



PENDLETON CITY COUNCIL

Innes, Cambier win races for council

East Oregonian

The Pendleton City Council hit a milestone Tuesday night. Retired auditor Carole Innes defeated Councilor Chuck LeValle in the Ward 1 election, taking 53.2 percent to LeValle’s 33 percent. Musician David Chorazy came in a distant third.

Not including the mayor, the council will have gender parity — four men and four women — when Innes and Ward 3 candidate Linda Neuman are sworn in next year.

Neuman and Ward 2 Councilor McKennon McDonald ran unopposed.

Innes said she was excited with the results and will continue to do “homework” needed to prepare for the position.

She added that she was disappointed with the number of Ward 1 residents who voted — early results show only 610 people cast a vote in that race — and she would continue to walk the district after the campaign to encourage citizen participation.

Innes is the first challenger to unseat a sitting councilor since 2010, although LeValle only had two months of incumbency after being appointed to fill the remainder of the late John Brenne’s term.

Despite the loss, LeValle said he was still optimistic, recalling a conversation he had with his wife before Election Day about how he would react to the results.

Had he won, LeValle told his wife: “I’m going to make them happy that they chose the right person.” And if he lost: “I’m going to make them wish they had.”

Other local races

Morrow County Commissioner
Don Russell..... **69.5%**
Raymond Akers **30.1%**

Milton-Freewater Parks and Recreation tax option
Yes **54.5%**
No..... **45.5%**

Hermiston municipal judge
Thomas Creasing..... **98%**

Milton-Freewater City Council
Steve Irving..... **96.8%**
Edwin Chestnut **97.2%**
Orrin Lyon **100%**

Morrow County Assessor
Mike Gorman..... **99.6%**

With less than seven months left in his term, LeValle said his focus will be to make as much impact as possible before the year ends.

He also doesn’t plan on staying out of city politics for long, declaring his interest in running for the Ward 1 seat again when it opens up for election in 2020.

Already the first black person to sit on the council, LeValle would have been the first African American elected to the council if he had won the race.

In the other contested race, Councilor Jake Cambier easily fended off a challenge from Rex Morehouse, taking home 64.2 percent.

Cambier said he had stayed in contact with the frequent council critic throughout the race and had come to respect Morehouse’s following and the time he puts into attending public meetings.

“He and I became buddies because of it,” Cambier said.

HERMISTON CITY COUNCIL

Narrow race for council seat pushes election to November

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Two incumbents looked safe in their seats and newcomer Roy Barron was leading with 55.9 percent of the vote, but a three-way race for Ward 1 of the Hermiston City Council was too close to call when early election results were called on Tuesday night.

Shortly after polls closed, Mark Gomolski was leading the Ward 1 race with 35.7 percent of the vote, followed by incumbent Lori Davis at 32.5 percent and Jackie Linton at 31.5 percent. If no candidate gets more than 50 percent of the vote when all ballots are counted, the top two vote-getters face off again in the general election in November.

Gomolski, who is retired and moved to Hermiston in 2015 from Chicago, is currently a member of the Hermiston School District school board, which meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at the same time as the city council. He said if he wins it would be a good opportunity to ask the school board to vote to change its meeting nights, since he knows people in the community who would like to attend both.

Gomolski said about 9:30 p.m. that although the race was still too close to call, he was not disappointed by the fact that he and Linton had gotten such a large share of the vote against an incumbent.



Lori Davis

“It shows people are fed up with the current administration and who is in there,” he said.

Davis has been a city councilor since 2010 and works for the Department of Corrections. While she wasn’t able to be reached late Tuesday night, she had previously said she wanted to run again because she felt she still had more to learn and to contribute.

Linton grew up in Hermiston and returned after retirement, although she now substitute teaches at Hermiston School District. She was trailing Davis by 15 votes in the first return Tuesday night, and said she still held out hope of pulling ahead. Either way, she said, she had enjoyed the experience of going door to door and meeting with voters, and said she learned that although few people attend the city council meetings many people said they would look up meeting minutes later when the



Mark Gomolski

topic interested them.

“They’re paying attention,” she said. “They’re keeping up with what’s going on.”

The council is sure to get at least one new face in January after current councilor Clara Beas Fitzgerald announced she was not running again in order to focus on other endeavors. Her husband Shean Fitzgerald filed for the seat, as did Roy Barron, who moved to Hermiston in 2015 after graduating from Xavier University in Cincinnati. As of 8:05 p.m. Barron was leading Fitzgerald 736 votes to 600.

“This town has given me many opportunities, and I’m so grateful it’s giving me another,” he said. “I’m ready to go.”

Barron grew up in Weiser, Idaho and now works for Umatilla County in the RISE program, which sends mental health counselors into schools. He said he already has some experience with the

city through his membership on the Hispanic Advisory Committee but he will also begin attending city council meetings in preparation for when the new councilors take their seats on Jan. 1, 2019. He said he wanted to thank his opponent Fitzgerald, who was always very respectful through the process of campaigning.

“I think it’s great to have an election with choices, and I think he also would have been a great choice,” he said.

As of 8:05 p.m. incumbent Jackie Myers was leading challenger Kyran Miller 56.3 percent to 43.5 percent. She has served on the council since 1994 and works for Severson Accounting.

Myers said she was honored to be re-elected again.

“As always, I will do my best to represent the people of Hermiston and the city of Hermiston,” she said.

Doug Smith, another incumbent, is currently in his first term and had 62.5 percent of the vote Tuesday night. His challenger, Michael Engelbrecht, had previously announced he was dropping out of the race even though he did not do so in time to keep his name off the ballot. Smith is a former officer of the Hermiston Police Department and now works as a contractor.

On Tuesday Thomas Creasing was also re-elected as municipal judge for Hermiston. He was running unopposed.

COMMISH: Shafer will take office in January

Continued from 1A

said.

He also dabbed away tears, joking, “My eyes are sweating a little bit.”

Shafer said he plans to work for the sheriff’s office right up until he takes office in January 2019. And before dealing with mental health services and other issues he brought up on the campaign, Shafer said he plans to get the pulse of county government.

“First I want to meet with all the county department heads,” he said. “I want to make sure we’re on the same page. ... I definitely want to hear from the department heads right out of the gate.”

He also said he wants to meet with incumbent commissioners Bill Elfering and George Murdock, who is on his way to a November runoff against challenger Rick Pullen.

Givens during the campaign touted the multiple state, regional and national boards and committees he serves on to show his work for county citizens. But Shafer hammered Givens on that participation, claiming it often took him away from county business. At the same time, Shafer stressed relationship building as part of his platform.

Shafer said both points played a role in his win, as did putting in hours of knocking on doors to ask for votes in person.

Givens was at home in Umatilla with his wife. He called the loss disappointing but added he is a firm believer things happen for a reason. He speculated multiple circumstances played a role in the race, from voters who wanted change to the country’s general anti-government attitude slopping

over into the local scene.

Murdock was winning with 45.8 percent in the race for county commissioner position 1, while Pullen pulled 30.2 percent and Tom Bailor received 23.7 percent. That sends Murdock and Pullen, both of Pendleton, down the road to a runoff.

Murdock said he is happy to be the front-runner with a 17-point lead and looking forward to time off the campaign. Seeking political office, he said, tends to get in the way of work.

For Bailor, also of Pendleton, the loss is his third in three attempts to win a seat as county commissioner. He acknowledged the difficulties of running against Murdock, who has the local name recognition and the funds to mount a larger campaign. Bailor said if he achieved nothing else in the campaign, he showed if he can run for

public office, others can as well.

“We do need to have choices,” he said. “It’s important for people to vote. But it’s also important for people to run.”

Givens still has seven more months of work as a commissioner, which starts again Wednesday morning. The county board has a packed day, beginning at 9 a.m. at the courthouse in Pendleton with a land use hearing on Echo farmer Kent Madison’s proposal for a recreational vehicle park near exit 182 off Interstate 84. The county board then moves into a regular meeting before returning for a 1:30 p.m. land use appeal hearing on Blue Mountain Hay, which seeks to build a fertilizer and seed production facility on Highway 11 near Appleton Road, Milton-Freewater.

OSU: Directors will begin looking for funding options

Continued from 1A

She said she understood that it’s always challenging to pass a new tax, and that the sticking point here may have been convincing people about the importance of funding agricultural research.

As a public employee, Corp could not advocate for the measure. But she and other OSU employees spent several months speaking to city councils and service groups around the county, providing facts about the proposed district and the programs it would fund. It took a vote of each city council and county board of commissioners to put the measure on the ballot.

Corp said in the immediate future, research station directors will have to

look at their budget and see how to handle the imminent shortfall.

She said that may include cutting positions.

“I don’t know of any other funding sources,” she said. “But we’ll continue to look at things to have strong research programs.”

Corp said in the coming weeks, she and other OSU employees will meet with their advisory committee and the county commissioners, and look more in depth at results.

She said it’s too soon to say whether they’ll go to voters again in the near future for an Extension Service District.

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com

JUDGE: Both counties affirm Collins

Continued from 1A

District.

During the campaign, the candidates’ signs popped up in Umatilla and Morrow counties. A spate of letters to the editor weighed in, some for Collins, others supporting Breiling.

On Election Day, neither candidate felt the win was in the bag. As evening fell, tension rose. Breiling gathered with supporters in a back room at Hubble Steakhouse. The hubbub of conversation bounced off the tin ceiling as they ate, drank and killed time until the results rolled in. As the eight o’clock hour neared, Breiling set down his drink and checked his phone, rechecking several times before they appeared. Finally, he scanned the Umatilla County results,

with friends leaning in. His expression grew serious.

Collins had won the night in Umatilla County with 5,886 votes to Breiling’s 3,713. Morrow County voters weighed in with similar percentages (61 to 39) and actual numbers of 875 to 559 votes. The vote count was unofficial with some votes left to be counted, but it would be an uphill climb.

“It’s not looking good,” he admitted, “but life goes on. I wish Rob well.”

Collins spent the early evening in another role as Round-Up Director, hosting Portland Rose Festival princesses in town to spend time with the Round-Up Court. After dinner at the Let ‘er Buck Room, Collins drove home to find a houseful of ecstatic people ready to celebrate with their candidate.

“There was a lot of people

cheering me, greeting me,” Collins said. “It was pretty cool. Everyone was quite jubilant.”

The attorney quieted for a moment.

“I feel excited that people have expressed that kind of confidence in me,” he said. “It’s really gratifying.”

Collins will take the bench in January. He said he will spend the next seven months easing out of the law practice he shares with his brother, Michael Collins.

“Being a judge is a full-time job,” he said. “I will withdraw from the law firm and my brother will carry on for Collins and Collins. He is considering bringing an associate into the firm.”

The campaign for Circuit Court judge was the most expensive local race, with Collins raising \$16,475 and Breiling \$23,549.

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