

# Gardner, Anderson Hansell pull ahead in Hermiston School District race

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR



Gardner



Medelez



Sherman



Anderson Hansell

Two new faces will be joining the Hermiston Board of Education and two incumbents kept their seats in the May 18 election.

According to results posted by the Umatilla County Elections Division after 10 p.m. on May 18, incumbent Brent Pitney was defeated by Sally Anderson Hansell.

Pitney, who works for Knerr Construction, was appointed to the board in 2018. He garnered 36.7% of the 2,843 votes cast. Anderson Hansell, an attorney at Anderson Hansell PC, received 63%.

She described herself as “deeply humbled” by the results, and said she looks forward to learning more about what is going on in Hermiston schools.

“I think the election tells me that the community is looking forward to

more and better communication from the board and administrators, as well as enhanced transparency as far as decisions go, and the reasons for those decisions,” she said.

After board member Mark Gomolski decided not to run again, in order to focus on his new job as director of the Agape House, newcomers Dain Gardner and Lili Gomez stepped up to vie for Position 3.

According to results posted late May 18, Gardner held a large lead at 61.2% of the vote. Both Gardner and Anderson Hansell had emphasized in their campaigns that students should have returned to in-person learning during the pandemic sooner.

Gardner, a senior trooper

for the Oregon State Police's Fish and Wildlife Division, expressed his thanks to voters and said he would work to stay in touch with them and help the board be more transparent.

“I'm just excited to get to work,” he said.

The other two current board members up for another term will retain their seats.

Karen Sherman, who has served on the board for 20 years, is in the lead for her seat, with 63.1% of the vote. The other person on the ballot for Sherman's seat, Caitlin Melhorn, told the *Hermiston Herald* prior to the election that she had decided she did not want to run after all due to pre-

vious time commitments, but the deadline had passed to withdraw her name from the ballot.

Sherman said she looked forward to working with the new board, and to planning for a more “normal” school year next year.

“I appreciate the support and hope I can continue to make the Hermiston School District a strong and effective district,” she said.

Incumbent Bryan Medelez, operations manager for Medelez, Inc., was appointed to the board in 2019. He was running unopposed to retain his seat, and had 2,111 votes in his favor, with 52 write-in votes.

# Incumbents keep their seats on Port of Morrow board

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

All three incumbents on the Port of Morrow Commission will retain their seats, according to unofficial election results released Tuesday, May 18.

Rick Stokoe, who holds Position 1 on the commission, had 46.9% of the vote.

Stokoe has been Boardman Police Department chief since 2011. He was appointed as a port commissioner in 2015 and reelected in 2017.

He had two challengers. John Kilkenny, an area farmer, had 38% of the vote, while Jonathan Tallman, whose family owns The Farmer's Cup, had the remaining 16%.

Jerry Healy is set to return for another term at Position 3 with 62.2% of

the vote.

Healy was born and raised in Morrow County and lived there most of his life, other than college and a stint in the Peace Corps. He has served on the Port of Morrow Commission for about 27 years and said he keeps running because the position is a worthwhile, exciting one that helps accomplish a lot for the community.

Of his two challengers for the seat, Rick Weiss, pastor of First Baptist Church in Boardman, had 30.9% of the vote and Chandler Schaak, an insurance agent, had the remaining 6.7%.

Joe Taylor, a farmer who has served on the port commission for 16 years, was running unopposed, with six write-in votes cast against him out of 1,632 votes total.

# Voters OK \$13 million bond for Umatilla County Fire District 1

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla County Fire District 1 Chief Scott Stanton was feeling a sense of relief on Tuesday, May 18, after voters supported a \$13.1 million bond that will pay for new safety equipment, vehicles and facility upgrades for the fire district.

As of results posted after 10 p.m. that night, the bond had 57.2% of the vote out of 3,150 votes cast.

“We've got a lot of work ahead of us, but we're excited to do it,” Stanton said.

The bond will assess up to 23 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties for the next 20 years,



Hermiston Herald, File

New decals adorn the door of a Umatilla County Fire District 1 engine at the main station in Hermiston.

which would cost the owner of a home valued at \$250,000 about \$57.50 per year.

The district plans to spend the money on a wide range of upgrades meant to better protect the health and

safety of fire district personnel, and improve their ability to respond to fires, crashes and medical emergencies. Once the district has access to the first funds in July, Stanton said one top priority will be purchasing new turnouts for firefighters. The protective suits are supposed to be used for up to five years, but some suits still in use by the district have been in use for as long as nine years.

“We've got a lot of planning to do, but there is also a lot of stuff we can get on fast, including personal protective equipment,” he said.

Some of the other items on the list for the next few years includes replacing or refurbishing old fire trucks,

adding equipment to ambulances to make it easier to load patients, replacing the aging rescue equipment used to remove patients trapped in crashed vehicles, replacing communications equipment and purchasing new cardiac heart monitors.

The district also plans to upgrade its facilities. Stanton said the board felt that upgrading current stations was a more effective use of taxpayer dollars than building new ones. Projects include new roofs on two stations that are leaking, additional bays for the Westland station, adding living quarters to the Stanfield station and adding separate living quarters for women at the main station in downtown Hermiston.

The district also plans to upgrade systems to reduce the engine exhaust fumes staff are breathing in while in the bays.

Stanton said it will take time to put together requests for proposals and work with the contractors selected, but the district already has a bond oversight committee made up of citizens tasked with making sure the money is being spent wisely.

He said district personnel were texting him as the results came in and talking to him at the station the next morning about how excited they were to have better equipment.

“We're so thankful for the community support,” he said.

# Hermiston



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