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Incumbents receive 4-year terms

By EARL WATT • Leader & Times After Tuesday night's election results, the Liberal City Commission will have two new members, sort of. Ron Warren was elected but is a past commissioner. Dean Aragon will be new to the commission, and incumbents Dave Harrison and Joe Denoyer retained their seats.

Harrison and Denoyer will receive four-year terms for receiving the most votes. Aragon and Warren will receive two-year terms.

"I am excited for the city," Denoyer said. "We listen to the people. I'm excited about what the future holds. We will be aggressive but be fiscally responsible."

Harrison interpreted the results as support for the current commission.

"I think it says something about what we've been doing, and it says people are pleased with what we're doing," he said.

Several issues were discussed during the campaign, but housing was clearly at the forefront.

"The priority will still be housing," Denoyer said. "We have to aggressively pursue that, we have to explore different options. We have to have places to put people to economically grow. We need to draw from the strengths of these other candidates. It is time to get aggressive but be fiscally responsible. The city is financially sound, and it is time to start moving forward in a positive direction."

Mayor Tim Long, who announced he would likely be moving from Liberal with the sale of the majority of his company, Panhandle Oilfield Services, finished eighth.

Aragon, who was sixth in the primary, made the biggest move in the general election, jumping into third and earning a two-year term.

“I was very happy, very excited, and I’m looking forward to it,” he said. “I was not expecting it.”

Warren’s fourth-place finish will put the contractor back on the commission at a time when housing has become the target of stunting Liberal’s growth.

“I am excited to get the opportunity to do it again,” Warren said. “I think I can hit the ground running. We have a lot of work to do.”

Warren said that he was cautious during his campaign since he builds homes – that he wasn’t perceived as a candidate looking to benefit from being a commissioner.

“I think I actually bring a lot of knowledge about the problem to the commission,” he said. “For example, I went to the (Joint Economic Development Council) meeting, and they were talking about housing is, in the way of, economic development. They don’t understand the problems, what is blocking housing. It is not just a matter of contractors wanting to build housing, it is what we have to be able to do to build and sell it. Multi-family housing is a different issue. I can bring knowledge to the table of understanding the different types of housing and what is preventing it.”

Julio Jimenez moved up from seventh to fifth in his second run for the Liberal City Commission, one spot short of making the commission.

Jack Carlile slipped from fifth to sixth, and Ivanhoe Love moved from eighth to seventh.

The canvassing to make the results official will take place Monday, and the new commissioners are expected to be sworn in Tuesday.

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