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Richie Beeler appointed to 8th District seat

By Mike Steely
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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Richie Beeler takes the oath of office from Judge Kristi Davis. He was selected from several applicants to serve the remaining term of the 8th District commissioner, Dave Wright, who was elected to the Tennessee legislature.

After five rounds of voting, Richie Beeler, a person with four generations of roots in Corryton, was selected to replace Dave Wright as commissioner representing the 8th District of Knox County.

The candidates who had applied for the seat included Beeler, Phil Ballard, Krystal Gibson, Douglas Iglehart, Rebecca Longmire, Sonia S. Sanders, Michel Westover and Terry Wilshire. Ballard and Westover withdrew their names from consideration and Wilshire didn't appear for the special county commission meeting held last Wednesday.

Each of the remaining contenders had five minutes to speak and Commissioner John Schoonmaker reviewed their voting record as to whether or not they voted in recent elections. Each of the commissioners except for Evelyn Gill and Brad Anders asked occasional questions.

Beeler said he was born in Zachary town within the district and worked 31 years in the Register of Deeds office. Beeler pointed out that the north and east Knox County district has lots of land for future development, praised the three new schools there and cited the opioid crisis as the area's biggest problem.

When asked by Commissioner Larsen Jay if he might run for re-election after serving Wright's two remaining term years, Beeler said he has "no idea, no plans."

When asked why he would be the best person for the position, Beeler said he was teachable and he knows how Knox County works.

Prior to the vote Commissioner Randy Smith said he would have preferred a special election but said the cost of holding one was prohibitive.

Chairman Hugh Nystrom said the commission has a deep bevy of qualified applicants."

With 10 commissioners voting, a total of six votes were needed to select the new 8th District commissioner.

Commissioner Anders nominated Beeler and Commissioner Charles Busler suggested Sanders. Commissioner Larsen Jay chose Longmire while Commissioners Justin Biggs named Gibson and Smith chose Iglehart. The other commissioners passed during the nominating.

The first round of voting saw Beeler get four votes and Sanders and Longmire with three votes each. Biggs, Michele Carringer, Smith and Anders voted for Beeler; Busler, Carson Daily and Schoonmaker voted for Sanders; and Jay, Gill and Nystrom voted for Longmire. That eliminated the candidates who received no votes.

The second and third rounds of voting went exactly the same and it looked deadlocked until Nystrom asked Beeler, Sanders and Longmire to speak for a couple minutes.

The fourth round saw Longmire's vote drop to two, Gill and Jay, which eliminated her. Nystrom changed his vote and went for Beeler.

In the final round of voting Jay joined Carringer, Smith, Nystrom, Anders and Biggs to give Richie Beeler the nod. Gill, Schoonmaker, Busler and Dailey voted for Sanders.

Beeler was sworn in immediately after the decision and will serve until August 21, 2020.

Knox County to host 20th Annual Holiday Festival of Lights

Knox County's 20th annual Holiday Festival of Lights at The Cove at Concord Park kicks off Friday, Dec. 21 with Mayor Glenn Jacobs hosting a meet and greet and passing out free candy "Kanes."

The family-friendly event starts that evening at 6:30 p.m. with a ribbon cutting. The Cove is located at 11808 S. Northshore Drive.

The festival, which is free and open to the public, runs through Saturday, Dec. 29, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It's open from 6 to 9 p.m.

The event is showcased by an illuminated three-quarter-mile greenway trail that features a sparkling light display coordinated to music and a number of fire pits. Pets on leashes are welcome.

In addition, Third Creek Coffee will be onsite each night with hot drinks, including coffee, hot chocolate and apple cider, and holiday snacks, like cookies, cakes and the ingredients for S'mores.

The park staff at The Cove does all the decorating, which includes placing displays and adding thousands of lights to the trees.

Although the event is free, Knox County will collect non-perishable food items for The Love Kitchen. This nonprofit provides meals, clothing and emergency food packages to the homeless, homeless and unemployed.

The 2018 Holiday Festival of Lights is sponsored by B97.5, the Knox County Mayor's Office and Knox County Parks & Recreation.

Mayor Jacobs to host December constituent meeting Tuesday

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs will host the December constituent meeting from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 11 at the Carter Library (9036 Asheville Hwy). These meetings are designed to give citizens the opportunity to meet one-on-one and speak individually with him about issues that are important to them.

These meetings are open to the public and no appointment is needed.

Lyons View State Veterans Cemetery in recent years, decked out with Christmas wreaths placed there by volunteers to honor the military veterans. This year the Vietnam Veterans of America, Captain Bill Robinson Chapter 1078, is sponsoring the event. Photo courtesy of Ronnie Collins.

Knox County volunteers sought to help lay 'Wreaths Across America'

By Mike Steely
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What are you doing Saturday?

The placement of evergreen wreaths at our three veteran cemeteries will begin after a brief ceremony at noon. Each cemetery has its own coordinator for Wreaths Across America, which is just that, a national effort to place wreaths on the graves of military veterans.

You can help by showing up at any of our cemeteries and helping to unload the wreaths prior to the services or helping place them in front of the tombstones.

"Due to the generosity of the many wreath sponsors there are substantially more wreaths to place this year so volunteers are encouraged to bring a friend," said Chris Albrecht, Public Service Officer for the Vietnam Veterans Chapter.

Volunteers are being asked to arrive early and help put ribbons on the wreaths.

Knoxville National Cemetery is located at 939 Tyson Street NW. Parking is available at Central Street and Baxter with a shuttle running from 10 a.m. to carry volunteers to the cemetery.

Lyons View State Veterans Cemetery at 5901 Lyons View Pike, parking will be at the baseball field parking lot in Lakeshore Park. Ashuttle will carry volunteers back and forth.

The East Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery at 2200 Governor John Sevier Highway now has lots of parking along the roads within the cemetery with the completion of recent construction.

You can reach the Captain Bill Robinson Chapter 1078 by calling (865) 321-1435. You may also get more information online at www.vva1078.org or at the Wreaths Across America, Knoxville Facebook page.

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