

MADISON

Madison County county commission flips to Republican majority



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While Madison County's school board will maintain its Democratic majority, the county commission will now be controlled Republicans, as the board's three incumbent Democrats - board Chair Mark Snelson, Vice Chair Craig Goforth and Norris Gentry, who also serves as interim county manager - were ousted on election night.

Bill Briggs, Jeremy Hensley and Alan Wyatt will take their places. Briggs received the most votes, with 4,974 votes, or 17.6% of votes, while Hensley received 4,862 votes , or 17.2% of votes, and Wyatt received 4,780, or 16.9% of votes.

Briggs previously served on the board from 2014-18, and was a Clerk of Superior Court in the county for years prior to his term as a commissioner.

"It feels good to be able to serve the people of Madison County once again," Briggs said. "I had a good feeling when I spoke with voters across the county. I thank all the people for their vote and support for Madison County Commissioner. I care about the future of our county and will use my experience and common sense for a sound and efficient local government. I look forward to serving the people once again."

Wyatt's 4,780 votes were more than 130 votes more than Snelson's total, who tallied 4,646 votes, or 16.5% of votes. Snelson edged out Goforth, who received 4,632 votes, or 16.4% of votes. Gentry collected 4,336 votes, or 15.3% of votes.

Wyatt, 46, currently serves on the Planning Board, but will vacate the position after he is sworn in as a commissioner.

"It was my first time running and we had six really good candidates vying for three spots," Wyatt said. "Each candidate brought something unique and different to the table. The people

of Madison County voted and chose Mr. Briggs, Mr. Hensley and myself to represent them. I don't feel worthy and I am very humbled to represent the great citizens of Madison County."

Hensley said he wanted to thank God for giving him the opportunity to serve Madison County residents.

"I look forward to serving the people of Madison County," Hensley said. "The people of this county have spoken and are ready for change. I would like to thank them for trusting me with this responsibility. I am very proud and excited to be a member of this commissioner's board."

Outgoing commissioners' responses

Board Chair Mark Snelson congratulated the winners and urged county residents to be open-minded about the newly elected commissioners.

"Congratulations to Alan Wyatt, Jeremy Hensley and Bill Briggs," Snelson said. "Good luck you guys with your next four-year journey. Thanks to everyone that supported me over the past four years. I've enjoyed working for and with the employees, along with all citizens. We are leaving the board in much better shape than it was four years ago. I appreciate everyone. Give these gentlemen a chance."

Vice chair Craig Goforth, who served 22.5 years at the county level, first on the school board and later as a county commissioner, wished to thank county residents for their support.

"It has truly been an honor," Goforth said. "Your confidence in me has been a blessing. I ask us all to get behind and support the new and existing leaders of this great county and strive to work together to make it a better place. We can do so much more together."

"We have the county in the best financial shape it has been in in years, our schools are performing at an excellent pace. All of the county agencies have performed well in this very trying period of a pandemic but especially the health department, sheriff's office and department of social services withstood a pandemic with class."

Goforth said he called Briggs, Hensley and Wyatt to congratulate them on their win and to offer his help in their new roles.

"Please accept my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for each of you who have supported me," Goforth said. "I will still be involved all over the county and coaching soccer, if I can help you, please reach out. I wanted to thank my wife Mary Alice Goforth and my family for

having to listen to me all these years. Please pray for me to hear God's calling on my life and to listen. May God bless us all."

Gentry has served as interim county manager since July 2020.

"It has been a great pleasure and a wonderful experience," Gentry said. "I wish everyone well. I'm looking forward to renewing old relationships, and looking forward to new opportunities. I'm very thankful to have had all my years in the Madison County, being able to do a lot of things and working with the community."

The Madison BOC will determine if Gentry will remain as county manager.

"I'm not going away," he said. "I will just look for some new opportunities to continue to serve and work within the community. I wish everyone well. The county is in good shape. The future is bright. I look forward to being part of that process and continue to build a better and brighter Madison County."