

LTUSD selects newcomer as board member



Adam Jones will be sworn in to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board in March. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District board members went with experience over longevity in the community when it came to appointing a fifth board member.

Adam Jones, 43, will fill the seat vacated by Sue Novasel. He will be sworn in at the next meeting, March 10. Novasel resigned last month after being elected to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. This term ends Dec. 2, 2016.

“He is likely to bring in ideas from the outside and not be too insular,” board member Mike Doyle said of Jones during the Feb. 10 deliberations.

Jones and his wife have owned a vacation home here for a number of years. Last summer they became full-time residents with their children, who are in third and fifth grade.

He told *Lake Tahoe News* the schools were a factor in deciding to relocate here. He likes the programs and facilities at South Tahoe High School, and that per pupil spending is higher in LTUSD compared to the South Bay district they came from.

Jones told the board that LTUSD uses technology better than the district he came from in Santa Clara.

While this is the first political board Jones has been on, his experience on a school board started in high school when he was the student rep to a board.

What he brings to LTUSD is experience in other avenues. He has a bachelor's in public policy from Stanford University and a master's in education.

In the Bay Area Jones has been the president and finance director of the Don Callejon School Community Organization, which would be the equivalent to the local education foundation. He also was a member and chairman of the school site council.

The way he talked about education during the interview process proved he understands the system, even if he doesn't know the nuances of the local schools.

For the past 21 years, Jones has worked for SimulTrans in Mountain View. He is still the chief operating officer for the translation firm. He returns to the Bay Area about every other week, but otherwise works remotely.

Five people were vying for the seat – Jones, John Drum, Kyle Martinez, Madelyn Rios and Jennifer Peterson. Now that LTUSD board seats are broken up into districts, the person had to

reside in the area that represents Meyers.

The five were interviewed in open session, asked the same 10 questions without the other candidates in the room, and then the four-seated members deliberated with everyone hearing the discussion.

In the initial round of picking their two finalists, all current members – Barbara Bannar, Larry Green, Mike Doyle and Ginger Nicolay-Davis – all had Jones on their list. Two voted for Rios and two for Drum.

In further discussions it was clear Jones and Drum were the top choices. But ultimately Jones won out because of what board members said would be his ability to jump onto the board without much of a learning curve.