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**Assembly Democrats’ leadership team all new going into election season**

*By WisPolitics.com*

Gordon Hintz and Dianne Hesselbein were the first dominoes to fall. Now, Wisconsin Assembly Democrats will have an entirely new leadership team than the one they had just four months ago — an unheard turnover in session for a caucus.

Hintz, D-Oshkosh, announced in December he was stepping down from the minority leader’s post, while Hesselbein, D-Middleton, let it be known soon after that she was leaving the assistant minority leader’s job to focus on her bid for state Senate.

That set off a game of musical leadership chairs. Assembly Democrats elected Rep. Greta Neubauer, D-Racine, to be the new minority leader and Rep. Kalan Haywood, D-Milwaukee, the new assistant.

That opened up Neubauer’s spot on the Joint Finance Committee and Haywood’s post as caucus sergeant at arms.

One of Neubauer’s first moves was to put the retiring Beth Meyers, D-Bayfield, in her old spot on JFC.

But that created a vacancy in Meyers’ post as caucus secretary, which the caucus filled with Kristina Shelton, D-Green Bay. Meanwhile, Lee Snodgrass, D-Appleton, was tapped to become sergeant at arms.

Then it was Caucus Chair Mark Spreitzer’s turn to step down as the Beloit Democrat runs for the seat of the retiring state Sen. Janis Ringhand, D-Evansville.

Assembly Democrats recently elevated Lisa Subeck, of Madison, to caucus secretary after she started the session as caucus vice-chair. Now, the caucus was meeting to fill that vacancy.

The two candidates were Milwaukee’s Supreme Moore Omokunde — who made a run at assistant minority leader earlier this year — and Jill Billings, of La Crosse, both announcing their candidacies for the spot. Once that vacancy is filled, every post in Assembly Democratic leadership will have someone new in the job compared to just three months ago.

Insiders note if a majority caucus were going through that kind of churn, it’d be a bigger deal. But minority Democrats are just trying to create a path to the majority someday and prevent Republicans from getting to a two-thirds majority this November.

That’s a tough sell in recruiting candidates and pulling in resources. Since 1995, Democrats have only once had the majority in the Assembly — for the 2009-10 session — and the urban-rural divide taking hold nationally and in Wisconsin isn’t making it any easier to get back to the majority.

If Democrats were looking at a wave year with the new maps approved by the state Supreme Court, they could maybe make a pitch that they have a path to the majority.

Without that, it’s about having good messengers in place willing to fight the good fight for a difficult cause, insiders say.

Observers also note the new leadership team reflects a young, progressive caucus.

Some give the new leadership props for being sharp and talented. But insiders are waiting to see if the new team can piece together a winning campaign message and fundraising operation that could lead Democrats to power in future cycles.

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