



Wave of New Faces Look To Join F.C. School Board

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June 10, 2021

Not a single incumbent member of the Falls Church School Board either sought or qualified for re-election on the November 2021 ballot, it was disclosed after the deadline to qualify passed this Tuesday. On the other hand, a whopping nine candidates were certified to compete for the four (out of seven) seats being contested this November.

Meanwhile, three of the four incumbents have qualified to seek re-election to the Falls Church City Council.

Tuesday was a big day for elections in the City of Falls Church. Not only was it election day for the Democrats in their primary for the three statewide offices (see further on), but it was also the deadline to qualify for the November ballot for citizens seeking election to the four seats on the Falls Church City Council and four seats on the School Board.

With the contentious issues that roiled the Falls Church community in the past year — including the School Board's decision to change the names of two of its five public schools and the unhappiness by some over the execution of Covid-19 pandemic mitigation policies in the schools — one of the largest fields in recent decades for both the City Council and School Board have qualified for the ballot, according to the City's Voter Registrar David Bjerke, who issued a final list of certified candidates yesterday morning.

Of those who qualified to run for City Council, three incumbents have been certified: Vice Mayor Marybeth Connelly, the longest-running incumbent (serving since 1994) David Snyder and Debbie Schantz-Hiscott, who was appointed by the Council last fall to fill the unexpired term of the late Daniel X. Sze, who passed away unexpectedly last summer. The fourth incumbent, first-term Councilman Ross Litkenhous, chose not to seek re-election this year.

But not to worry, there are three alternatives who have qualified to fill that seat: Stuart Whitaker, who ran unsuccessfully in 2019, Caroline Lian and Scott Diaz.

The field competing for the four seats on the School Board is even more wide open, as not a single incumbent filed to seek re-election to that body. Dropping away as of the end of 2021 will be immediate former chairs Shannon Litton (current chair) and Greg Anderson, as well as recent appointees to fill vacated slots on the board, Sonia Ruiz-Bolanos and Edwin Henderson.

So there are nine, count 'em, contenders who will be competing for the four open seats in the fall election, which will culminate on Election Day on Nov. 2.

Listed in the document provided by the Registrar's office, they are Ilya Shapiro, Lori Silverman, Adam Riedel, Jerrod Anderson, Courtney Mooney, David Ortiz, Kathleen Tysse, Tate Gould and Jennifer Halvaksz.

None of these candidates have sought election to any public office in Falls Church before, though some sought unsuccessfully to win appointments to two open School Board seats in the past months.

From public onsite sources, it is learned that Shapiro is a senior fellow in Constitutional studies at the Cato Institute, Lori Silverman is a mother of two and a self-employed consultant, Adam Riedel works for Arlington County in its Environmental Management office, Jerrod Anderson is a statistician at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Courtney Mooney headed a return-to-school parent group in the City, David Ortiz is deputy director for the federal Office of Electric Reliability, Kathleen Tysse is a member of the Mary Riley Styles Library Foundation board, Tate Gould is a former deputy director for technical assistance at the U.S. Department of Education, and Jennifer Halvakez is a board certified clinical specialist in orthopedic physical therapy.

Finally, there were no additional candidates who filed to run for the three Constitutional Officer positions on the ballot in November.

That leaves the incumbents in Commissioner of the Revenue Tom Clinton, Treasurer Jody Acosta and Sheriff Met Cay to all run opposed later this year.

Voter turnout in the City of Falls Church was what Voter Registrar David Bjerke called a "solid number" in the Democratic primary election Tuesday, with 16.4 percent of registered voters in the City casting ballots. The winners of the statewide races, the only ones on the ballot in the three voting precincts in the City, were Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe over four others for governor, Prince William County State Del. Hala Ayala over six others for lieutenant governor and incumbent Mark Herring over one other for attorney general. All three won by wide margins.

After his solid victory Tuesday, McAuliffe sounded a cautionary tone in communiques to supporters yesterday. He said, "Last night, I was honored to accept the Democratic nomination in the Virginia Governor's race. Now, I've got to be honest — this race is going to be extremely competitive. That's bad news because my Trump-endorsed opponent, Glenn Youngkin, has a big head start on us. He's been the Republican nominee for weeks, able to outraise us, outspend us, and has pledged to spend up to \$75 million of his own money buying the governor's office."

With 1,080 votes in F.C., McAuliffe easily bested Jennifer Foy (323 votes), Jennifer McClellan (201), Lee Carter (38) and Justin Fairfax (25). With 543 votes, Ayala finished ahead of State Del. Sam Rasoul (479 votes), State Del. Mark Levine (319), Sean Perryman (132), Andria McClellan (117), Elizabeth Guzman (20) and Xavier Warren (12).

Incumbent Herring scored the high vote total in the City with 1,196 votes to best Jarrauld "Jay" Jones (437 votes).

In areas surrounding Falls Church, incumbents won contested races, as Del. Kaye Kory carried the 38th District over Holly Hazard, 62-38 percent, Del. Alfonso Lopez won in the 49th District over Karishma Mehta, 70-30 percent, Del. Kathleen Murphy won for the 34th District over

Jennifer Adell, 74-26 percent, and Del. Ken Plum won in the 36th District over Mary Barthelson, 77-23 percent.

Statewide, however, five incumbents lost, including Del. Levine, who due to a census reporting technicality was able to seek both the lieutenant governor seat and his own 45th District delegate seat, and lost both.

Overall, almost 500,000 votes were cast statewide in Virginia, almost matching the 2017 total and indicating to Democratic officials that voter enthusiasm for their candidates has not waned.

Area Democrats will gather Saturday for the first in-person event since the Covid-19 pandemic began to hit in March 2020 with a barbecue at the Northern Virginia home of former U.S. Rep. Jim Moran.