



Photo by Kelvin Wee

Many people spent their Saturday afternoon at a rally to show their support for the recall of EWEB officials responsible for firing EWEB general manager Jean Reeder

Rally held to organize recall vote

By Stephanie Mencimer
Emerald Reporter

Nearly 100 people gathered at the Eugene Water and Electric Board Riverfront Plaza Saturday to organize a recall of the EWEB commissioners who voted last Monday to fire EWEB general manager Jean Reeder.

John Reynolds, former EWEB commissioner, led the action along with other former commissioners Camilla Pratt and Jack Craig who has filed to run against EWEB board vice president Randy Thwing.

Reynolds voiced his dissatisfaction with the process commissioners Thwing, Dennis Solin and Rob Willis used to fire Reeder.

He seemed to convey the general feeling at the rally when he said, "If you disagree with how they did it, that's why we're here demanding a recall. If you disagree with what they did, take issue at the ballot box."

Pratt told the crowd that Solin, Thwing and Willis demoralized the EWEB staff and rendered the board of directors ineffective by resorting to secrecy in their decision-making process.

Voicing strong support for

Reeder, Craig made caustic remarks about the three commissioners who fired her.

"These brute acts of these power-hungry officials, Solin, Thwing and Willis have earned themselves the greatest reprimand we can give them under the law - recall from office," Craig said.

The move to recall the EWEB commissioners had a broad base of organizers ranging from the former EWEB commissioners to a local marketing firm, Clevenger-Westling.

Clevenger-Westling accounts manager Christina Davis said she is very concerned about the future of the utility under the leadership of Solin and Thwing and concerned with the consequences of firing Reeder.

"You don't put a utility with such a high bond rating in jeopardy like that," Davis said.

Rally organizers distributed petitions and canvas sheets with maps of the wards represented by Solin, Thwing and Willis. Nearly 7,000 signatures are needed by March 22 to place the recall of Thwing on the next ballot because he holds an at-large seat which is voted on by the whole city. Around 2,000 signatures are needed for each of the other commissioners.

Ken Hinder, a local resident who picked up a petition to circulate in his neighborhood said, "I'm really upset about the process they went through to fire Jean Reeder. There are laws to protect people against things like that and I think it is important to make the laws work."

Several EWEB employees are involved in organizing the recall, even though they are prohibited by law to engage in political action during working hours. "It takes a lot of guts to do this," said employee Kate Bergman. "Things like this happen all the time and people just want to turn their heads. We don't want to stuff our feelings about the injustice done here."

EWEB commissioner Sarah Hendrickson, who voted against the motion to fire Reeder said she was optimistic about the recall passing.

"I think some really spirited people are signing up to run against them (commissioners). If the recall doesn't pass, I don't think they have a chance at reelection," Hendrickson said.

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