

# EWEB recall still possible for June election

## Many reasons given to continue effort

By Jack Craig

The Eugene Water and Electric Board recall is still under way despite word to the contrary. In fact, the recall is more likely now than when it started because fewer than 3,000 total signatures remain to be garnered and petitioners have 50 days to place the issue on another ballot in late June. More than 10,000 signatures have already been obtained.

The major misunderstanding about the folding of the EWEB recall of petitioners Dennis

### Commentary

Solin, Randall Thwing and Rob Willis came about because of a misinterpretation of the recall law by the city recorder's office.

The correct interpretation of Oregon's recall law gives petitioners a total of 90 days from the time of filing, with an election set only after 100 percent of valid signatures are obtained.

This means that within a short time the recall will be on the ballot. As of now, only 130 names are needed for Solin; 1,300 for Thwing and fewer than 500 for Willis. Those shortages were determined after validation checks of the 10,000 signatures by the county election department.

Petitioners were seeking placement on the May 15 primary ballot, which would have been so overcrowded that such a date was indicated as not possible.

There have been protests

against the recall by its targets, EWEB Commissioners Soling, Thwing and Willis, as well as persons who oppose recall votes. Anti-recallers claim that the primary election would take care of the problem, but it assuredly will not.

In fact, there are many good reasons to continue the recall. It is the only way to correct the shameful conduct by the commissioners who violated all the precepts of Oregon's open meetings laws in the firing of the utilities general manager Jean Reeder. These are some of the good reasons to move out the recall election:

1. There is no assurance the primary election will solve the problem which has brought irreparable damage to the city-owned utility — one of the best public utilities in the country.

One of the errant commissioners, Thwing, may win a run-off in the November election as he is an incumbent with lots of special-interest money to spend and two other candidates running against him. Solin, the second candidate up for election, has garnered hundreds of thousands of dollars from local interests for past elections. A third candidate, Willis, is not up for election.

The recall election is the only way these errant commissioners can be taken out for sure if

voters so decide.

2. More than 10,000 people who have already signed petitions expect an opportunity to cast a "yes" or "no" vote for recall on the conduct of Solin, Thwing and Willis. A recall will do that.

3. The goal for the recall is now easily attainable, and there will be only negligible costs because the issue will be on the same ballot as other issues in late June. This dispels the "cost to taxpayers" argument of recall targets.

4. The EWEB spot in the primary election has the lowest profile and favors incumbents. The EWEB candidates appear as last candidates at the end of a long ballot. By the time voters reach the EWEB punch slot on the long computer ballot, many have already given up. The norm in past elections has been for the underdog to outnumber even winning candidates. This gives an ever more reason for the recall issue to be on the much-shorter ballot in June.

5. Solin, Thwing and Willis have further compounded their firing of Jean Reeder, moving into a fast-track, inside-track selection of the EWEB general manager before the entire issue is settled by the elective process. Many feel the incumbent majority, Solin, Thwing and Willis, have already proved

themselves to be untrustworthy for such a transaction because of already demonstrated irresponsibilities.

A recall vote in June can sweep the deck clean. Like Humpty Dumpty and his great fall, the recall can put EWEB back together again. It will give voters a final and fair opportunity to make the decision.

Jack Craig is one of three former EWEB board members leading a recall of Solin, Thwing and Willis.



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