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skills to the council.

“I’m a people person,” she said. “I love people, I love to listen, I love to communicate and I love to solve problems.”

Savage said that her drive to help was a prime motivator for applying to the council position.

“I can’t help but get involved. It’s just the nature of who I am as a person,” she said.

Savage listed transparency and education about water bills and fixing roads as top challenges the city is facing. She also stated in her application that she hopes to bring her budgeting skills to the council.

Savage serves on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and works as an executive assistant, project manager, office manager and property manager at Blackstone, Inc.

When the matter of choosing an applicant came to the council in its regular session, Councilor Kenneth Roberts motioned to appoint Duane Taddei, however the motion died after failing to be seconded.

Councilors Mike Fleck, Greg Ervin and Candace Solesbee expressed their preference for Savage in the discussion that followed.

Fleck pointed to Savage’s appointment to the Budget Committee and her run for a council position last fall as key qualifiers for his pick.



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

**Newly appointed City
Councilor Chalice Savage will
represent Ward 1.**

“I really appreciate people who take the time to learn about government, especially our government, and why we do things so that they can become informed when they ultimately run for that,” he said.

Savage was the only of the six candidates to have recently run for a council seat, challenging Councilor Roberts for the Councilor-at-Large position last fall.

Though she lost that race, Savage was appointed to the city’s budget committee this January.

Fleck also reasoned that adding a second woman to the council would be beneficial.

“I do want a diverse board,” he said. “I do think that getting opinions from all segments of society is really critical and I do think that while I would never vote just because somebody represented a certain gender or position necessarily, I do think that that adds to the value of the council.”

In closing, he requested that a discussion take place before a motion to vote for any candidate was made.

Ervin and Solesbee also mentioned being impressed with Rust as a standout candidate, though leaned toward Savage as their top choice.

“I do weigh pretty heavily the ability to connect to the residents of the ward and to Cottage Grove in general, the understanding of the main mechanics of how the city works, what decisions can be made, and how the budgets operate,” said Ervin, noting also that Savage’s run for office was instrumental in his decision.

Solesbee, too, pointed to Savage’s demonstration of interest in the position as a factor in her choice.

“Chalice put a lot of effort into running and she is definitely qualified,” said Solesbee. “And she’s gotten even more involved with different boards since she ran, which speaks volumes for her.”

Fleck then made a motion to appoint Savage and Solesbee seconded. All but Councilor Roberts voted in favor of the motion.

Savage was sworn in immediately following the vote and participated in the council’s remaining business for the night.

She thanked the council for the appointment and implored the other applicants to reach out and connect with her.

“I’m honored and humbled to be sitting here tonight,” Savage said. “There were five other applicants and I would love to sit down and talk with each one and really get to know you. We are all the same ward and I feel like it’s really important that all of us come together.”

Solesbee provided further context for her appointment decision later in the council session.

“I want the public to know that it’s not just based on the interviews that you guys all saw tonight, that we have extensive applications that we’re also looking at,” she said. “And so hopefully that will also explain a little bit more why, if somebody really shines in an interview or somebody doesn’t really shine in interview, why they might have been on the top of our list.”

Fleck encouraged the other five applicants and other residents to continue engagement with local government and apply for committee positions.

“One of the key things for me is consensus building,” he said. “I want a diverse board that’s going to bring all sorts of opinions, but I also want a board that’s going to be able to talk and work towards resolution. And so these are kind of the key pieces and I really encourage all of the candidates to keep with it.”

Appointment to the Ward 1 councilor term expires Dec. 31, 2022 and will come up for public vote in the general election in November 2022.

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