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DiBileo putting stamp on controller's office

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DiBILEO

Controller Gary DiBileo is setting some fairly basic goals for his office as he moves into his role as Lackawanna County's chief fiscal watchdog.

As he completed his first week as controller Friday, Mr. DiBileo admitted he was still in a learning mode but is focused on making the nine-person operation as efficient and effective as possible.

"I'd like to improve its productivity as best I can while making sure all bids are reviewed, all bids are processed and all audits are completed appropriately," he said.

However, he is already putting his stamp on the office.

Mr. DiBileo said Mary Jo Sheridan, who practiced as a certified public accountant and has auditing experience, will take over Monday as office manager, filling the position previously held by Beth Hopkins. Ms. Hopkins, one of two at-will employees appointed by Mr. DiBileo's predecessor, Keene McDowell, was dismissed Thursday.

Mr. DiBileo said he anticipates the other at-will employee, Deputy Controller Reginald Mariani, also will be replaced eventually. Mr. Mariani had agreed to stay on temporarily to assist with the transition, he said.

The personnel changes are being coordinated with the assistance of the commissioners' office and attorney Brian J. Walsh, who Mr. DiBileo said will be his solicitor.

Mr. DiBileo said one of his challenges will be catching up on long-overdue audits of county departments, which his office is required to perform under the Home Rule Charter. He said he knows the office is behind but was not certain by how much.

Tardy audits have been an issue for the controller's office across multiple administrations.

In 2010, when Mr. McDowell sued the commissioners in an attempt to compel the reinstatement of two clerical employees whose positions were eliminated in a cost-saving move, Mr. McDowell cited the office's inability to complete the mandated audits with its available staff.

Mr. DiBileo said staffing is something he is reviewing.

"I can't say today if we have enough staff to do the job effectively, but I can say that seems to be the case," he said.

Contact the writer: dsingleton@timeshamrock.com

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