

Republicans sue over new Oregon U.S. House maps

SALEM (AP) — Former Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno and three other Republicans have filed a lawsuit to challenge new congressional districts recently passed by state lawmakers.

They say the new maps are partisan gerrymandering, unconstitutional and contrary to state law.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports the suit, filed Monday, Oct. 11 in Marion County Circuit Court, is the first such attempt to alter the six-district map that Democrats pushed through during a contentious special legislative session last month.

That session nearly ended in a Republican walkout after House Speaker

Tina Kotek, D-Portland, reneged on a deal to grant the GOP an equal say in new congressional and legislative maps.

Instead, Republican lawmakers showed up on the last possible day and allowed Democrats to pass a map that could lead to Democratic control of five of the state's now-six seats in Congress. Oregon picked up an additional U.S. House seat because of population gains recorded by the recent U.S. Census.

Clarno, the secretary of state until this year, was joined by three other former Republican officials: Gary Wilhelms of Portland, a former House Republican leader; James Wilcox, former mayor of The Dalles; and Larry

Campbell of Eugene, a former House speaker.

They argue that Democrats' handling of the process harms them "by frustrating their ability to vote for and campaign for congressional candidates who share their values, and who share their views on issues such as gun rights, transportation, and water rights."

The suit notes that four of the state's six new congressional districts include part of the Portland area, which they say is a sign Democrats improperly stocked the districts with left-leaning voters.

They have asked the court to block the plan and draw its own.

RENOVATE

Continued from A1

Shannon, whose father was the construction firm's founder, Sid Johnson, who died in 2014, is the company's office manager.

And it happened that when the pandemic began, the company was able to add the renovation to its other projects.

"It wouldn't have gotten done otherwise," Shannon said. "This would have been too much to do on our own."

Doing away with that dropped ceiling was a vital part of the project in multiple ways. Besides revealing the pressed tin ceiling, the removal uncovered a row of windows that had been blocked, making the first floor much darker than it was originally.

Natural light now streams into the lobby and into Bob's and Kyra's offices.

The renovation was comprehensive.

"There isn't anything you see here that was there when we first bought the building," Bob said, gesturing to his office and to the main entrance area outside.

Except, of course, that ceiling.

It was in excellent condition for the most part, Bob said.

A few sections had to be repaired, and the owners found a company in Cleveland that had experience with pressed tin.

Josh designed the renovations and oversaw the project, which included replacing the heating and ventilation system.

Shannon and Kyra decided on such things as light fixtures, including eight large lamps that hang from the ceiling.

They also chose paint colors, Shannon said, her laugh suggesting that their conclusions didn't always happen without a certain amount of discussion.

Bob, also smiling at the memory, avoided those debates.

"It was really easy for me," he said.

One of the more difficult parts of the project — and certainly the heaviest — was moving the massive steel door to its current place at the entrance to one of the building's two former bank vaults.

Trouble is, the door had been in the basement, where the other vault is.

And the route from the basement to the first floor is a flight of stairs that, by today's more stringent building standards, are both steep and narrow.

Shannon said that during the renovations she asked Josh whether the door, which bears the name "Baker Loan & Trust Co." and was constructed by The Hall's Safe Co. in Cincinnati, would fit at the entrance to the first floor vault.

His rueful answer: "Unfortunately, yes."

Sliding it out of its spot in the basement was comparatively easy.

But maneuvering the ponderous thing up those stairs was a different matter.

"It's nice ... now," Shannon said.

Bob and Kyra moved into their new offices on Monday, Oct. 11, following an open house on Wednesday, Oct. 6 to celebrate completion of the first phase of the renovations.

Bob and Shannon said they still plan to refurbish the second floor, a project they expect will take two years.

They haven't decided on its use, but one possibility is using it as a vacation rental, Bob said.

Shannon said they would like to apply for a grant to cover part of the cost.

In the meantime they're still excited about having completed the first phase, seeing the utter transformation of the space that



Gary Dielman/Contributed Photo

The Baker Loan and Trust building was constructed in 1910 and 1911 after a fire on Jan. 26, 1910, destroyed the previous building at the southwest corner of Main and Broadway streets.

More Information

Baker City historian Gary Dielman compiled a history of the Baker Loan and Trust building at 2043 Main St., including photographs and text that are displayed at the renovated structure. During his research Dielman learned that the building has had a variety of tenants over the decades, including, as is the case now, attorneys, as well as a dentist, a title company and an insurance firm. The Baker State Bank occupied the building from 1946-58. The office space on the north (Broadway Street) side, near the alley, has had several occupants. Its current tenant is financial officer Scott Warner. Surveyor Tom Hanley has an office in the basement, the same space his father, James D. Hanley, also a surveyor, used. The elder Hanley had his office elsewhere in the building starting in 1956, before moving to the basement in 1984, according to Dielman's research.

confronted them three years ago.

"It's better than what we thought it would be," Shannon said.

Bob said he recognizes that the building is a prominent piece in Baker City's nationally recognized downtown historic district.

"It's right in the center of Baker," he said. "We're happy to have the opportunity to do this."

Shannon said they bought the building in part

because her brother, Mark Johnson, co-owner of Sid Johnson & Co., inspected the structure and deemed it sound.

The new owners also marvel at how rapidly the building went up following the fire, back when the 20th century was scarcely a decade old.

"Within a year it was rebuilt," Shannon said.

"It took us a year to remodel it," Bob said with a grin.

COUNTY

Continued from A1

Commissioner Mark Bennett said "both applications hit it out of the ballpark and they were really good. They addressed a lot of the concerns that we heard in the community and new ideas and I think that the proposal that we have from the Chamber is really forward looking and that's in a visionary document and that's what we had hoped to see."

Commissioner Bruce Nichols, who participated in the meeting by computer, said the county's Transient Lodging Tax Committee (TLT) did a fine job reviewing the two proposals.

"Both entities that did their proposals did a really good job of putting stuff together. This was a very arduous process for all of us," Nichols said.

The TLT, which advises commissioners, went through both visitor center proposals on Oct. 7, scoring both based on the criteria included in the county's Request for Proposals.

The committee gave the Anthony Lakes proposal a score of 98, and the Chamber's proposal a score of 96.

Harvey said county officials will be in contact with the Chamber of Commerce soon to talk about the new contract, which will continue through Jan. 1, 2024.

"We'll get to a point where in November, our regular session meeting, at that point in time we'll approve a contract," Harvey said.

Bennett thanked all of the

people involved in the process, including county counsel Kim Mosier and Heidi Martin, the county's human resource director.

"I'd like to thank all the parties that participated and really the staff work that went into it," Bennett said. "I think we need to acknowledge that. And I know it's been a really trying period of time, and also the work that the TLT did and a lot of other folks, work groups, et cetera."

County commissioners initially were slated to award a new contract in early 2020. The same two groups — the Chamber and Anthony Lakes — were the only applicants then.

But commissioners didn't make a decision then and instead extended the contract with the Chamber several times, most recently through Aug. 31, 2021. During that period the county restarted the process and wrote a new Request for Proposals, which was released in early September.

Commissioners voted unanimously to pay the Chamber at the rate in the previous contract — it was about \$77,000 per year — starting Oct. 1 and until the new contract takes effect.

Money for the contract comes from the tax that guests pay at motels, bed and breakfasts, vacation rental homes and other lodging businesses.

The Chamber listed in its proposal an annual budget \$87,575. Cutler said that includes \$7,600 in payroll expenses that in the previous contract the Chamber paid on its own.

COVID

Continued from A1

The resolution councilors approved Tuesday states that the governor's vaccine mandate has "destabilized the supply of healthcare providers" and that it "negatively impacts the financial stability of healthcare providers."

In other business Tuesday, councilors:

- Awarded a contract for "cured in place" pipe work to Planned and Engineer Construction, Inc. (PEC) of Helena, Montana, which was the low bidder at \$112,614.

This will be the 10th project in Baker City the company has done. The process involves lining existing wastewater mainlines with a material that extends the lifespan of the pipes.

- Scheduled a work session with the Baker City-County Planning Department for Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at City Hall

to discuss the city's status as a "severely rent burdened city," which means more than 25% of the population spends more than 50% of income on rent. A 2018 state law, House Bill 4006, requires such cities to have at least one public meeting to discuss the causes and consequences of the situation, barriers to reducing rent burdens and possible solutions, according to a memo to councilors from Holly Kerns, planning department director.

- Postponed reviewing applications from people interested in filling the one vacancy on the Council, created by Lynette Perry's resignation in August due to health issues.

Councilors plan to invite applicants to attend the Oct. 26 meeting to be introduced and answer any questions from councilors.

Three people have submitted applications — Tom Hughes, Randy Daugherty and Koby Myer.

AWARD

Continued from A1

To qualify, students must be AABP members.

"These 18 students exemplify what the future of veterinary medicine needs: leadership, ambition and a devotion to continuously elevating and improving animal health and well-being," Justin Welsh, executive director of livestock technical services for Merck Animal

Health, said in a press releasing announcing the scholarship recipients.

Colton, who was not able to attend the conference due to her rigorous schedule at OSU, said she was "just basically in shock" when she learned about the award.

"I'm still in shock," she said on Wednesday, Oct. 13. "I was so pleasantly surprised."

Colton said she never diverted from the career path she chose as a little girl.

During the summer after she graduated from Powder Valley, she worked with Dr. Kim Mahaffey at the Baker Veterinary Hospital.

She also did job shadows with two other Baker City veterinarians, Drs. Tom Hill and Brett Hamilton.

Then, for four summers starting in 2017, she worked during the summer at a small animal clinic in Washington.

Colton said she intends after graduation to return

to either Eastern Oregon or Eastern Washington. Her goal is to join a veterinary practice where she can focus about 70% of her time treating large animals, and in particular beef cattle and dairy cows, with the rest of her time devoted to dogs, cats and other smaller animals.

"I really want to focus my career on supporting the ag industry," Colton said.

Her ultimate goal is to own her own clinic.



Alexandra Colton/Contributed Photo

Alexandra Colton, who's in her final year of veterinary school at Oregon State University, is one of 18 veterinary students in the U.S. and Canada to receive a \$5,000 scholarship from Merck Animal Health.

New At The Library

Patrons can reserve materials in advance online or by calling 541-523-6419. See everything new this week to Baker County Library District at wowbrary.org. Materials featured, and in library collection, does not indicate endorsement or approval of contents by the library. Selections are based on factors such as demand, public interest, diversity of viewpoint, community relevance, and others.

FICTION

- "Much Ado About You," Samantha Young
- "The Book of Form and Emptiness," Ruth Ozeki
- "The Man Who Died Twice: A Thursday Murder Club Mystery," Richard Osman

- "The Morgans," William W. Johnstone and J.A. Johnstone

NONFICTION

- "The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War," Craig Whitlock and The Washington Post
- "The End of Bias: A Beginning: The Science and Practice of Overcoming Unconscious Bias," Jessica Nordell
- "The Family Firm: A Data-Driven Guide to Better Decision Making in the Early School Years," Emily Oster
- "The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music," Dave Grohl
- "The Taking of Jemima Boone: The True Story of the Kidnap and Rescue That Shaped America," Matthew Pearl

- "World War C: Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic and How to Prepare for the Next One," Sanjay Gupta and Kristin Loberg

CHILDREN

- "All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team," Christina Soontornvat
- "Baby Loves Aerospace Engineering!" Ruth Spiro
- "Change Sings: A Children's Anthem," Amanda Gorman
- "My Year in the Middle," Lila Quintero Weaver
- "The Bad Seed Presents: The Good, the Bad, and the Spooky," Jory John

The Baker County Veteran Services

office will be closed
from 18 -21 of October,
2021 due to a training
conference.