

Williams appointed to interim Ward 5 post

Frank Armand Albano
Sentinel-Voice

As the City Council chamber lights flickered on and off for a few seconds, Mayor Oscar Goodman called Item No. 14.

Since none of the 10 candidates for the Ward 5 City Council seat got more than 50 percent plus one vote in Tuesday's primary — which would have prevented a runoff in the General Election between the two top vote earners — an interim appointment was made the following day to fill the vacancy. The seat has been open since former Councilman Lawrence Weekly re-

tired following his appointment to the Clark County Commission recently.

Goodman introduced the action item, calling Brenda Williams "a credit to the community and a good Las Vegan." With the consent of the council still standing front and center after opening ceremonies, the roll call was taken. There were 7 yeas and with none opposed or abstaining and Williams was confirmed.

Goodman stated: "I'm going to swear you in today," and proceeded.

Faced with a sudden need to act, brought on by interpretation of state statute, the

City Council could not leave the Ward 5 council seat vacant until the June 5 General Election win, as it originally planned. Up until last Friday, the council believed it was okay to leave the ward without a representative for two months longer. However, according to the Secretary of State's office,

NRS 266.225 called for the appointment of an interim replacement by this week's meeting.

Dressed in a dark blue, two-piece outfit and white blouse, Williams told the

packed council chamber, "I thank the mayor, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Reese and Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian. But most of all, I thank God. Before I place my feet on the floor in the morning, I thank God."

She told the assemblage, "You will not be sorry. I plan to do lot of things; to be proactive — not reactive."

To a rousing cheers, she said, "I do," to the Oath of Allegiance. Williams, who is a former aide to Sen. Richard Bryan, immediately took the helm of Ward 5.

She introduced her husband, Monroe.

"Monroe is a retired city firefighter. He was the first Black man to be hired by Las Vegas in 1963," she said.

"I want to be successful in Ward 5... There are a lot of things to do in Ward 5."

As a lifelong Las Vegan, Williams said, "I know a lot of the concerns. There's a lot of growth; we need more growth. Things have to be done proactively. We have to change Ward 5's image. When I see weeds, toilet paper in Ward 5, that's an irri-

tant. Change this image. I'm a gatekeeper. I will serve the residents of Ward 5 with integrity."

She ended by thanking Lawrence Weekly for making the recommendation to appoint her.

Goodman told the audience, "I spoke with the city manager and the mayor pro tem last Friday. We couldn't make the announcement until Ms. Williams would accept the appointment."

Reese said afterwards, "If we must appoint somebody, she's as good as any."

Nevada governor enduring probes

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Gov. Jim Gibbons' decision to hire high-priced Washington, D.C., attorney Abbe Lowell shows he's taking seriously an FBI investigation into the governor's associations with a company awarded secret military contracts when Gibbons was in Congress, legal analysts said.

Federal law enforcement officials said in February that the FBI is investigating Gibbons' failure to report properly the gifts or payments received from the software company that was awarded the contracts.

"You don't hire somebody at the level of experience of Abbe Lowell unless you're facing a serious matter," said Laurie Levenson, a former federal prosecutor who is a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

"Kickbacks, bribery — those are years in jail. What you need is somebody who has the smarts, expertise and the resources to stay on top of this," she told the *Las Vegas Sun*.

Lowell declined to comment. Gibbons has denied any wrongdoing.

The company involved in the case is eTrepid Technologies LLC of Reno, owned by Warren Trepp, a longtime Gibbons friend who contributed nearly \$100,000 to the Republican's campaign for governor.

The case arose out of a civil lawsuit brought against Trepp by a one-time business partner. In the lawsuit, which involves ownership of software codes, Trepp's former partner made allegations that Gibbons used his influence to

steer tens of millions of dollars in military contracts to Trepp.

According to the Wall Street Journal, a federal grand jury in Washington has begun issuing document subpoenas in the investigation.

Stan Hunterton, a Las Vegas attorney who supports Gibbons' hiring of Lowell, knows what people will think now that the veteran defense attorney is involved in the case.

"It's what we used to call the F. Lee Bailey problem: If you show up with F. Lee Bailey, what does everybody assume? You're guilty," Hunterton said, adding that it's better than the alternative of a weaker defense.

Lowell's clients include lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who's serving six years in prison on a criminal case out of Florida, where he pleaded guilty in January 2006 to charges of conspiracy, honest services fraud and tax evasion.

Abramoff has not yet been sentenced on charges of mail fraud, conspiracy and tax evasion stemming from the influence-peddling scandal in Washington.

Other clients included former California Democratic Rep. Gary Condit, who was cleared in the death of a missing intern to whom he was romantically linked, and former HealthSouth Chief Executive Richard Scrushy, who was acquitted of all charges for a \$2.6 billion accounting fraud.

As Democratic counsel for the House Judiciary Committee, Lowell also helped (See Gibbons, Page 3)

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