

Brockton elects representatives, for City Council, reflective of city's diversity.



Shaynah Barnes made history on Tuesday as the first black woman elected to the City Council.



“I was confident in my message and confident in my ability, but it’s still a little surreal,” said Barnes, 37, who took home 3,834 votes, or nearly 11 percent of the at-large vote.

“I grew up here, I’m a single mom with a very close family, but to be a leader for this city, and the first African-American woman on the council, that really means something,” she said.

Barnes and several other newly elected councilors are calling this year’s election transformational.

“I think it’s a great day for a city that’s looked like this for the longest time and now they have some representatives reflective of that diversity,” said Moises Rodrigues, 52, who finished just ahead of Barnes with 4,609 votes, or 13 percent, to become the council’s first Cape Verdean member.

“I’m very excited about who’s on the council. I think new faces, new perspectives, new ideas is really what keeps a city growing,” said Jass Stewart, 42, who four years ago became the first minority on the City Council.

Stewart cruised to another victory Tuesday with 7,012 votes, or nearly 20 percent.

But the top vote-getter, just as he was in the September preliminary, was incumbent Robert Sullivan, who garnered 22 percent, or 7,859 votes. Sullivan thanked his residents for electing him to a fifth term on the council and said he looks forward to working with his new colleagues.

Sullivan, 43, said the new council will be “a mixture of veteran leadership and ... rookies” who will all have to work together with the mayor and School Committee to better the city.

“We can’t be naive to the fact that difficult financial times are here and they’re not going away quickly,” Sullivan said. “We need to work together ... we’re all public servants and we serve the residents and the taxpayers.”

With two perennial top finishers stepping down in Todd Petti and Tom Brophy, the field grew to 16 before the September preliminary election cut the field to eight.

Of those who didn't win an at-large seat, anti-tax activist Paul Beckner and Craig Pina, chairman of the Republican City Committee, came closest. The two were separated by only 87 votes – Beckner garnered 3,431 votes and Pina, 3,344 – but they fell several hundred votes short of elected office.

Former School Committee member James Daley garnered 2,856 votes, while Ward 3 School Committee member Donegan came in last, with 2,557 votes.

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