Cabrillo appoints Watsonville man as new trustee

By KIMBERLY WHITE
klewhite@santecrussentinel.com

APTONS — Watsonville resident Ed Banks has been appointed to a seat on Cabrillo College’s Board of Trustees, following former Trustee Katy Stonebloom’s announcement last month that she’s moving outside of the district.

The position is provisional, but Banks plans to run for a permanent seat during the regular elections in November.

At a special board meeting Monday in Watsonville, Banks was named Trustee for Area VII, which includes parts of Santa Cruz County. He was selected over Priscilla Leighton, who serves on the county’s employment advisory board.

Banks said he first considered joining the board in January, when longtime former Trustee Rebecca Garcia resigned her seat, but tabled the idea after realizing he lived outside of that district.

“When I heard about (Stonebloom) having to resign, I thought, ‘Well, if nothing else, it’ll give me a different perspective of how the college works,’” said Banks, who graduated from Cabrillo in 1968 and has served various positions on the Cabrillo College Foundation for the last seven years. He now serves as its vice president, but will take over as president when the fall term starts.

Serving on the board, he said, is “my small way of contributing in a different facet toward the success of the institution.”

But he also acknowledged the challenges ahead.

At Monday’s meeting, Board members are expected to adopt a preliminary 2012-13 budget with a $3.2 million deficit, even after nearly two dozen faculty and staff have either been laid off or had their hours reduced during the last few months.

Adopting that budget allows Cabrillo to enter the new fiscal year, according to Victoria Lewis, Cabrillo’s vice president of administrative services, and it’s based on a best-case scenario in which voters pass Gov. Jerry Brown’s tax increase initiatives in November.

The final budget will not come before the board until September, when it may also approve a fourth round of layoffs and reductions in hours. That budget, Lewis said, assumes voters will reject Brown’s initiatives, but that the state will somehow find another way to raise revenue. The mid-case scenario assumes Cabrillo’s budget will be slashed by $3 million, with those cuts going into effect Jan. 1, 2013.

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