
JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 10, 2017
Holiday Inn Express Meeting Room
Glendive, Montana

The Commission convened at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, July 10, 2017, in the meeting room in the Holiday Inn Express, 1919 N. Merrill Avenue, Glendive, Montana. All Commission members were present and participated in the applicant interviews for the 7th Judicial District: Judge Richard Simonton (Chairman), Janice Bishop, Karl Englund, Elizabeth Halverson, Hal Harper, Lane Larson, and Nancy Zadick. Lois Menzies, Office of Court Administrator, served as Commission staff.

The interview schedule was as follows:

8:00 a.m.	Sally K. Hickok
8:35 a.m.	Olivia Cherlynn Rieger
9:20 a.m.	Matthew Stuart Robertson
9:55 a.m.	Cynthia K. Thornton
10:25 a.m.	Deliberations

Each applicant made an opening statement, and questions from the Commission followed. Members questioned applicants in several areas including range and depth of legal experience (e.g., trials, complex civil litigation); areas of weakness and how they would be addressed; challenges facing the 7th Judicial District; characteristics of a good district judge; working with pro se litigants; electability within the judicial district; running an effective campaign if appointed; running for the judicial seat if not appointed; election versus appointment of judges; state-run versus contract prisons; transitioning to the role of judge; separation of church and state; and use of scheduling orders. Some applicants were asked to clarify or expand upon information in their applications. Following questions from the Commission, applicants delivered closing remarks.

The Commission began deliberations following the last interview. Seven members (unanimous) voted in favor of nominating Olivia Rieger and Cynthia Thornton. Five members (Simonton, Bishop, Englund, Harper, and Zadick) voted in favor of nominating Matthew Robertson with two members opposed (Halverson and Larson). Members unanimously declined to nominate Sally Hickok for the position.

The reasons for nominating the applicants are contained in the certificate and report submitted to the Governor, which are incorporated into these minutes and attached to them.

The Commission adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.

CERTIFICATE

The Judicial Nomination Commission of the State of Montana hereby certifies to the Honorable Steve Bullock, Governor of the State of Montana that it has agreed and approved the qualifications of the following lawyers for appointment as District Court Judge for the Seventh Judicial District.

All of these we now certify are qualified for appointment under the laws of the State of Montana. We hereby certify the same to you, as required by law, and list them in alphabetical order:

Olivia Cherlynn Rieger
Matthew Stuart Robertson
Cynthia K. Thornton

REPORT

Pursuant to Section 3-1-1010, MCA, the Judicial Nomination Commission provides the following report:

Seven members of the Judicial Nomination Commission were present and participated in the applicant interviews and deliberations on July 10, 2017, in Glendive, Montana. The applications of and public comments regarding the above-listed nominees are attached to this certificate and also may be reviewed at: <http://www.courts.mt.gov>.

Olivia Cherlynn Rieger received seven affirmative votes to recommend her appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Ms. Rieger:

1. meets the minimum qualifications for the position of district court judge;
2. appears to be electable to the position within the judicial district;
3. has a depth and breadth of legal experience;
4. demonstrates judicial temperament; and
5. has significant support within the community for serving in the position of district court judge.

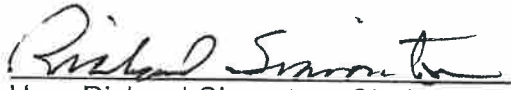
Matthew Stuart Robertson received five affirmative votes to recommend his appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Mr. Robertson:

1. meets the minimum qualifications for the position of district court judge;
2. appears to be electable to the position within the judicial district;
3. has a depth and breadth of legal experience;
4. demonstrates judicial temperament; and
5. has significant support within the community for serving in the position of district court judge.

Cynthia K. Thornton received seven affirmative votes to recommend her appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Ms. Thornton:

1. meets the minimum qualifications for the position of district court judge;
2. appears to be electable to the position within the judicial district;
3. has a depth and breadth of legal experience;
4. demonstrates judicial temperament; and
5. has significant support within the community for serving in the position of district court judge.

Done at Glendive, Montana on the 10th day of July, 2017.



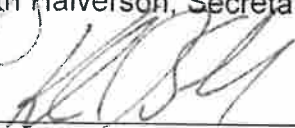
Hon. Richard Simonton, Chairman



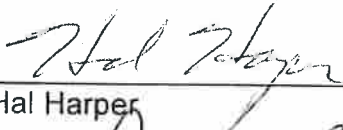
Elizabeth Halverson, Secretary



Janice Bishop



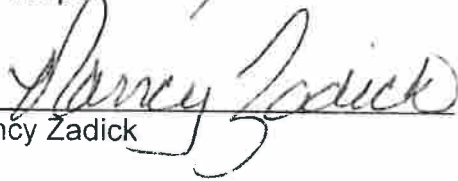
Karl Englund



Hal Harper



Lane Larson



Nancy Zadick