

7 people in running for 1 South Tahoe council seat

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By Kathryn Reed

The four South Lake Tahoe council members will have at least seven people to choose from to fill the vacant seat.



Five had turned in papers, with two more turning in papers today – Brooke Laine and Bruce Grego.

Laine is a former council member, having stepped down in 2002. That was the year Kathay Lovell was elected. Lovell also wants back on the council. She chose not to run after eight years on the council.

Grego was on the November ballot for re-election – to which voters said no to him.

Bill Crawford, another ex-councilmember, is also contending for the seat. He, like Lovell, also chose not to run in 2010.

Austin Sass, who has been on the Planning Commission, but did not seek reappoint this week is running. He has been on the ballot twice and voters have not selected him.

Lake Tahoe Community College instructor Scott Valentine and chiropractor Howard Bittner are the two political newcomers vying for the seat.

People have until 5pm Jan. 25 to fill out the application.

The seat came open when Claire Fortier in December quit two years into her four-year term. Laine was Fortier's campaign manager.

All candidates will be interviewed starting at 9am Jan. 29 at Lake Tahoe Airport.

"I will be conducting a randomized alphabet drawing similar to the process the California secretary of State uses which is set forth in the California Elections Code to determine the order of interviews," City Clerk Suzie Alessi said in an email.

The council will set the interview process that morning. Mayor Tom Davis will be participating via teleconference, which means all votes will be by roll call. The four could use a coin flip to decide who the fifth candidate is or some other method if there are not three votes for one candidate, or they could call for an election in June.