

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD SESSION – To Fill the Vacancy for Oregon Senate District 10

Tuesday, June 25, 2019
8:30 a.m.

Senator Hearing Room
555 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

PRESENT: Commissioners Sam Brentano, Commissioner Kevin Cameron, and Commissioner Colm Willis. Also present were Polk County Commissioners Mike Ainsworth, Craig Pope, and Lyle Mordhorst.

Commissioner Brentano called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Video Time (00:01:29)

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF PROCESS – Commissioner Sam Brentano

Summary:

- The commissioners are operating under the auspices of the Secretary of State;
- There are very specific requirements for filling a legislative vacancy, which the commissioners have done several time over the years;
- Process:
 - The commissioners will be taking opening statements from each nominee:
 - Each nominee has three minutes.
 - The commissioners will be asking each nominee questions:
 - Each nominee will have two minutes to answer; and
 - The commissioners will rotate the order of the nominees.
 - The commissioners will allow three minutes for closing statements;
 - Will take a break after closing statements;
 - Will come back and deliberate; and
 - Vote.

Board discussion:

- Filling legislative vacancies is taken very seriously by the commissioners;
- Every decision that the commissioners make is a direct representation of the people of Marion and Polk County; and
- The commissioners have been pleased with the candidates they have put forward in the past.

Video Time (00:03:22)

NOMINEE'S OPENING STATEMENTS

Representative Denyc Boles:

- The absence of Senator Winters will be felt throughout the community for a long time;
- It was very humbling for Rep. Boles to present her name before the board for consideration;
- Currently serving as a state representative for House District 19;
- Rep. Boles won her election last year through a competitive primary and general election;
- Rep. Boles has learned a lot by serving in the super minority as a republican woman in the state of Oregon:
 - It is no easy task.
- Rep. Boles record shows that she approaches things from a common sense, balanced perspective;
- Stands firm on principles that are important to the community;
- Rep. Boles listens well and gets along with people from all political backgrounds, but is clear on what she believes in, and what her community needs;
- Willing to be a strong advocate for her community;
- Whoever is selected today, the partnerships created in this community are important going forward; and
- Looking forward for the opportunity to be a strong partner with Marion and Polk County.

Kevin Chambers:

- Currently the Polk County Republican Chair;
- Serves on the Polk County Housing Authority;
- Proud of what has been accomplished in House District 20, which is primarily Democratic;
- Mr. Chambers' background is in environmental science, and would be the only one in the senate to stand up and say that in regards to House Bill 2020, a fake environmental crisis is being used to push an agenda that will kill businesses in both counties; and
- Would like to push a bill requiring getting control of federal land and putting the counties in control, not state controlled.

Rebecca (Becky) Mitts:

- Second generation Oregonian;
- Has lived in Marion, Jackson, Polk, and Coos Counties;
- Married for 43 years to her high school sweetheart:
 - Has three kids;
 - Six grandkids; and
 - Two great grandkids.
- Wants to make Oregon more like it was when she was growing up, where natural resources were used, and people had more freedom;
- Has been a Precinct Committee Person for the Republican Party since 2010;
- Worked on helping get candidates elected;
- Believes that she is ready to step up in the senate position;

- Has worked in customer service for most of her professional life;
- Currently works at the capitol for Rep. Mike Nearman; and
- Ready to be a voice for the constituents.

COMMISSIONERS' QUESTIONS

Video Time (00:09:26)

Commissioner Brentano:

1. What are your thoughts on House Bill 2020?

Kevin Chambers:

- It will kill jobs;
- The supporters of the bill are using a fake environmental crisis to get their bill approved;
- There are three factors that cause climate change:
 - Plate Tectonics;
 - The Milinkovic Cycles; and
 - Solar minima and maxima:
 - This drives the decade long climate shifts.
- This bill will take money away from rural people; and
- Tired of Portland and Eugene collecting the majority of the federal dollars.

Becky Mitts:

- Has not studied the bill, but knows enough about it to know that it is driving a wedge between the urban and rural communities;
- Has talked to Dairy farmers, farmers, and ranchers:
 - Will drive their business out of the state, or out of business; and
 - Cannot keep their livelihood if this bill passes.
- The bill needs to be defeated.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- House Bill 2020 has been quite the topic;
- During the legislative session, there have been more than 100 amendments that were introduced in an attempt to bring a common sense balance to the bill;
- The bill will be incredibly burdensome to the rural and natural resources communities, and will be burdensome to all citizens of Oregon;
- Creates a carbon czar that will give extraordinary power to an unelected bureaucrat in the state of Oregon;
- Has been watching the state grow agencies and give them a lot of power that is not being directly checked by elected officials;
- Had to remove a Democrat from Ways-and-Means in order to get the bill passed through the committee;
- There is a lot of work that is left to be done; and
- Believes that people are starting to listen to the concerns that have been presented through the entire session.

Video Time (00:12:51)

Commissioner Cameron:

2. What single event or experience in your background makes you the most prepared candidate for service in the legislature?

Kevin Chambers:

- Has an environmental background;
- Age and perspective:
 - Has felt the burden of student loans; and
 - The trouble of living paycheck to paycheck.
- Trying to find a job right out of college is difficult;
- Can relate to a lot of low income and young families trying to make ends meet; and
- One of his biggest worries is not having earthquake resistant bridges over the Willamette River.

Becky Mitts:

- Ms. Mitts has courage and convictions;
- Has conservative values that she lives by and believes in; and
- Has the courage to stand up for what she believes in.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Believes her current experience as a state representative makes her the most prepared candidate for service;
- Understands the process;
- Understands what it is like to sit on the dais and ask questions, take votes, and interact with others throughout the building;
- Leadership is difficult and lonely at times; and
- Experience has prepared her on what to expect, even though it is a new chamber and new body.

Video Time (00:16:20)

Commissioner Willis:

3. What are your specific and concrete plans to keep yourself grounded and in touch with your constituents as a legislator?

Becky Mitts:

- It is easy to keep grounded with her family;
- Has plans to go out and meet the constituents; and
- Hold town hall meetings to find out what issues are important to them.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Very fortunate that she gets to live in the community that she is serving;
- Other legislators are consider deployed while serving at the capitol;
- Rep. Boles is able to come home every night;

- Attends a monthly breakfast with the mayor of the City of Turner;
- Learned so much campaigning door-to-door;
- The legislature is the constituents' legislature, and they should feel comfortable contacting their state representatives;
- Believes she has done a decent job having a good connection with her community; and
- Looks forward to having the opportunity to expand that.

Kevin Chambers:

- Wants to create "office hours", that will be once a week from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. that constituents can come meet with Mr. Chambers;
- Wants to hold town hall meetings;
- Has attended city hall meetings and neighborhood association meetings; and
- Mr. Chambers is already involved in his community in Polk County, but he would like to expand that.

Video Time (00:19:43)

Commissioner Pope:

4. The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) has worked to increase their mandate and influence from protecting farm and resource land to directing state policy on transportation and the environment. It usurps the authority from the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Quality. The most recent examples are writing ineffective and damaging rules limiting vehicle miles traveled to appear as a response to global warming. Do you see DLCD as a problem and how would you rein it in?

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Land use is not an area of expertise for Rep. Boles;
- Believes that DLCD is expanding their authority;
- Being able to rein in DLCD will be challenging due to a lack of willingness to rein agencies in at the legislature;
- Rep. Boles would advocate for more common sense approaches;
- She is a fan of regional decision making; and
- Land use adjustments become heated very quickly.

Kevin Chambers:

- The Republicans need to win in 2020;
- Bills need to be introduced that will rein in governmental agencies and reduce the size of government:
 - Giving control back to localities, specifically counties and cities.
- Land use should be decided by the counties.

Becky Mitts:

- Not an expert on this subject, but she is a very good listener and a very good learner;
- Believes it will take a group effort;
- Will listen to other people:
 - Learn from them; and

- Work with like-minded people.
- Cannot change anything being in the super minority; and
- Can get the government back to the way it should be, which is small government and more freedom.

Video Time (00:23:24)

Commissioner Mordhorst:

5. What are the biggest challenges facing residents of Senate District 10 today? How do you plan to address it?

Kevin Chambers:

- Government controlled regulation and lack of housing;
- Over the last six to eight months, just in House District 20, businesses closed because of overreach of government regulation:
 - Rising prices;
 - Increase in taxes; and
 - Increase in minimum wage.
- The best way to get more housing and to lower prices is to build more housing and lower the cost of fees and development charges:
 - Give control back to the county, so the Urban Growth Boundary can be expanded.
- Cut back regulations on small businesses, so they can afford to pay people.

Becky Mitts:

- People are working really hard and it is difficult to make ends meet;
- The economy is doing much better, but taxes are being raised;
- People cannot pay attention to what is going on at the legislature because they are working hard to keep their head above water;
- Need to get back to small government;
- Cut back on the state's budget; and
- Get back to the basics.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Families want to be able to raise their children and make ends meet;
- They want to have the ability to make decisions for themselves and their families;
- This legislative session has put a lot of that in jeopardy; and
- The cost of living will go up, which will cause stress in the constituent's lives:
 - Housing;
 - Education; and
 - Employment.

Video Time (00:27:24)

Commissioner Ainsworth:

6. Name three major political groups that are actively supporting your candidacy. Have you promised to support a particular position on issues that are important to them?

Becky Mitts:

- Did not actively go out and solicit support from groups;
- Supported by Oregon Right to Life and Taxpayers Association of Oregon; and
- Received an email that she is supported by a gun group.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Did not actively garner support from political groups;
- Supported by Oregon Right to Life and Taxpayers Association of Oregon;
- In the past, Rep. Boles was supported by the Oregon Farm Bureau:
 - Oregon State Chambers.
- This has been a very quick process.

Kevin Chambers:

- Lars Larson has given his endorsement to Mr. Chambers.

Video Time (00:30:18)

Commissioner Brentano:

7. What is your position on gun rights?

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Supports the Second Amendment;
- Guns are a right that free people should have;
- Concerned with people who haven't committed a crime being treated like a criminal because they own a gun;
- Voted no on a gun measure during a special session; and
- Has an A rating with the National Rifle Association (NRA).

Kevin Chambers:

- Believes in constitutional carry;
- Believes that the gun bills that have been introduced are far overreaching; and
- Mr. Chambers' priority is to start rolling back on regulations that are harming the state.

Becky Mitts:

- Was not raised around guns, but married a man that loves to hunt;
- Just passed the concealed carry test;
- Ms. Mitts is pro Second Amendment, because she believes citizens have a right to defend themselves; and
- Would vote no on any gun bill that would limit that right.

Video Time 00:33:38)

Commissioner Cameron:

8. If there is a disagreement on a piece of legislation or program between Polk and Marion County, how would you proceed?

Kevin Chambers:

- Grew up learning to be a mediator in order to find compromises;
- The way the house and senate was formed creates compromise;
- Being able to bridge communities is important; and
- As a leader, it is important to mediate.

Becky Mitts:

- Has been in customer service her whole career, which involves listening and problem solving; and
- Listening to both sides in order to find common ground is important.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Has had experience with mediation;
- Has no problem reaching out to both parties; and
- It is important to listen to both sides very closely.

Video Time (00:36:46)

Commissioner Willis:

9. What principals will you use to evaluate policy and proposed legislation?

Becky Mitts:

- Common sense; and
- Ms. Mitts supports small government, pro-life, and pro-freedom.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Approaches things with a set a principals that she tries to live by;
- Has a strong sense of faith;
- Has a strong belief in life that should be protected; and
- Rep. Boles supports small government:
 - More personal freedom and accountability; and
 - A fair landscape so that everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve.

Kevin Chambers:

- Mr. Chambers' faith is the most center pillar of his life;
- Tries to live his life that honors and is pleasing to God;
- If there is a bill that is introduced that infringes on ones right to live their life the way they want, he will not vote for it; and
- Looks at data and facts to make decisions.

Video Time (00:40:27)

Commissioner Pope:

10. If selected, what process will you follow to solicit input and find answers on legislative issues? What are the actions you will take to be effective in the minority?

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Will continue the process of building relationships on both sides of the aisle;
- Not everything is a highly-partisan combative situation;
- There is a lot of collaboration that can happen;
- Will come into the position with a lot of relationships already built;
- Will continue to have regular meetings and interactions within her district;
- Has established a reputation of someone who is pragmatic and is easy to work with, until she's not; and
- Has a very good skill set to be as successful as she can being in the minority.

Kevin Chambers:

- Would bring in an aide who is a Democrat to hear the other side of the issues;
- Always does his research, so will do his research on any bill that is presented;
- Has been in the community and gotten to know people; and
- Would be driving into another state if appointed.

Becky Mitts:

- Looking forward to having a district tour where she would go around and introduce herself to leaders within the community;
- Has an open door policy; and
- Wants to start building close relationships.

Video Time (00:44:12)

Commissioner Mordhorst:

11. Why are you a better candidate than the other two here today?

Kevin Chambers:

- Believes his environmental background makes him a better candidate;
- The focus of climate change needs to be shifted to real climate change issues, such as natural disasters; and
- Mr. Chambers is the only candidate being attacked online and in the streets by the potential Democratic nominee in 2020.

Becky Mitts:

- Believes that she is not better than the other two candidates;
- Has different strengths;
- This district will be very lucky if any of the three candidates are appointed;
- Her strengths comes from life experiences:
 - Former dairy wife:

- Can associate with farmers.
- Self-employed for 10 years; and
- Customer service experience.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Believes that the combination of her life experiences, raising a family in the community, involvement in schools and businesses, and her political experience are strengths she would bring to the senate.

Video Time (00:46:46)

Commissioner Ainsworth:

12. Why would you want to be appointed to this position? If you are appointed, will you be running for re-election?

Becky Mitts:

- Wants to be appointed to the position because she wants to bring balance back to the senate;
- Being in the super minority is very hard work;
- There needs to be a strong conservative person in the seat;
- Needs someone with courage and strength to be there to balance the other side that is trying to take away freedoms;
- If chosen, Ms. Mitts will run for re-election;
- Knows it will be a tough race; and
- Will knock on every door in the district.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- Expects the 2020 race to be the biggest one yet;
- Rep. Boles put her name forward because she knows the effort it will take to keep the seat;
- Looking at this as an opportunity to defeat the Democratic candidate;
- Wants to build an infrastructure and grass roots passion for the way of life that is deserved;
- Republicans have different perspectives than the senate majority in the legislature; and
- It will take everyone going in the right direction to make a real difference.

Kevin Chambers:

- This will be a big race;
- If appointed, Mr. Chambers will run again;
- Believes he is the only candidate that can beat the Democratic candidate;
- Will do whatever it takes to win the seat; and
- Will make sure this seat stays in Republican control.

Video Time (00:51:21)

CLOSING STATEMENTS

Becky Mitts:

- It is an honor to be here and to be nominated to participate in this process;
- Has worked in the legislature for the last five sessions and has learned a lot;
- Knows what it takes at the capitol to get things done;
- Thinks she's ready to take the next step;
- Wants to kill bad bills that infringe on peoples freedom;
- Wants to enjoy Oregon's natural resources;
- Wants to be a conservative voice that reminds people of their conservative values;
- Wants to help constituents; and
- Thankful for this opportunity and asking for the commissioner's vote.

Rep. Denyc Boles:

- This senate seat is a big deal;
- It was held by a very impressive person;
- This is bigger than serving in the legislature and voting on bills, or trying to work across the aisle to make things happen;
- As a state senator, there is an obligation to bring people together and build bridges amongst the people that they serve;
- Rep. Boles will continue to build bridges;
- Has great character, compassion, and leadership that is needed to have success in the legislature;
- Represents more than 60,000 voters in her district, which is an enormous responsibility; and
- Rep. Boles will continue to bring personal awareness and commitment to the position if she is appointed.

Kevin Chambers:

- Families are hurting;
- People are living on the streets;
- Businesses are hurting;
- Infrastructures are crumbling;
- There isn't enough priority being put on the community to be prepared for natural disasters;
- There needs to be someone in that seat that can look ahead, is compassionate, and can relate to their constituents;
- House Bill 2020 will destroy rural businesses;
- Lives the struggle as being a small business owner and a college graduate; and
- Believes he is the best choice for the position.

The commissioners convened at 9:27 a.m.

The commissioners reconvened at 9:45 a.m.

ACTION

Video Time (01:15:55)

DELIBERATION AND VOTE

Summary:

Commissioner Ainsworth:

- It will be a difficult decision;
- Appreciates the three candidates representing Senate District 10;
- Commissioner Ainsworth's vote is for Rep. Denyc Boles;
- All three candidates would do a very good job;
- Hopes that whoever wins the position, the other two will help support that person; and
- Democrats will come out strong to try and win the seat.

Commissioner Brentano:

- Commissioner Brentano's vote is for Rep. Denyc Boles;
- Rep. Boles has experience in the legislature;
- Knows part of the district very well;
- Rep. Boles has served on the Marion County Budget Committee, which gives Commissioner Brentano confidence that she knows a lot about Marion County; and
- Rep. Boles has electability.

Commissioner Cameron:

- Loved what Mr. Chambers had to say about office hours:
 - Infrastructure is very important.
- Appreciated Ms. Mitts commitment to her family:
 - Commissioner Cameron appreciated Ms. Mitts comment on not being better than the other two candidates, she's just different.
- Commissioner Cameron's vote is for Rep. Denyc Boles:
 - Rep. Boles has experience in the legislature;
 - Understands what it takes to go through an election and win; and
 - Rep. Boles understands the big shoes she will be filling being appointed to this seat.
- Appreciates all three of the candidates; and
- Encourages all of the candidates to keep up the great work.

Commissioner Mordhorst:

- Appreciates all of the candidates going through the process;
- Believes they will all do a great job;
- Appreciated Ms. Mitts stance on returning Oregon back to the way it was 40 years ago with less restrictions;
- Appreciated Mr. Chambers stance on improving infrastructure:
 - Keeps on being put on the back burner.
- Rep. Boles has something this district really needs, which is relationships:
 - Has proven that she is a great team worker; and

- She is there for the people around her, but is willing to step up and stand her ground.
- Commissioner Mordhorst's vote is for Rep. Denyc Boles.

Commissioner Pope:

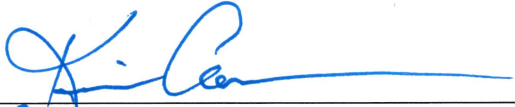
- Appreciates all of the candidates willingness to go through the process of being appointed;
- This is a challenging process;
- Agrees with everything the other commissioners have stated;
- All candidates have qualities and skill sets that are different;
- Rep. Boles has strengths that she brings to the table that resonates with Commissioner Pope;
- Ms. Mitts' comment about being a dairy wife resonates with Commissioner Pope:
 - Has a lot of respect for dairy farmers.
- Mr. Chambers' youth, science background, and ambition are solid strengths;
- Commissioner Pope's vote will go to Rep. Denyc Boles, because of her experience and connectivity; and
- Believes the person appointed needs to have experience and a pretty good run going in order to step into the seat.

Commissioner Willis:


- Public service is very important;
- Appreciates all of the nominees' service to Oregon;
- Rep. Boles and Ms. Mitts have been in the trenches for years;
- Appreciates Mr. Chambers work in the community;
- Acknowledges how hard Ms. Mitts has worked with the Republican Party:
 - Legislative aide;
 - Commissioner Willis believes that Ms. Mitts is one of the best people in the legislature when it comes to constituent relationships;
 - Grateful for Ms. Mitts wisdom; and
 - Would be proud and honored if Ms. Mitts was the senator.
- Commissioner Willis' vote is for Rep. Denyc Boles:
 - This is a really hard job and he believes that she is the best person suited for the job; and
 - Rep. Boles has spent more than a decade serving Oregon.

Commissioner Brentano asked the commissioners to take a voice vote on the candidate they would like to appoint. The voice vote was unanimous with all commissioners voting for Rep. Denyc Boles. Rep. Boles is appointed to the Senate District 10 seat.

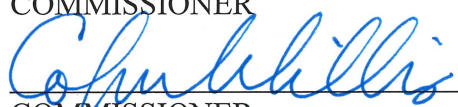
Commissioner Brentano adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.



CHAIR



COMMISSIONER



COMMISSIONER

Board Sessions can be viewed on-line at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYF8Y6U7178>.