

NEWS

# Olsen tops poll by Kitsap County Bar Association for Bainbridge Island Municipal Court judge

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Members of the Kitsap County Bar Association have weighed in on the candidates for the next Bainbridge Island Municipal Court judge, and a poll released by the association shows that Steve Olsen was viewed as the first choice and the most qualified for the position.

Olsen received more "first choice" votes than the second-place finisher in the poll. Olsen picked up 23 first-choice votes, while Tom Alpaugh had 11.

In third was Stephen King, with three.

Judge [Kate Carruthers announced in July](#) she would not be seeking another term with the city. Carruthers has worked with the city since 2006, and the city is currently reviewing 12 candidates for the job.

Results of the poll were announced Monday.

Matthew Lucas, president of the Kitsap County Bar Association, said the poll had two parts. The membership was first asked to rank their top three candidates. For the second part of the poll, members listed each candidate as "highly qualified," "qualified" or "not qualified." Members could abstain or participate in either part of the process, which is why different candidates have different voting results.

In the poll, 30 members of the association said Olsen was "highly qualified" for the judge's post. A total of 20 said Alpaugh was "highly qualified."

Cindy Smith received 15 votes as "highly qualified."

Lucas said the results are very significant for the community.

When Governor Gregoire asked the Kitsap Bar to conduct a similar preference poll for the last Kitsap Superior Court opening, Lucas noted the governor chose to only interview the top two candidates from the bar poll to fill the two open positions.

In addition to Olsen, Alpaugh, King and Smith, the other candidates for the Bainbridge judge position are Nanette Blackburn, Miren First, Jim Kennedy, Karen Klein, Sara McCulloch, Shane Seaman, Johanna Vanderlee and Victoria VanNocken.

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