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Published January 21, 2006

Election campaign enters final stretch

• Candidates David Gordon and Bill Wiggins have pulled ahead in the money race, with \$24,000 and \$16,700 respectively.

By Mark R. Madler, The Leader

DOWNTOWN BURBANK -- Walking door-to-door, making phone calls and airing cable television commercials are among the methods five candidates in the special City Council election are employing in the final days of campaigning.

Two of the candidates -- David Gordon and Bill Wiggins -- meanwhile, have pulled away from the pack in terms of money raised for their campaigns.

advertisement The most recent campaign finance disclosure reports filed with the City Clerk's office show that Gordon, an optometrist who served on the Planning Board, had \$24,200 in his campaign war chest as of Jan. 7, \$13,000 of which was loans to himself.

"Many people have voiced to me they would like a new face and new approach," Gordon said. "They are tired of 5-0 votes and want diversity on the council."

Gordon had an expense of \$6,500 to Charter Media to produce and air a television commercial touting his message.

"I feel a lot of people watch television as their main source of information and thought that would b a good way to reach the community," Gordon said.

Wiggins, a former council member and mayor, reported \$16,700 in his campaign chest to get his message out to voters.

"We ran a very positive campaign," Wiggins said. "All of our literature, all of our ads have been positive. That's the way a campaign should be run."

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Candidate Vahe Hovanesian reported collecting \$4,160 in contributions, and candidates Amy Lawrence and Michael Dontanville were not required to report their finances because they had collected less than \$1,000.

Ballots started going out Jan. 3 in the all-mail election to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of former Councilwoman Stacey Murphy.

Murphy resigned her council seat in August after she was charged with felony cocaine possession and misdemeanor child endangerment.

Voters have until 7 p.m. to return their ballot to the City Clerk's Office in City Hall, 275 E. Olive Ave.

The winner will be sworn in at the Feb. 14 council meeting.

Lawrence, an attorney, and Dontanville, a retired air traffic controller, are political newcomers making their first run at elected office. Hovanesian, an attorney, is making his third try for a council seat.

Lacking the money of their two opponents, the three are getting their message out in simpler ways.

Dontanville will spend the weekend before the election going door-to-door talking with voters.

"Quite a few are thrilled that a candidate would come up and talk with them," Dontanville said.

Lawrence has also found an advantage to talking directly to voters.

"I've had a great deal of positive feedback," Lawrence said. "I've had calls from people who have heard from other people who like my message and said they would vote for me."

Hovanesian's strategy in the waning days of the election is responding to e-mails from residents, making sure that registered voters have cast a ballot and working the phones.

"This is a content-based campaign," Hovanesian said. "People want to hear from me so I have been pushing the phone calls and communicating with people."

Voters can return their ballots to five locations around the city from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. today and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Jan. 24: City Hall, 275 E. Olive Ave.; McCambridge Park, 1515 Glenoaks Blvd.; Buena Vista branch library, 300 N. Buena Vista St.; Tuttle Center, 1731 N. Ontario St. and Joslyn Center, 1301 W. Olive Ave.

QUESTION

Are you satisfied with the city's mail-in election this year? E-mail your responses to burbankleader @latimes.com; mail them to the Burbank Leader, 111 W. Wilson Ave., Glendale, CA 91203. Please spell your name and include your address and phone number for verification purposes only.