
JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 9, 2015
South Park Avenue Building
Helena, Montana

The Commission convened on Monday, November 9, 2015, at 8:35 a.m. in the third floor conference room at 301 South Park Avenue (former federal building) in Helena. Commission members participating in the interviews were Judge Richard Simonton (Chairman), Mona Charles, Elizabeth Halverson, Hal Harper, Lane Larson, Ryan Rusche, and Nancy Zadick. Lois Menzies, Office of Court Administrator, served as staff to the Commission.

The interview schedule was as follows:

- 8:30 a.m. Chris Abbott
- 9:05 a.m. Melissa Broch
- 9:40 a.m. Marc Buyske
- 10:30 a.m. DeeAnn Cooney
- 11:05 a.m. Dan Guzynski
- 11:40 a.m. Barb Harris
- 1:15 p.m. Don Jones
- 1:50 p.m. Mike McMahon
- 2:20 p.m. Deliberations

Each applicant made an opening statement, and questions from the Commission followed. Members questioned applicants in several areas including anticipated allocation of time on the bench; ability to handle scrutiny from the media; readiness to run for election if appointed and interest in running if not appointed; handling the growth in cases involving self-represented litigants; range and depth of legal experience (e.g., complex civil litigation, family law); approach for coming up to speed in areas in which experience is lacking; caseload management and granting of continuances; preference for electing versus appointing judges; and personality traits that would ensure success on the bench. Some applicants were asked to clarify or elaborate upon information in their applications or public comment received. Following questions from the Commission, applicants were given an opportunity to provide closing remarks.

The Commission began deliberations following the last interview. The results of the members' votes and reasons for nominating each applicant 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 3:15 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 First 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:

Christopher David Abbott

Marc George Buyske

DeeAnn Gribble Cooney

Daniel Mark Guzynski

Donald Ford Jones

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. 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>.

Christopher David Abbott received seven affirmative votes to recommend his appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Mr. Abbott:

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.

Marc George Buyske received four affirmative votes to recommend his appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Mr. Buyske:

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.

DeeAnn Gribble Cooney received four affirmative votes to recommend her appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Ms. Cooney:

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.

Daniel Mark Guzynski received seven affirmative votes to recommend his appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Mr. Guzynski:

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.

Donald Ford Jones received seven affirmative votes to recommend his appointment. The Commission's reasons for recommending this nominee are that Mr. Jones:

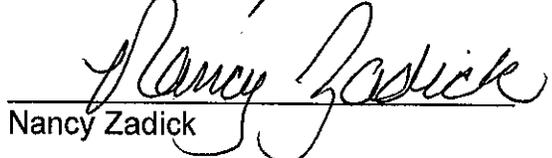
1. meets the minimum qualifications for the position of district court judge;
2. appears to be electable to the position within the judicial district;
3. has a depth and breadth of legal experience;
4. demonstrates judicial temperament; and
5. has significant support within the community for serving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

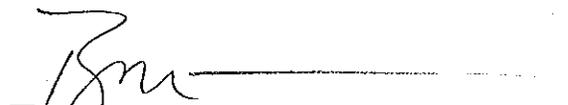
Done at Helena, Montana on the 9th day of November, 2015.


Hon. Richard Simonton, Chairman


Mona Charles


Hal Harper


Nancy Zadick


Ryan Rusche, Secretary


Elizabeth Halverson


Lane Larson