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AFSCME #88 weighs in on Cogen's resignation

Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen announced his resignation Sept. 6. Based on the Multnomah County Home Rule Charter, Cogen's chief of staff, Marissa Madrigal, will serve as the interim chair until May 2014. Madrigal, 35, who took over Sept. 16, is the youngest chief executive and the first Latina to hold the position.

Most county employees are members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 88. Union President Michael Hanna released the following statement regarding the county chair transition:

"During Jeff Cogen's tenure as Multnomah County District 2 commissioner and later as Multnomah County chair, AFSCME Local 88 was proud to work in collaborative partnership with him — and his staff — to help stabilize the county budget, secure lasting long-term funding for the library, improve working conditions for our represented staff and the efficiency of our county services, and work on a vast array of innovative, cost-effective programs and services that enhance our community.

"It was an honor to work with Jeff Cogen on so many important issues, and the citizens of Multnomah County

are better off because of his leadership. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors, and would welcome the opportunity to work with him again.

"Local 88 has had a multi-year collaborative working relationship with Madrigal through her work as chief of staff to Cogen, and we welcome the opportunity to work with her in her new role as chair in the coming months. She has impressed our local union with her intelligence, authenticity and dedication to the mission of Multnomah County. She will be a strong asset to the county and its citizens in her new role.

"Sept. 12 marks the first day to file for office for the May 2014 primary election for county chair. Given the importance of this position to Local 88-represented employees and the likelihood that there will be many qualified candidates for the position, Local 88 will not begin our candidate endorsement process for the chair position until early 2014. This will ensure the most thorough and balanced evaluation of possible candidates, and the endorsement of the candidate best able to further the mission of Multnomah County and the interests of Local 88-represented employees."

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