Stephens Challenges More to Run for Office

Monday, 19 August 2013

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The final list of all candidates for Kodiak Island Borough Assembly, School Board and Service Areas was released after the close of the filing period, and it shows only two races that are contested.

At Thursday’s meeting, Assemblyman Mel Stephens was addressing the highly contentious composting issue at the landfill when he made this comment about the small number of people who seek public office.

“And finally, as to the people who are very passionate about this issue, you know, I just kinda shake my head. Today was the close of the period to putting in petitions to run for borough assembly, and my guess is that when I read the paper tomorrow it will turn out that not very many people showed up,” he said.

And he was right.

Most notably, the office of borough mayor will not be contested, and unless a write-in candidate chooses to run, Jerrol Friend will waltz into the mayor’s office unopposed.

There are also two open seats on the Kodiak Island Borough Board of Education, one for a three-year term, the other for one-year. But both only have one candidate, Rick Kniaziowski and Todd Hailey, respectively, meaning the two men are practically guaranteed office. It’s not the first time in recent years a school board seat has seen only one candidate.

And while Fire Protection Area Number 1 and Road Service Area Number 1 each have the minimum number of candidates, two service areas have NO candidates. Two seats are available on the Bay View Road Service Area and two more are available on the Womens Bay Service Area, yet nobody filed for them.

Stephens called out those who are most vocal about how the government conducts the people’s business and challenged them to seek office next year, since this year’s filing period is over.

“For people out there who feel passionately about good government and feel that maybe we could be doing a lot better than we are, I would really, really urge you, in another year at least, to think about putting your name in for the assembly.”

The Assembly is one of only two races where the outcome is still up in there. It has two seats open, AND has three candidates, incumbent Carol Austerman, along with Frank Peterson Junior and Dennis Symmons. The top two vote-getters will be sworn in.

The other contested race is for the Monashka Bay Service Area Board, which also has three candidates for two openings. Darlene Turner, Randy Spivey and Tom Lance are vying for the pair of three-year seats.