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Parents of disabled son face troubling future



Karen (on couch from left), Jeff and Danny Groff watch as Jessica Hartman plays with her daughter Cecelia during a family “happy hour” held at a relative’s home in Upper Arlington, Ohio.

‘Our worst nightmare is that we lose him first. And our worst nightmare is that we go first.’

Madeline Mitchell USA TODAY

Karen and Jeff Groff have read the same children’s books to their son Danny for nearly four decades. • At 6-foot-1, 39-year-old Danny Groff enjoys sitting between his parents on their couch in Upper Arlington, Ohio, holding a stuffed Bert Muppet toy. He leans in toward his mother as she reads “Curious George Rides a Bike,” and breaks into a smile when she whispers, “George got curious.” • Danny Groff has Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, a rare and severe type of epilepsy that typically develops in early childhood. About 50,000 people in the United States and 1 million people worldwide have the condition, according to the LGS Foundation. Every time a seizure happens, brain damage occurs that can lead to learning difficulties and other lifelong disabilities. Danny Groff has seizures daily, and Karen Groff said he has the developmental abilities of a 2-year-old.

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Family portraits sit behind Jeff Groff as he reads to his son, Danny. From left in the pictures are Karen and Jeff when they were both young teachers. Danny and his sister Jessica are pictured in the smaller portraits.

PHOTOS BY DORAL CHENOWETH/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Meet the newest city council member

Reese Taschenberger unanimously appointed

Austin L. Miller
Ocala Star-Banner
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Dunnellon City Council at its Sept. 10 meeting unanimously selected Reese Taschenberger to fill a seat on the board left vacant on and off again since December 2023.

“Welcome to the city council,” Mayor Walter Green said after the vote.

Taschenberger’s appointment was taken up toward the end of the meeting. With no public comment, Councilmember Valerie Hanchar nominated

Taschenberger for the seat and it was seconded by Vice Mayor Tim Inskeep. Taschenberger, 28, is the youngest member on the council in recent memory. After his selection, Taschenberger walked to the front where he was greeted by City Clerk Mandy Odom, where a short swearing-in ceremony was held. Taschenberger was then congratulated by his colleagues as he sat in the District 2 chair.

City officials had received Taschenberger’s application for the job that pays \$150 per month in late August. Taschenberger will serve until November 2026 when he will be up for re-election. Councilmembers serve four-year terms.

As the meeting continued, Taschenberger’s first official act as a councilmember came when he seconded a motion to end the meeting, which drew a round of applause.

Green told a Star-Banner reporter at the conclusion of the meeting that Taschenberger is a descendant of the Williams family for which U.S. 41 is named. The mayor said the Williams family has been in Dunnellon for decades and has contributed to the evolution of the community.

In a previous interview with a Star-Banner reporter, Taschenberger said he cares for the city and can offer new ideas to the council. Contact Austin L. Miller at austin.miller@starbanner.com

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