

Since then his record, acknowledged Mr. Gevaert, hasn't been enviable.

"I'd rather have gone 47 out of 47 meetings," he said. "If I could say I could have met every one of them, it would have been perfect."

Instead, he tries to keep on top of Milton business by staying in regular contact with Town clerk Helen Lisi.

And he hasn't ruled out running in the November municipal elections.

"If I run again, the situation of having a



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.....
LIEVEN GEVAERT

job outside of the country can't happen," he said.

In the meantime, he's consulting with constituents to determine if they want him in Council Chambers another term.

"I'm listening to people. I'm laying it on the table saying, 'hey, I want you to be honest with me,'" said Mr. Gevaert. "If they say we really don't want you to run, I won't."

In 1999, Mr. Gevaert attended only two meetings in his elected role as councillor between January 11 and April 19. He missed 13.

Between April 26 and Sept. 20, 1999, he was absent for six meetings, attending 13.

But absentia become his regular mode

again between September 27 and December 13. He attended five meetings in that period, missing nine.

And he has been a virtual no-show as a council representative on the library committee, attending three of eight meetings.

But overall, Mr. Gevaert felt his record had improved.

"It carried on at a lower level. I was home all September and October and I was home December 5 to January 15," he said.

After attending Monday's council meeting, Mr. Gevaert will soon be off again. But he promised to return in time for the operating budget meetings, scheduled for late March.

Originally, Mr. Gevaert expected his contract in Israel to expire last summer. Instead, it was renewed.

That scenario was repeated this month.

"The folks over in Israel had me quitting February 15," he said. "Two days later, they came to me again. But my prime commitment is to Nassagaweya and town council."

• see NO ACTION on page 7

The nominees are...

• from NOMINEES on page 1
Businesswoman of the Year

- Melissa DeBrouwer, Bick Financial Security Corporation
- Edwina Doddington, Safe and Sound Children's Centre

Businessman of the Year

- Don Bell, Shopper's Drug Mart
- Doug Kocher, McKersie-Kocher Funeral Home

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Fred Johnson

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