Knueve says the budget is a top priority.

Written by Nancy Spencer Wednesday, May 08, 2013 12:15 AM - Last Updated Thursday, May 09, 2013 12:28 AM BY NANCY SPENCER, STACY TAFF and STEPHANIE GROVES DELPHOS AREA — Delphos voters have spoken and Andrew Knueve and Del Kemper will appear on the Nov. 5 General Election ballot. Ballots lifted Knueve over Andrew Daley 126 to 100 for the 1st Ward nod and Kemper beat out Greg Etgen for the 4th Ward Tuesday evening. Knueve was appreciative of voter support. "It feels good to have the backing of the voters," he said Tuesday evening. "I was nervous and excited the whole day. I think it was good for Delphos to have two contested races." Knueve says he's ready for November and beyond. "I have what it takes to fit in to the existing council and participate, contribute and be useful," he said. "I'm going to start doing my homework. It's going to be difficult to fill Rick Hanser's shoes."

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"The budget is a huge concern," he said. "It will be a challenge. I have a feeling it's just going to get smaller."

Knueve, an associate lawyer with Huffman, Kelley, Brock & Gottschalk, LLC. in Lima, said he has the time to devote to the position, if not the experience.

Knueve and his wife, Amanda (Recker), live on Fourth Street and attend St. John's Church.

Kemper was happy about the voter support as well.

"I'm pleased to make it through the Primary. It was a light turnout and I think everyone expected that with only a few issues and candidates to vote on," he said. "Now I'm going to get acclimated to what's going on so I can make good decisions."

Kemper is semi-retired from Statewide Ford in Van Wert and sells real estate. He said in an earlier interview with the Delphos Herald that Delphos is in need of a solution to its budget problems.

Delphos voters also passed the Delphos Public Library's request for a renewal of its 5-year, .6-mill operating levy, which generates a significant portion of the library's annual budget.

If the levy had failed, Director Kelly Rist says reductions would've been in the future.

"There were some funding cuts from the state four years ago and cuts were made in hours," she said. "If it had failed we would've looked at the budget to see where we could've cut. It most likely would've been a reduction in materials or possibly hours again. It would've been bad because the levy makes up 13 percent of our annual budget."

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Rist and the rest of the library staff and board members are thrilled to avoid such reductions.

"We are extremely happy," Rist said. "I think they said it passed by 88 percent in Allen County and 85 percent in Van Wert County. We're very appreciative to voters in the district for all of their wonderful support."

After months of planning and campaigning, Elida Local Schools is faced with the prospect of further devastating cuts after its second failed levy attempt in the last year. After an earned-income request fell through in November, Elida tried for a 5.95-mill Property Tax Levy during Tuesday's Primary Election but voters weren't having it.

"The plan right now is just to digest this a little bit," Superintendent Don Diglia said. "Regardless of whether or not this levy passed, the board had already approved a plan to make almost \$500,000 in cuts. We have a carryover that will get us through the next year, so it's just a matter of how proactive the board wants to be in getting to state minimum standards. We've had the next year planned; it's beyond that that's the problem."

Future items on the chopping block will likely include some extracurriculars, the reduction of all day, everyday kindergarten to half-day and the reduction of an elementary building coach, high school language arts teacher, science and foreign language teachers and a foreign language teacher at the middle school.

Diglia says voters will probably see another issue in November.

"I don't think the board will have any other choice but to go back on the ballot again in November," he said. "Another defeat would be devastating."

Even with the bleak outcome, Diglia says Elida is appreciative of the community support over that last few months.

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"It's disappointing, certainly. The low voter turnout was a big surprise but as far as yes votes, it was close," he said. "I've been a part of nine different levy campaigns and I can't think of any other that had as much momentum and positivity as this one. We really appreciate the work the levy committee did, I've never been a part of anything so positive."

Elida's 1.0-mill Permanent Improvement Levy Renewal was passed by voters 2,408 to 1,565.

Allen County voters passed The Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District (JAMPD) 0.75 mill 10-year replacement levy Tuesday night, with 72.2 percent of voters approving it.

The levy, which is the park district's primary source of funding, raises \$1.2 million per year, accounting for 80 percent of the district's total budget.

Park District Director Kevin L. Haver, who has served the district for 36 years, said this was the highest percentage win ever. Haver and his team — committee, volunteers and staff — were very pleased with the turnout. He said they worked hard on the campaign the past three years and were very diligent the past four months in between monthly meetings.

"Even though it won, it generates substantially less revenue due to changed tax codes," Haver explained. "A 0.75-mill today results in \$255,000 less than 20 years ago."

Haver said that he and his staff are ready to get back to work.

"At this point we are in a hold, maintain and renovate mode," Haver detailed. "We need to take care of what we have."

Haver said that in the future, the Park District will probably have to ask for a new levy.

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"We don't know what might happen in the future," Haver said. "We are doing things the correct way."