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Sheriff Yon to retire, Undersheriff Duncan likely successor

ALBANY — Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon told Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker Tuesday morning that he will end his 28 years with the Sheriff's Office as of Dec. 31, with one year left on his four-year term of office.

As has been a tradition in Linn County for many years, Yon recommended that Undersheriff Michelle Duncan be appointed to fill the remainder of his term. Pending her appointment, Duncan, 47, stands to become the first female sheriff in Linn County law enforcement history.

Earlier this year, Yon announced he would not seek another term in office.



Michelle Duncan

"It has been a great experience," Yon said. "We have great partners and we all work together to make things happen."

Commissioner Tucker thanked

Yon for his dedication to the county and praised his team's proactive work in the Jefferson Wilderness Area prior to the Labor Day 2020 fires. Tucker said those actions likely saved many lives.

He also praised Yon for his team's leadership of the Search and Rescue program made up of young people over the years, efficiently operating the jail and functioning well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sprenger, a former Deputy Sheriff, said being in law enforcement is a hard job, but pressures mount as a person moves up the line.

"You've spent your entire career in one department," which is unusual, Sprenger said.

Nyquist said that it is important the incoming sheriff "hit the ground running." Nyquist said that being undersheriff provides someone with a vast amount of information from day one.

Yon lives in Sweet Home, but is an Albany native and South Albany and Western Oregon University graduate.

His career began as a resident deputy in Harrisburg and then he worked traffic, sex crimes, narcotics and support divisions of the LCSO before being promoted to undersheriff in 2014. He was appointed sheriff in 2018 upon the retirement of Bruce Riley.

Yon told the board that the LCSO has always done things differently than other agencies. Deputies still respond to every call.

He said the recent approval of a four-year law enforcement levy of \$2.98 per \$1,000 property value by a 62% to 38% margin, is indicative of local support. The



After 28 years with the Linn County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Jim Yon announced his retirement as of Dec. 31 during Tuesday morning's meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Also pictured are administrative assistant Heather Gravelle and Board Chair Roger Nyquist.

new levy is 15 cents per \$1,000 more than the current levy.

Yon said Duncan has been successful in every role she has filled with the LCSO.

"She is ready to go," Yon said. "She led our work at the Willamette Country Music Festival and she has done a fantastic job in every position she has held."

Duncan, 47, started her LCSO career as a resident deputy in Mill City. She has also served as a narcotics deputy, patrol sergeant, lieutenant for contract cities, patrol captain and undersheriff.

LCSO Deputy John Raymond has filed to run for sheriff as well.

If there are only two candidates, their names will appear on the November 2022 ballot.

If more than two candidates file, their names will appear on the May 2022 primary ballot. The names of the two candidates who receive the highest number of votes will be on the November ballot.

If one of the candidates receives 50% of the primary vote tally — plus one vote — that candidate would be the lone name on the November ballot.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Were told by Juvenile Director Torri Lynn that in October there were 19 Linn County youth held for 168 total days and four young people from Benton County held for 12 days and two young people from Linn County held for 21 days. There are 177 young people in the Probation Unit. Lynn said that four young people on the Tier I work crew completed 87 hours of service and 15 youth on the Tier II team completed 268 hours of service. Commissioner Nyquist said 5 to 10% of

students are struggling upon returning to classrooms and asked Lynn to scour the state and country to see how other counties are doing to "address this issue."

- Talked about how dispose of the former Willamette Industries mill site in Sweet Home. Property manager Rachel Adamec and County Attorney Gene Karandy provided information about the current environmental studies and how long it would take to advertise an auction. The issue will be placed on the Dec. 7 agenda.
- Authorized Linn County Assessor and Tax Collector Andy Stevens to participate in a program through the Oregon Department of Revenue that outlines how tax reimbursement for counties affected by the 2020 wildfires will distribute funds to affected taxing districts. Stevens said the application deadline is Dec. 1.
- Approved a resolution to allow Ryan and Jennifer Smothers to annex their property at 29896 Sodaville Mountain Road, Lebanon, into the Lebanon Rural Fire District.
- Continued a public hearing from Oct. 5, allowing a comprehensive plan map amendment and zoning map amendment for a 67.19-acre property near Harrisburg. The owners said the property is not suitable to growing crops and they want to develop 5-acre home sites. Neighbors were concerned a housing development may negatively affect their well water resources.

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