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Andersen Drops Out of City Council Race

By SHAUN FRIEDRICHSEN
News Director

With the general election date quickly approaching, candidates are actively promoting themselves as they vie for elected positions. However, one of the four candidates for the Alliance City Council has announced her withdrawal from the election.

Mara Andersen told the Alliance Times-Herald on Sept. 5 her plans to drop out of the race, noting her focus on serving the community through the Alliance Recreation Center.

"Serving this community through the ARC is my highest honor and I remain committed to doing so safely despite COVID-19," Andersen wrote in a news release. "The ARC reaches every member of our community: every school, every student, every family, every business, every employer. Now is not the time to divide my focus."

Andersen said she remains dedicated to making a positive change in the community.

"It was a difficult de-

cision to make, but I feel strongly that the best thing I can do for our community is to ensure the ARC overcomes the COVID-19 challenge. Thank you for your votes, your support, and your enthusiasm. Though I will not be your council woman in 2020, I hope you will consider voting for me in the years to come," Andersen said.

In the primary election, Andersen claimed the third highest number of votes, with a total of 589. John McGhehey received 1,245 votes, incumbent Brian Mischnick received 1,120 votes, and Gary A. Goodell received 477 votes. Incumbent Ryan Reynolds and Travis Turman were eliminated from the race, receiving 190 votes and 457 votes, respectively.

Box Butte County Clerk Judy Messersmith said that Andersen will still appear on the ballot in the general election, alongside McGhehey, Mischnick and Goodell. She noted that the Secretary of State will be sending applications for mail-in ballots to registered voters this week.

Sprock Resigns as City Manager

Council Appoints Johnson, Waggener Interim Manager

By SHAUN FRIEDRICHSEN
News Director

On Sept. 1, Alliance City Manager Jeff Sprock verbally resigned from his position, effective immediately, after serving in the role for a little more than one year.

Sprock, who came to Alliance in November 2018, had served as Mitchell's city administrator since 2015. He ascended to the city manager position in March 2019, following the retirement of Rick Kuckkahn.

Mayor Mike Dafney told the Alliance Times-Herald the separation with Sprock came about as a mutual agreement.

"It was just a mutual agreement that the city and Jeff were going different directions. Once you decide to make that break, it's just easier and better for both parties to make it clean and make it as soon as possible so that you can get down the road. In Jeff's case, if he wants to look for different avenues of employment and the city wants



Photo by SHAUN FRIEDRICHSEN/Alliance Times-Herald

Tarrah Johnson and Randy Waggener have taken over as interim city manager following a special meeting on Friday.

to get started, then it's just better to do it right away, and that's what we did," said Dafney.

In a press release on Sept. 2, the Alliance City Council thanked Sprock for his service to the community, wishing him and his family well.

At a special meeting on Sept. 4, council members formally accepted Sprock's resignation. They discussed the appointment of City Clerk Tarrah Johnson and Finance Director Randy

Waggener to serve as the interim city managers, in a move to save the city money while paying Sprock's severance package.

According to Waggener, the severance package, per the contract, includes benefits and totals approximately \$10,000 a month for the next four months, or until Sprock finds another position. At the special meeting, Waggener explained that it would also likely cost the city \$10,000 per

month to hire an interim manager. The council expressed faith in Johnson's and Waggener's abilities to handle the extra duties.

"Finance Director Randy Waggener and City Clerk Tarrah Johnson feel that they are the best people to fill this interim, and I would agree," Dafney said at the meeting.

The council voted unanimously to appoint

Manager Jumps to Page A4



Photo by SHAUN FRIEDRICHSEN/Alliance Times-Herald

ALREADY?

On Tuesday morning, Alliance woke up to a dusting of snow blanketing rooftops throughout the city as temperatures dropped to a low of 28 degrees. Temperatures are expected to rise the remainder of the week with highs hitting the mid to upper 80s.

COVID Cases Still Active at APS

By KATHRYN KELLAR
Alliance Times-Herald

As the school year has progressed, Alliance Public Schools has seen active coronavirus cases with one case at Grandview Elementary School and Alliance Middle School, respectively.

According to the District's COVID-19 Dashboard as of press time, there have been no recovered cases in the district, 25 quarantining and 53 that were sent home and showed symptoms of COVID-19. Of the 25 quarantining nine students were from Alliance High School, two students at Alliance Middle School, 10 students at Grandview,

three students at Emerson Elementary and one in early childhood. A total of 53 students have been sent home showing symptoms with 22 at the high school, four at the middle school, 24 at Grandview and three at Emerson.

Chadron Public Schools and Chadron State College also have seen positive cases. CPS has four people quarantining and 12 positive cases. CSC has three active cases and 39 cases that have recovered.

As of Tuesday, Box Butte County has 10 active and 29 recovered. Banner County has two recovered cases. Cheyenne County has two active cases and 31 recovered. Dawes County has had 106 cases with 14 active and 92

recovered. Deuel County has four recovered cases. Garden County has eight recovered cases. Kimball County has 17 recovered cases. Morrill has one active case and 66 recovered. Scottsbluff has 47 active cases, 340 recovered and six deaths. Sheridan has eight active cases and 27 recovered. Sioux has one active case and six recovered. The Panhandle total is 711 cases with 83 active, 622 recovered and six deaths since cases started being tracked.

The Panhandle Public Health District will move into Phase Four of Gov. Pete Rickett's Directed Health Measure.

Free testing is available through Test Nebraska at multiple locations

in the Panhandle. People can sign up through Test Nebraska at testnebraska.com or by calling 402-207-9377. In Alliance, testing is available at Box Butte General Hospital Monday through Friday from 9 to 10 a.m. The testing site is located in the ambulance bay on the east side of the emergency department.

In Chadron, testing is offered at the Chadron Community Hospital on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 9 a.m. Collections are located at 821 Morehead Street.

Community Action Health Center in Gering offers tests on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 a.m.

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