Sanders Stuns Paquette In Close Mayoral Race

By ALAN ABBEY
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Bernard Sanders sent Burlington's political establishment reeling Tuesday with a stunning 12-vote upset win over five-term Mayor Gordon Paquette, but the results will not be final until a recount.

Sanders charged there were "irregularities" in the election. Wednesday at 2 a.m. Sanders and his attorneys asked Superior Court Judge Edwin Amidon to impound all paper ballots. Sanders' campaign aides said they were not permitted to observe the counting of paper ballots in some wards.

In unofficial but complete tallies from the city's six wards, Sanders had 4,035 to Paquette's 4,023. Richard Bove received 1,090 and Joseph McGrath 138.

If the results stand, it will be Sanders' first electoral win and Paquette's first loss in his 23-year political career. Sanders, 39, built his victory with wins in half the city's wards, and close finishes in the others.

Sanders was at first shocked by the race's tightness, and then exultant as he went to a party of campaign workers and supporters.

City Democrats, including elected and appointed officials, were glum and bitter at a party more like a wake than the sixth victory celebration they had expected.

Democratic and Republican aldermen immediately began predicting Sanders will have a hard time keeping promises he made to supporters like city police. "Where is Bernie going to get the money when the police ask for a 19 percent raise?" said one.

Aldermen began pointing out they can assert more independence than they have.

Free Press Photo by JYM WILSON

BERNARD SANDERS, ARMED WITH VICTORY, FLASHES WINNING GRIN
... campaign 'pulled off something no one thought we could do'