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**Walker appointees refusing to step off tech college board**

*By WisPolitics.com*

The Natural Resources Board isn’t the only governmental body where former Gov. Scott Walker’s appointees are refusing to leave their posts until replacements are confirmed by the Republican-controlled state Senate.

Three Walker appointees to the Wisconsin Technical College System Board continue to serve in their roles even though their terms expired in May. That has prevented Gov. Tony Evers’ picks to replace them from beginning to serve on the body, which sets policy for the 16-campus system.

Chair Frederick Prehn has caused a political stir — and a legal fight — by continuing to serve in his post on the DNR board despite his appointment expiring seven months ago. He’s vowed not to give up the seat until the Senate confirms his replacement, but Gov. Tony Evers’ pick to replace Prehn remains bottled up in a state Senate committee controlled by Republicans.

Evers’ three picks still waiting to serve on the Tech College Board, meanwhile, have yet to receive a public hearing before the Senate Universities and Technical Colleges Committee even though the governor made the nominations between June 24 and Nov. 19.

Chair Roger Roth’s office says the delays are due to scheduling conflicts. But Sen. Chris Larson, D-Milwaukee and a member of the committee, sees other motivations.

“This is unprecedented. It is 100% motivated by blatant partisan politics,” Larson said.

The 13-member board includes three Evers-friendly ex-officio members who serve because of their positions: state Superintendent Jill Underly, Workforce Development Secretary Amy Pechacek and Evers-appointed UW System Regent John Miller.

Of the remaining 10 members, five are Evers’ appointees and the other five are Walker holdovers, including the three whose terms have already expired.

The arrangement effectively gives those associated with Evers an 8-5 majority.

Walker appointees remaining on the board with expired terms include Mary Williams, a former GOP state representative from northern Wisconsin; Kelly Tourdot; vice president of Associated Builders and Contractors; and Becky Levzow, a southern Wisconsin dairy farmer.

Williams initially fielded a call from a WisPolitics.com reporter this week and said she’d call back, but hasn’t responded to messages since. The other two haven’t returned calls.

As their replacements, Evers appointed Sara Rogers, planning analyst for Employ Milwaukee; Daniel Klecker, state education director for the Foundation of the Wisconsin Automobile and Truck Dealers Association; and Paul Buhr, a Viroqua-area dairy farmer who ran unsuccessfully for the 96th Assembly District in 2018 as a Democrat.

Evers initially appointed Eric Williams, executive director of the Educational Opportunity Program, to Klecker’s spot, but Williams left to serve as vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in Chicago. Evers then appointed Klecker to the post on Nov. 19.

While Rogers, Klecker and Buhr have been attending board meetings, they’ve not been able to vote.

So far, just three of Evers’ eight appointees to the Tech College System Board have been confirmed; two of whom had either been appointed or reappointed by Walker.

Terry McGowan, president and business manager for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 139 was first appointed by Walker, while Mark Tyler, founder and chairman of OEM Fabricators, was initially appointed by Gov. Jim Doyle and then reappointed by Walker. The third Evers pick to be confirmed is Doug Holton, a former chief of the Milwaukee Fire Department.

Evers appointed Megan Bahr to the board as a student representative, and Quincy Daniels, an associate professor at Northcentral University, as a public member. While they haven’t received confirmation votes yet, both have been serving on the board.

Meanwhile, seven of Evers’ appointees to the UW Board of Regents also have not been confirmed by the Senate. But unlike with Prehn and the Tech College System Board, they are serving as regents.

Without confirmation, a new governor in 2023 could rescind any of the appointments.

Roth’s aide added timing and availability issues have also caused delays for the UW Board of Regents appointment public and executive hearings too.

“There are currently no plans to hold an executive session on appointees this month, but will be under consideration in the new year,” Roth’s aide said.

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