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Reicher appointed to provisionally fill AUHSD vacancy

By Sora O'Doherty



Wendy Reicher Photo provided

At a public meeting on Aug. 3, the Acalanes Union High School District governing board voted to appoint Wendy Reicher to fill the board vacancy created by Kristin Connelly's resignation. Connelly was elected to the position of Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder in November 2022, and recently resigned from the AUHSD board to concentrate on her county job.

With only a year left on her term, the AUSHD board decided against spending a lot of money to run a special election and opted instead to make a provisional appointment to fill the position. The board accepted applications from nine candidates, but two were unable to appear at the meeting. Each of seven candidates were allowed to speak for four minutes, and a written statement from one of the candidates who could not attend was read aloud.

Following this, the four current board members, Jennifer Chen, Christopher Grove

Chris Severson, and Nancy Kendzierski, each selected two candidates and rated them, ranking them one or two. All the candidates ranked one were called upon to answer some questions from the board, and also each candidate who had received two number two rankings. The candidates who were then asked to come forward and answer questions were, in random order, Paul Chopra, Peter Catalano, Wendy Reicher and Tonya Makowski.

After hearing the candidates answers to the questions, the board proceeded to move candidates to be given the provisional appointment. The entire proceeding was conducted in open session of the board. The student board member, Melina Nath, did not have a vote, but did have a preferential vote which expressed her opinion.

Jennifer Chen moved to appoint Tonya Makowski as provisional board member. The motion was seconded by Christopher Grove, but failed to pass, with Chris Severson and Nancy Kedzierski voting nay.

Paul Chopra was proposed by Chris Severson and seconded by student board member Melina Nath. That motion also failed, with Chen and Grove voting nay.

Finally, Wendy Reicher was proposed by Severson and seconded by Grove. Although Chen voted nay, the motion was carried with ayes from Grove, Severson, Nath (preferential vote) and Kendzierski.

In announcing Reicher's appointment to the AUHSD board, Superintendent John Nickerson said that Reicher has resided in Lafayette for 23 years and her three children have attended public schools with her youngest currently enrolled at Campolindo High School. "She has extensive experience with college/career advising and has been a volunteer with school parents' clubs, education foundations, athletic boosters, parent education programs, school choir support, and more," he said, noting further that Reicher, who earned her Bachelors of Arts degree from UCLA in history, currently serves as the Campolindo Parents Club president. Reicher also earned a certificate in Career and College Counseling from UC Berkeley.

According to Nickerson, unless a petition calling for a special election, pursuant to California Election Code section 5091, is filed in the office of the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools within 30 days from Aug. 3, the provisional appointment shall become an effective appointment to a term ending in December 2024.

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