

Lompico finally fills Water Board

By TOM LONG

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LOMPICO — To the surprise of many and the obvious pleasure of most people at the Lompico Water Board meeting Saturday, two new directors were appointed to the board, bringing it to its full complement of five directors for the first time in months.

"That's wonderful," one woman called out after board director's Stacy Wright, Richard Harrington and Hal Rogers were able to compromise and unanimously appoint Paula Gallant to the board. The approval of Gallant followed the previous appointment of contractor Chuck Wright.

The board will not remain at full strength for long, though. Rogers —

who had been found by the grand jury to not be a resident of Lompico — had handed his letter of resignation to Harrington. Harrington said it was worded to take effect July 4, the anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's death.

Still, those attending seemed elated to have any board at all. If no agreement on appointments had been reached, the remaining two-

man board would have been left powerless, without a quorum following Rogers' resignation.

If that had happened it would have been up to the Board of Supervisors to appoint a new member July 14, leaving the water district without management amid what the state calls a critical water shortage.

"Two grownups — I'm so pleased," said Gail Levy, one of five applicants for the positions who was not appointed. "The two people who got on are reasonable people who can compromise."

Gallant said, "Chuck and I know each other and we can talk to each other and that will be of benefit to the board," Gallant said after her appointment.

"I believe we can solve most of our problems with this new board," said board President Richard Harrington. "It's a step in the right direction, now let's get on with business."

Many were surprised that Rogers, Harrington and Stacy Wright were able to agree on any appointments, since they have agreed on little in recent months. But Chuck Wright's last-minute application changed things.

A longtime resident and a contrac-

tor who has worked on many projects for the district over the years, he has followed the water board closely, and was seen as both an informed and politically neutral appointee.

"This was the first interest I know of that he has ever shown in joining the board," Harrington said. "He's not a political person that I can see."

The new member was not at the meeting. He was doing volunteer work, trying to repair the district's inoperative well.

Rogers agreed with Wright's appropriateness, saying "We don't need any more politicians on this board."

Gallant missed being elected to the water board by one vote in the last election. When she was first nominated Saturday, Stacy Wright voted against her. But when Rogers and Harrington said they would swear Chuck Wright into office and then nominate Gallant again, Stacy Wright gave in and voted for her.

Gallant said that one of the first ideas she would present to the board would be a time limit on meetings so

that more members of the public might attend. Some recent meetings have run more than eight hours.

"People who work five days a week do not have eight hours to spend at meetings," Gallant said.