

Recount possible in Birmingham school board vote

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

A vote recount may be held before Monday's Birmingham school board race results are final.

Only four votes separate the apparent second-place winner and another candidate in the contest for two four-year terms on the board.

William Frever, with 1,067 votes, and Jerald Scheel, who received 997 votes, have the highest totals among eight candidates for the two posts.

But Wade Crane's 985 vote total, posted Monday night, was revised to 953 votes Tuesday morning when three errors were found in precinct records turned in after the polls closed.

The errors also changed the original totals posted for two other candidates but not significantly. The precinct records were delivered to the county board of canvassers Tuesday. An official count will be available some time next week.

CRANE SAID Tuesday he would wait for the official report of the board of canvassers before deciding whether to ask for a recount.

"I may ask for a recount of the absentee votes because they are counted by hand," Crane said, "but probably not for the total vote, unless the absentee count narrows it down to one or two votes."

Monday night's countdown at the administration building turned into a cliff hanger for Scheel and Crane when all returns were in except for one precinct. Crane was leading Scheel by a few votes, but the situation reversed when the final precinct reported.

Frever, a candidate favored by the Birmingham Education Association, held on to his first-place spot but in the final tally led Scheel by only 60 votes.

Of the remaining candidates, Marsha Murav received 840 votes, Peter Cartwright 721, Clyde Pritchard 702, Everett Lefter 338 and Michael Currier 332.

PRITCHARD ALSO was endorsed by the teachers union but failed to keep pace with Frever's vote totals.

The 3,270 voters in Monday's election, which had no issues other than the Birmingham board race and election of trustees for Oakland Community College, drew seven per cent of the district's registered voters.

The only issue of any consequence that surfaced during the campaign centered around school closings, with most of the candidates opposed to closing schools.

PERHAPS THE most outspoken on that issue was Frever, who said Monday night he "took a stand on issues as early as I could."

"I think the community is speaking," he said, when it was apparent that he would be a winner in the election.

"I said that I absolutely oppose school closings, and they (people) agree with me."

"I can't handle it alone, but I know what the people think."

When Crane's total appeared to be 12 votes behind Scheel's Monday night, Crane said he was glad he had made "a good run at it."

Asked if he would try again, he said, "I will think about it seriously. I have learned some things that probably would be beneficial in another race."

SCHHEEL, WHO had many supporters watching the election returns, beamed as well-wishers congratulated him on his victory.

"It has been a healthy campaign," he said. "I have learned a lot. It has been exciting and a great race right up to the last 15 minutes. I didn't get nervous until then."

He said he had never been through a political campaign before and believed that having eight candidates

increased their opportunities to take the pulse of the community."

Frever collected the highest number of votes of any of the candidates in eight of the 22 precincts and ended in a three-way tie for the lead in another.

Scheel led in three precincts and tied fourth. Crane led in four and tied in a fifth.

WITH THE exception of Currier,

every candidate led in at least one precinct.

The highest totals were Crane's 156 and 130 votes in the two precincts at Beverly School, his home territory.

Frever received 109 votes in the Adams precinct, where he lives. Pritchard received 109 in his home school of Franklin. Scheel also carried his Meadow Lake precinct with 104 votes and was the only candidate to top 100

votes in a precinct other than the one in which he lived. He received 107 votes in one of two precincts voting at Qarton School.

The two newly elected trustees will begin their board duties at the July 10 meeting. New officers will be chosen at the same time.

Leaving the board this month will be Donna Hartwig, current president, and Janet Johnson.

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