

## County says goodbye to longtime public servants

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Yolo County bid farewell on Tuesday to several longtime public servants with more than 40 combined years in elected office.

In a ceremony held at the beginning of Tuesday's Board of Supervisors meeting, outgoing Supervisor Matt Rexroad, Sheriff Ed Prieto and Chief Financial Officer Howard Newens were all thanked for their contributions and honored for their service.

Rexroad, who represented much of Woodland for 12 years on the board, declined to seek re-election this year and will be replaced next month by Gary Sandy, who won election in June.

Prieto, meanwhile, was defeated in the June primary election by his longtime undersheriff, Tom Lopez, and retires after a 50-year career in law enforcement, including 20 years as Yolo County sheriff.

Newens served Yolo County for 18 years, including 12 as elected auditor-controller and treasurer-tax collector before that office was eliminated and Newens was appointed chief financial officer.

Also recognized Tuesday was departing chief probation officer Brent Cardall, who is retiring after a long probation career, including the last five years as chief in Yolo County.

The county is currently recruiting for Cardall's replacement and an interim chief probation officer likely will be appointed before that process is completed, according to county spokeswoman Beth Gabor.

Meanwhile, that process is complete for Newens' replacement: The Board of Supervisors voted in closed session Tuesday to appoint Chad Rinde, currently the county's assistant chief financial officer, to the top position.

The high regard for Newens among county staff — whom Rexroad called, "the fiscal conscience of the county" — was evident at Tuesday's ceremony, where he was greeted with a loud and sustained standing ovation in the Board of Supervisors chambers.

"It's been a very rewarding experience, the past 18½ years," said Newens, who added that the decision to retire was difficult.

"It's been a privilege to work with a group of very smart and competent department heads and especially a pleasure and privilege to work side by side with staff in the Department of Financial Services... who are very dedicated to the ideal of public service," Newens said.

"I enjoyed the work I am doing, and enjoyed the company, and some people have been trying to invite me to extend my stay here... but there's a time for everything, a season for every activity on earth and this is the season for me to wind down... to step down so others can step up and make their mark."

Newens spent 20 years as an auditor for Alameda County before joining Yolo County's financial services staff in 2000. He was elected auditor-controller in 2002, then re-elected to the expanded office of auditor-controller/treasurer-tax collector in 2006 and 2010.

After Yolo County voters passed Measure H in 2014 — eliminating the office and replacing it with that of an appointed chief financial officer — Newens was appointed to that position by the Board of Supervisors.

“During his 18-year career with Yolo County, Howard has been an advocate for sound fiscal management with an inclusive approach toward decision-making, which has resulted in steady and effective leadership of the financial functions of Yolo County,” the resolution presented to Newens on Tuesday said.

“The Yolo County Board of Supervisors hereby thanks, commends and wishes to express its gratitude to Howard Newens for his years of public service to Yolo County and wishes him a long, happy and healthy retirement.”

Riding off

Also receiving a sustained ovation and praise from board members on Tuesday was Prieto.

“Fifty years of law enforcement service doesn’t happen by accident,” said Supervisor Oscar Villegas of West Sacramento. “It requires a tremendous amount of dedication.”

Villegas noted the way Prieto rarely used prepared notes when speaking in public, and said, “it speaks volumes about who you are as a person — you speak from the heart... you wear it on your sleeves, you say it like it is and you’ve always done it your way.

“But I know you have a soft place in your heart and I’ve seen it,” Villegas added, describing a time two years ago when Prieto visited with some teens in West Sacramento.

The kids, Villegas said, were very nervous about immigration issues — their own status as well as their parents — and fearful about going to school.

“You came to the school, you talked to the kids, and you had a degree of empathy that I’d never seen before. A lot of these kids are off the radar and were worried about their prospects for graduating from high school, and the likelihood of not having a cap and gown, because they couldn’t afford it, and you, without any hesitation, pulled out your checkbook and said, ‘How much is it going to cost?’ and you wrote the check.”

“You have left the sheriff’s department in a much better place than you found it,” Villegas told Prieto.

For his part, Prieto said, “at the end of the day, it’s time for me to go. It’s been a privilege to be sheriff for this organization and the entire community. I’m ecstatic leaving this place in a much better place than I found it.”

Supervisor Jim Provenza of Davis presented Cardall with a resolution thanking him for his service as chief probation officer, and noted that Cardall “brought us through the era of the community correction program, having to change from a system that emphasized punishment to one that emphasized reform.”

Additionally, Cardall oversaw the creation of the day reporting center as well as apprenticeship programs for young people and “brought Yolo Arts into the juvenile hall,” Provenza said.

“And I remember some of the kids saying that being recognized for their art was one of the first times in their whole life that they were recognized, so I think you have positively implemented changes in our criminal justice center and really put us on the path to be a leader in the state of California,” Provenza told Cardall.

“Yolo County has been an awesome place to serve and I’m very grateful for the opportunity to serve,” Cardall, who spent 32 years in law enforcement, said Tuesday.

“We have a lot of great leaders here ... among the best I’ve ever seen, and we have a great probation department,” he added.

“This has been a great ride. It has been extremely hard work, and I didn’t realize how it would be (so) labor intensive, but it definitely has been rewarding.”

#### Board departure

Not left out by colleagues past and present on Tuesday was Rexroad, who was serving in his final Board of Supervisors meeting.

He received some friendly ribbing — as well as an assortment of gag gifts in the form of photos and trophies — from two former board colleagues: Helen Thomson and Mike McGowan.

“I wish Gary (Sandy) a lot of luck... I think it’s an upgrade,” McGowan quipped at the beginning of his comments.

McGowan, who represented West Sacramento on the Board of Supervisors for many years, noted that he and Rexroad share many attributes: “We’re both attorneys. We were both mayors of our hometowns (Rexroad in Woodland and McGowan in West Sacramento), and we’re both Marines, and even though we kind of came from different sides of the aisle to some extent, we bonded on the Board of Supervisors.

“We had a lot of fun, a lot of respect for each other and we got a lot of good things done,” said McGowan.

“Job well done,” he told Rexroad. “And Semper Fi.”