



The Chairman's Corner

by

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NEW CONTROLLER

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At the beginning of December 2021, Columbia County welcomed Jim Breig as its new Controller. Breig replaces longtime controller Ron Caponera, who retired at the end of 2022.

Working with Breig, Jessica McMahon has joined the county as director of accounting and auditing -- she comes to Columbia County from the Village of Wappingers Falls, where she was treasurer.

After two decades in a managerial position with Key Bank, Breig and the banking business parted company during the 2008-09 financial crisis. Subsequently, he spent three-plus years as controller with the Town of East Greenbush, before moving on to spend eight years as deputy budget director with Rensselaer County.

"The position of controller with Columbia County combines the best of what I like about the East Greenbush and Rensselaer County jobs," he said.

While with Rensselaer County, Breig assisted in the preparation of the annual budget, as well as working on contracts, personnel changes and special projects. In Columbia County, he said, "the government does a lot of that."

In the early days as the new Columbia County Controller, Breig said he's observed "some things we could work on" in terms of changes to the process. "We could definitely make more use of some technology – things like the bill paying process could be streamlined. We could use technology to improve workflow and reporting."

"Things are good here and they were in good shape when I got here," he said. "My job is to not screw it up the first year I'm here. Ron Caponera did a good job, the Board of Supervisors does a good job of managing. Everything's in good shape and we want to keep it that way."

One of Breig's more immediate goals is to fill a couple empty slots in his department, as well as revise some of the job descriptions

Breig grew up in East Greenbush and attended the Christian Brothers Academy before picking up his bachelor's degree at Siena College. He earned his MBA at UAlbany. He and his wife, Penny, live in East Greenbush.

During the summer, Breig likes to play golf, but when winter rolls around "I try to hibernate as much possible. Penny likes to travel so we do some of that."

The county Board of Supervisors and I welcome Jim aboard.