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By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader

Candidate Reid Petty garnered nearly 2,000 votes on his way to winning Tuesday as residents in the Liberal school district went to the polls to pick three school board members.

Petty picked up the seat currently held by USD No. 480 board member Bob Meier, who made the decision not to run for another four-year term.

Petty said he was pleased with Tuesday's results.

"I'm glad the people chose me," he said. "I hope I'll do my very best to help work with the current board, administration, teachers and the general public to try to do what's best for the district."

Liberal residents also turned down a \$61 million bond issue Tuesday for upgrades to USD 480 facilities, and Petty said he is unsure of where the issue will go from here.

"I don't want to say what road it'll take because I don't know," he said. "I'd have to wait and see."

At 23, Petty is the youngest person on the board of education, and he hopes this will bring more youth into becoming community leaders.

"I think it's good for younger people to become involved in politics," he said. "Hopefully, that'll

maybe help interest younger people into becoming interested in politics.”

Incumbents Cheryl Louderback and Cliff Abbott retained their seats on the board, and Louderback said she is thankful to the public.

“I’m blessed. I can hardly wait to thank everyone that voted for me that placed their confidence in me, and I thank God that He’s placed me in this office again,” she said.

Louderback said her hope for the school bond is that the board will start over and figure out what the critical needs are for the district and what needs to be done at the moment.

“If we need more things down the road, we’re going to have to figure out a way to pay for them, but the people spoke,” she said. “We need to listen and respect that. I am hoping that I and my fellow board members will listen to what the people said.”

Louderback finished with nearly 1,500 votes in Tuesday’s election.

Fellow incumbent Cliff Abbott and challenger Nick Hatcher were separated by a mere vote, according to the unofficial results, and Abbott said while a final tally won’t be known until Friday, as some provisional ballots are still uncounted, he said it is a great honor to serve in his capacity.

“I’m looking forward to serving and volunteering anywhere we can to help our community and our kids,” he said.

Abbott said he appreciates Hatcher and fellow challenger Bart Stapleton going through what they did during the election process.

“Both of them would be tremendous candidates, and I sure hope they continue to invest in our district and our community. They bring a lot to the table. Hopefully, we can still keep them involved.”

Like Petty, Abbott said he is unsure of the direction of the school bond issue.

“We will have to gather up and meet, but I am looking forward to seeing Mr. Petty’s plan,” he said. “He had a \$22 million plan, and also Mrs. Louderback mentioned she was willing to go back to the drawing board. I’m looking forward to seeing what she’s going to bring as well.”

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