

Incumbents Win in Lake Wales, Dundee, as Voters Approve Charter Change *Dundee Commissioner Alethea Pugh Defeated by Challenger Annette Wilson*

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Lake Wales Mayor Jack Hilligoss won an easy reelection victory Tuesday to a new 3-year term, turning back a challenge from former city commissioner Curtis Gibson in a race that saw record amounts spent, primarily by outside groups.

Hilligoss received 1390 votes, or 60.96 percent of the vote, while Gibson took 890 votes, or 39.04 percent. Hilligoss will be sworn in to serve a new three-year term as chair of the five-person commission.

Voters also approved a charter amendment that will require run-off elections by a wide margin. The change will ensure that future city elections will be won only by a candidate who wins a majority of votes cast, rather than the plurality that has determined two recent elections.

In the Lake Wales charter vote, 1570 voters supported the change, while only 513 were against, leaving 75.37 percent in favor of the change.

In Dundee, Mary Richardson defeated challenger Julia Hunt 280 to 257 to take a new term on the Dundee Town Commission Seat 4.

Challenger Annette Wilson won 324 votes, or 61.6 percent, to defeat incumbent Dundee Commissioner Alethea Pugh in the Seat 2 race. Dundee is directed by a five-person commission.

The Lake Wales race was unusually costly and included large expenditures by PACs based in Tampa and Tallahassee that called Gibson, who serves as general manager of the [Eagle Ridge Mall](#), "dangerous," citing two prior arrests.



Town of Dundee

Dundee Town Commissioner **Mary Richardson** won re-election in Tuesday's election, turning back a challenge from Julia Hunt.

One of the cited incidents involved a domestic violence accusation he faced while serving on the city commission. The second involved an attempt to cash a check sent to him as part of a scam. He was never prosecuted for either incident and charges were dropped.

Hilligoss, the pastor of High Point Church, denied involvement in the mailers and text messages, saying he didn't know the source of the attacks.

Lake Wales voters were required to stand in line for as much as an hour due to a lack of staffing. Although a post on the Facebook page of newly-elected Supervisor of Elections Melony Bell suggested that election officials were surprised by the turnout, the 2,200-plus voters closely matched that of the last two municipal elections in Lake Wales.