

Write-in campaign ousts Dresden Supervisor Tall, returns Ferguson to office

By EJ Conzola II and Patrick Ward, NYVT Media · November 13, 2025

DRESDEN – A last-minute write-in effort – reportedly organized in part by the town's two justices - has unseated Supervisor Charles Tall, replacing him with the man he succeeded in the office.

Tall, who was appointed supervisor after the abrupt resignation of Paul Ferguson in September 2024 to fill the remaining year of Ferguson's term, had had no opponent on the Nov. 4 ballot. But opponents – some of them apparently driven by Tall's effort to eliminate one of the town's two justice positions – staged a successful effort to defeat him by writing in Ferguson's name.

Tall received 72 votes as the only candidate on the ballot. The write-in campaign for Ferguson garnered 124 votes, according to the Washington County Board of Elections. Those numbers are unofficial until the board completes a recanvass of the results.

Tall accepted the results philosophically, saying "what happened, happened." But he noted that "emotions in the town are running high," as evidenced by several heated conversations that took place at a special Town Board meeting on the 2026 budget held the day after the election.

Tall noted that the write-in campaign had been organized in part by Jared and Darin Eggleston, the town's two justices. Both men had threatened to quit their posts if Tall went through with a proposal to reduce one of the justice's salary to just \$1 – a reduction that was approved as part of the tentative 2026 spending plan at the Nov. 5 meeting.

The Egglestons' reported involvement in the write-in effort could be problematic for them, as the state rules governing the conduct of judicial officials prohibit justices from being involved in any political effort involving offices other than their own.

The rules state "Neither a sitting judge nor a candidate for public election to judicial office shall directly or indirectly engage in any political activity" and specifically bar "participating in any political campaign for any office" or "publicly endorsing or publicly opposing (other than by running against) another candidate for public office."

Tall said several complaints about have already been filed with the state Commission on Judicial Conduct. CJC public information officer Marisa E. Harrison said she could neither confirm nor deny the commission had received any complaints, noting the organization does not comment on cases involving judicial complaints until it issues a decision on any discipline it hands down.

That discipline can include admonition, censure or removal from office and a ban on holding any judicial position in the future.

Ferguson confirmed the Egglestons were among those who had approached him about the write-in campaign but noted that several other people – including several people living outside the town – had also spoken to him about the plan.

In a telephone interview late Thursday, Jared Eggleston said the brothers got involved in the write-in effort in response to public dismay over Tall's leadership.

"A lot of people in town were very frustrated with Charles," he said.

Eggleston said Tall pushed forward on several proposals – including his plan to reduce the justice salary to \$1 – without speaking to longtime residents or consulting with other town officials. He described Tall's leadership style as "arrogant" and said "the guy has no ethics, no integrity" – pointing to changes made in the proposed 2026 town budget made after the election that cut the supervisor's annual salary from \$15,000 to \$7,000, reduced the money available to the supervisor for contractual expenses by \$2,500 and cut the salary allocation for the budget officer – a role currently filled by the supervisor – from \$12,500 to \$6,000.

The changes will set Ferguson up to fail, he added.

Tall explained his rationale for the cuts at during recent discussions about the spending plan, saying the lower figures more accurately reflect the amount of work the job entails.

Eggleston noted that although Ferguson will take over town government leadership in January, the proposed budget will be in place by that point. He said he's "not sure it's going to help at this point" to have a new person at the helm.

The effort to recruit Ferguson as a write-in candidate was a "collaboration" among a number of people and involved "a lot of phone calls, a lot of door-to-door," Eggleston said.

Ferguson said he had been approached just six days before the election about a possible write-in challenge to Tall and that, after several days of deliberation, "I said – let's do it." He said he had not expected to win, given the difficulties of staging a write-in effort, but that "I'm just overwhelmed" by the support he received.

Ferguson also said the effort to defeat Tall had drawn support not only from town residents but from others in the county – including at least one member of the Board of Supervisors he declined to identify. That support came because of the ongoing difficulties with the 2026 county budget, which currently calls for a 17% increase in county taxes driven in large part by a huge increase in spending in the Department of Social Services, Ferguson said.

Tall is the chairman of the Board of Supervisors Health and Human Services Committee, which oversees the DSS.

Eggleston also said he and his brother are still considering whether to follow through on their threat to resign and will wait "to see what plays out" under Ferguson.

He declined to comment on any possible ramifications from the reported complaints about his involvement in the write-in campaign.

Ferguson had stepped down midterm because of repeated clashes with members of his Town Board and acknowledged some of those who had caused him to resign remain in town government. However, he said he will do his best to work with all board members, saying "I'm in it for the people."

He also said he hopes his election will encourage more people to attend Town Board meetings so elected officials can get a better sense of community sense on issues the town will be facing.

"I'll have to come in and clean up the mess," he said.

Tall's defeat means there will be four new faces on the Board of Supervisors when it comes back into session in January.

In addition to Ferguson – who had served on the board during his previous term as supervisor – new supervisors will represent the towns of Easton, Greenwich and Putnam. In Easton, current Town Board member William Herrick, a Republican, was unopposed to succeed fellow GOPer Dan Shaw, who did not run again, and in Greenwich, Town Board member James J. Mumby Jr., a Democrat, faced no opponent in his bid to succeed fellow Democrat James Nolan, who stepped down.

In the only on-ballot supervisor contest, the current Putnam town clerk, Republican Darlene Kerr, defeated independent candidate Kathleen L. Coffman to succeed Republican Darrell T. Wilson, who opted not to seek re-election.

[Election Results — the article continues with countywide 2025 results; only the Dresden line is reproduced here.] Dresden – Supervisor: *Charles Tall (i) 72, Paul D. Ferguson (write-in) 124; Town Board (2 seats): *Christine Diekel (R) 157, *Marc Brown (R) 156, Suzanne Hudson Shad (I) 65. Town Justice: *Jared N. Eggleston (R) 181. (* = incumbent)