



November 16, 2009

## Mayor's picks for bridges commission approved by council committee

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Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson's picks for a commission that will determine the role of tolls and other funding issues for the Ohio River Bridges Project received unanimous approval from a Metro Council committee on Monday afternoon.

The four appointees — public relations executive Sandra Frazier, University of Louisville College of Business Dean Charles Moyer, Greater Louisville Inc. President and CEO Joe Reagan and Ben Richmond, president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League — will now be considered at the full council's Thursday meeting.

Members of the Contracts and Appointments Committee, including some who had initially raised concerns about Abramson's choices, said they were satisfied with the nominees' qualifications.

Hal Heiner, R-19th District, singled out Moyer's background in finance. In remarks to the council committee, Moyer cited his experience on the audit committee of King Pharmaceuticals, a Bristol, Tenn., pharmaceutical company, in addition to his expertise in public utility rate cases and overall corporate finance.

"Certainly having Dean Moyer on the group, someone that's focused on large-scale infrastructure financing, will be a real benefit to the community," said Heiner, who also is a candidate for Louisville mayor.

Committee member Kevin Kramer, R-11th and the Republican caucus chairman, had doubted last week that all four appointees would pass on Monday. But after reviewing their qualifications, Kramer praised the choices.

Kramer said Richmond's familiarity with bonding large projects as a Metropolitan Sewer District board member, as well as Frazier's work fundraising for the Louisville Zoo, will be assets in deciding how to pay for the bridges project, which includes new spans downtown and in eastern Jefferson County and a redesigned Spaghetti Junction interchange.

Vicki Welch, D-13th and the committee's chairwoman, and Rick Blackwell, D-12th, criticized the appointments for not representing citizens in the city's southern and southwestern neighborhoods.

But Welch and committee member Mary Woolridge, D-3rd, said Abramson's appointees are nonetheless diverse, ranging in age from 37 to 66 and including a woman and an African American.

"They bring a lot of varied aspects of the community together," Welch said.

Frazier, CEO of Louisville's Tandem Public Relations, was the only nominee who did not attend Monday's meeting. Welch said Frazier was out of town attending a previously scheduled Brown-Forman board of directors event.

Establishing the commission, a bi-state authority between Kentucky and Indiana, would be a key step in accelerating the \$4.1 billion bridges project, which is years behind schedule due to funding difficulties and a larger price tag than was projected earlier.

After several years of debate in Frankfort, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a bill in June allowing Kentucky and Indiana to work together on a financing plan. Tolls are likely to be included in the funding mix.

The bi-state authority would determine the price of tolls and other details in the finance plan. Indiana is still weighing its makeup on the authority, but Kentucky law gives Abramson four selections and Gov. Steve Beshear three.

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