



ROOM A | 130 6TH STREET WEST
COLUMBIA FALLS, MT 59912

PHONE (406) 892-4391
FAX (406) 892-4413

**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP - REVIEW & CONSIDER COUNCIL CANDIDATES
AGENDA
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2022
COUNCIL CHAMBERS CITY HALL**

COUNCIL WORKSHOP– 6:30 P.M

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

COUNCIL REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL CANDIDATES

- 1.** Council Review and Consideration of Council Applicants - Completed Applicant Questionnaires in Alphabetical Order

ADJOURN

Barb Staaland

From: Alice Wondrak Biel <awbiel@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2022 10:59 AM
To: staalandb@cityofcolumbiafalls.com
Subject: council questionnaire

Hi Barb--
Below please find my answers to the council questionnaire.

My phone number for contact is 100-223-2756

Thanks--
Alice Biel

Questions for Councilor Appointment

Name: Alice W. Biel

Physical Address of where you reside: 2125 Drift Water Way

1. Why are you interested in this position?

I am interested in the position because since moving to Columbia Falls 10 years ago, I've been impressed with how well the city is run, and by its ability to leverage resources to get good things done on a limited budget. I'd like to help contribute to that and help keep Columbia Falls a great place to live.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

Under that form of government, the day-to-day duties of running the city are handled by a professional manager with experience in that field, hired by the city. Broad-scale decisionmaking authority rests with the city council and mayor. The city council and mayor establish the vision and make policy. The city manager is responsible for their implementation, and is accountable to the council and mayor.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

No.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

A lack of affordable housing; deteriorating roads; the need to manage the growth necessary for economic stability in a way that maintains the character of our community and meets the needs of the people who live here.

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

It means candidates and officeholders are not associated with partisan labels (Democrat/Republican/Libertarian). I don't know what "the requirements" are but I would think officeholders are also expected not to make decisions based on party influence or ideology, and not to accept funding from partisan groups when running for office.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

That's a decision I would make based on my family's input and my experience in the position, if I were selected for it.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

No.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

I was a trustee and then vice-chair for School District 8 (West Glacier Elementary) in 2011-2012. Before that, I briefly served on the board of a small, non-profit day care. After graduating college, I worked in city government for about a year and a half, as a Mayor's Assistant under a partisan system.

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

Yes.

10. Were you in favor of the Resort Tax?

Yes, because I believe Columbia Falls is the kind of town the resort-tax option was designed to help: one with a relatively small tax base that has to pay for services and infrastructure heavily impacted by huge numbers of people (tourists) who don't otherwise contribute to that tax base. Under the resort tax, the tourists help us pay for their impacts to our streets, police department, etc., and the people who pay the property taxes that support those services get a tax break later on. As I mentioned in my letter of interest, I believe in practical solutions that will benefit community residents and keep our town moving forward and prepared to meet the future. The resort tax is an example of that.

Questions for Councilor Appointment

Item No.1.

Name: Kelly Marie Hamilton
Physical Address of where you reside: 1316 4th Avenue West Columbia Falls

1. Why are you interested in this position?

This position is an opportunity for me to further serve the community that I love.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

From attending city council meetings, I have seen from a “lay person” point how things operate. I haven’t researched anything on this, but I think I understand why we have the offices and positions that we do. It’s a good checks and balance system, from what I have seen.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

NO! If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

1. Growth, and how to approach and make decisions on what is good for the community in that aspect

2. Water leaks

3. Public opinion (getting the folks to give input on more than just a couple of huge issues)

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

I stay away from politics except for just local stuff, and that’s only if I have to. Subjects and issues need to be addressed from community need and desire, not a political opinion. As much as politics seep into things these days, I am more than happy to shut down and redirect discussions that go off subject.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

I’ll let you know then! Let’s see how a trial run goes first. But I do love a challenge.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

No.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

I am on the Canyon Kids Christmas board, and the Community Market board. I volunteer with different non profits, some valley wide, some just of my own doing here in CFalls. I am the coordinator for the US Marine Corps Toys for Tots for Flathead Valley.

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

You bet, I did!

10. Were you in favor to the Resort Tax?

More than just in favor, I openly promoted it.

Questions for Councilor Appointment

Item No.1.

Name: Ryan Hedgecock

Physical Address of where you reside: 1825 Riverwood Drive, Columbia Falls

1. Why are you interested in this position?

Whether we want it to or not, Columbia falls is growing and I feel we need to focus on bringing our community together to steer the growth rather than to oppress it. I have lived in Columbia Falls for 30 years and I want to do my part to make Columbia Falls the Last Best Place to Live. In a time where partisanship is dividing our communities, I will be a voice that will represent everyone regardless of their political alignment.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

I am very familiar of how the City of Columbia Falls government works.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

I am in full support of maintaining the current form of government.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

In no particular order;

- Growth
- Affordable housing
- City works/services

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

I am aware that the city council operates in a non-partisan format.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

Yes.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

I have no urgent issues. I do believe there are areas that need attention.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

I served on the Glacier League Baseball Board of Directors, 1995-2000

I served as Montana Legislative Representative for SMART Transportation Union, 2004-2012

I served as a member of the Montana Division Safety Board for BNSF Railway, 2009-2017

SMART Transportation Union Local Chairperson, on BNSF in Whitefish, MT, 2012-present

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

Yes.

10. Were you in favor to the Resort Tax?

While I do not think this question is relevant to the position, I did vote in favor of the Resort Tax.

Questions for Councilor AppointmentName: Mark L. JohnsonPhysical Address of where you reside: 1902 Riverwood Lane, Columbia Falls

1. Why are you interested in this position?

I want to serve our community. My education and broad range of experience should be an asset for the city and the council.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

Yes, I have lived in Columbia Falls for 26 years and have work with the council and city managers.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

No, I believe the current form is the most efficient for we could have.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

- Affordable Housing*
- Job Creation*
- Maintaining our unique character*

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

Yes.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

Not at this time.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

No.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

I served as branch manager for Glacier Bank for the last 10 years.

I currently sit on the boards of the Columbia Falls Lions Club, Columbia Falls Food Bank and the Columbia Falls Community Foundation.

I have served as president of the Chamber for 3 years and as the president of the Lions Club for 5.

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

Yes.

10. Were you in favor of the Resort Tax?

Yes, the community has to be creative in finding way to fund infrastructure so that the burden does not fall whole on property owners.

Questions for Councilor Appointment

Name: Clay Lundgren

Physical Address of where you reside: 307 5th St E Columbia Falls, MT 59912

Phone number: 406-890-4212

Email: clundgren406@gmail.com

1. Why are you interested in this position?

I first became interested in a Council position when I started going to meetings about River's Edge Park. This interest led me to attending the County traffic study report, and being a citizen representative on the sales tax committee. I believe that our city will continue to grow and some aspects will change over the next few years. I want to support our city and do my part in our city's response to this growth. This is my forever home and I want to be a voice for my neighbors as well as my conscience.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

The powers and duties of the city manager are to see that the laws and ordinances are enforced; to appoint and, except as provided in this part, remove all directors of departments and all subordinate officers and employees in the departments in both the classified and unclassified service; to exercise control over all the departments and divisions created in this part or that may be created by the commission; to attend all meetings of the commission, with the right to take part in the discussions but without the right to vote; to recommend to the commission for adoption measures considered necessary or expedient; to keep the commission fully advised as to the financial condition and needs of the city; and to perform other duties prescribed by part 44 or this part or required by ordinance or resolution of the commission.

The commission shall constitute the governing body, with powers as hereinafter provided to pass ordinances, adopt regulations, and appoint a chief administrative officer, to be known as the city manager, and to exercise all powers as hereinafter provided. This also includes a Petition for Initiative.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

No.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

1. The growth of our city is outpacing our infrastructure. I believe that the Resort Tax is supporting three new, paid fire department staff, but what about our understaffed police department, and all the other staff that keep our town safe and beautiful.

2. Housing. When I ran for city council a couple of years ago housing was my main issue. Housing is why I joined the planning board. We need to grow, but responsibly. Thank you Darren for your employee housing in Lyle Mitchell's old office. That is a solution. We need solutions, not just profiteers. I do support Mic Ruis' projects. I believe that is responsible. The development we voted down across the river was not.

3. Retention of our young talent. Columbia Falls should be a place that our graduating students can return to and get good jobs. I mention this as retention because I believe that it starts with outreach and communication from our current opportunities. Nomad, Proof, Logan Health, Smartlam, Ruis Construction, etc. We have the opportunities, but yet these businesses still need to hire from out of state.

I would also like to include a 4th issue, property tax. The City Council should remain vigilant in keeping rising property taxes to a sustainable level. We do not want our property taxes to become an obstacle to home ownership in our city. I believe the Council did a great job of this by initiating the Resort Tax to fund public safety, rather than funding this through bonds.

I list property taxes as 4th because, while this is an issue that matters to me, the needs of the city come first.

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

A nonpartisan, municipal election allows for ranked-choice voting; if a candidate wins a 25 majority of first-preference votes, the candidate is declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. First-preference votes cast for the failed candidate are eliminated, and the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots are then treated as first-preference votes. Basically, the Council is voted upon based on public choice of the Counselor, regardless of political affiliation.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

Yes.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

No.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

1. Columbia Falls Planning Board/Zoning Commission
2. Columbia Falls Police Commision.
3. Willamette University Student Senate.

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

Yes.

10. Were you in favor to the Resort Tax?

Yes, but I do not believe it was perfect. As a citizen member of the Resort Tax committee, I was originally strongly in favor. As it started including bowling and books, I began to believe it was not a resort tax, but a general sales tax. The final product was a good compromise. I do still wish we could have changed the percentages a bit, but it was a good and necessary decision.

Questions for Councilor Appointment

Item No.1.

Name: James Osborne

Physical Address of where you reside: 556 7th Ave Est N

RECEIVED
SEP 20 2022
CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS

1. Why are you interested in this position?

I am interested in doing my part to help improve the community that I love while maintain the small town feel and sense of camaraderie that I had the growing up. I want the same warm support for my kids and grandkids that I had the privilege to experience growing up here.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

I understand the general scope of work but do not understand the procedures and etiquette of the actual meetings and planning.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

As of right now I do not believe we need to change how our City Government operates.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

1. Higher Cost of Living outpacing wage increases forcing many valued people out of our community
2. Rapid Expansion and Growth-This is a double edged sword as growth is essential but we as a community need to ensure that the town is growing in the way we want. We don't want to be another Whitefish.
3. Jobs-We were a Blue-Collar Town that is/has transitioned into a service industry town. This is good but we cannot keep all our eggs in one basket. If tourism drops off can our town survive? Right now I think the town is sturdy enough to weather a drop in tourism, but if we focus only on tourism I feel we are setting the town up for failure.

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

I understand "non-partisan". I am unaware of any additional requirements other than to leave party politics at the door.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

If I am selected to be a member of the council, I will run to maintain the seat.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

None that I am aware of.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

Nothing relating to government. Only some coaching and unofficial volunteer work.

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

Yes

10. Were you in favor to the Resort Tax?

No, I was not. I do not feel strongly enough to push for the removal of the resort tax at this time but I do feel we are shorting our local businesses. I know plenty of Columbia Falls residents that go to Kalispell to buy items taxed in Columbia Falls and I feel this hurts local businesses. The Issue of the resort tax should be revisited but I believe now is not the time.

Questions for Councilor Appointment

Name: Heather Peacock

Physical Address of where you reside: 1235 Clayton Lane, Columbia Falls since 1999

1. Why are you interested in this position?

Columbia Falls has been good to our family, and I want to be a part of the process that makes it desirable for another family. My interest was sparked with interactions I had with Doug Karper. I was impressed by his kindness and willingness to listen. These interactions made me feel that as Columbia Falls residents, our opinions matter.

I am a good fit for the city council. I am well-educated, use critical-thinking and problem-solving skills daily, and do my homework before making a decision. I have empathy, but also understand there is a framework in which to operate. I am timely and reliable. I am willing to put the work in to learn the position.

I do want to disclose a few potential conflicts of interest. My son-in-law has the full intention to apply as a city patrolman when he graduates from college in spring 2024. I also have two extended family members that work for the city. I would abstain from any vote that directly involved wages or hiring these parties.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

Yes, I understand this form of government. The council is responsible for policy development, and the city manager is responsible for operations.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

This form of government does not need to be changed. Columbia Falls has a strong city council and a strong city manager who work hard to keep the city moving in a forward direction.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

Affordable Housing

Economic development

Infrastructure development and maintenance

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

Yes, I understand. The city government is a non-political entity.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

If appointed to the city council, I will run for election in 2023. If not appointed, I will make a decision at a later date. I have no issue supporting someone who will work for the betterment of Columbia Falls.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

We have had a few issues arrive over the years, including drainage and tree trimming. These were both resolved quickly and we felt the city listened to our needs. We did contact the city last winter with a concern and were directed to the city works director. We left a message asking for a return phone call and did not hear back from the gentleman.

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

I am a former board member of the Glacier Institute. I have been on multiple committees through church, including former chair of the Staff-Parish Relations, and currently sit on the Leadership Development team.

9. Did you vote in the last city election? Yes

10. Were you in favor of the Resort Tax? Yes

Questions for Councilor AppointmentName: Kathryn PricePhysical Address of where you reside: 1506 Eddy Court, Columbia Falls, MT

1. Why are you interested in this position?

As a lifelong resident of Columbia Falls I saw the need of a replacement and I am willing to step up to help. I believe the council can provide for future planning while maintaining the wholesomeness of our community that the residents have come to know.

2. The City has had the manager commission form of government since 1994. Do you understand how we operate – duties of council and duties of the manager?

Yes, the council are elected officials that draft/ work on legislation and ordinances, approve the budget and works with the city manager to enforce the laws/ordinances. The city manager appoints heads of departments, staffing, budget submittals and overall running of day to day operations.

3. Do you think we need to change our form of government?

No I think the council-manager form government works great for our smaller community.

4. What are the 3 most critical issues the city is currently facing?

1. Growth/planning to include traffic flow, lights, vehicle congestion plus future plans of the City.
2. Safety/Security – police, fire and EMT funding/staff to sufficiently provide the necessary services to our local community and beyond.
3. Street maintenance/repair/plowing – to be improving upon the existing roads, sidewalks, etc.

5. City Government is non-partisan. Do you know what that means & the requirements?

Being non-partisan means to be non-bias towards others regardless of political affiliation. To work together for the common good of all our citizens.

6. Do you plan on running for election in 2023?

Maybe, depends on how this short term goes. I definately want to be more involved now and help where it's needed.

7. Have you or any of your family members had issues with the city?

No

8. Do you have any relatable experience, Board positions, School Board, non-profit, etc.?

I helped start and organize, run Columbia Falls Youth Softball Association and stayed actively involved on the Board for 14 years. I served as President, Vice President and Treasurer (non-profit)

I helped organize, fundraising, planning + logistics for CFJH 8th grade and CFHS 12th grade graduation parties.
(4 years) (4 years)

9. Did you vote in the last city election?

Yes

10. Were you in favor to the Resort Tax?

I believe that the tourist/visitors should pay something for the use, wear and tear, emergency services, etc. on our community. However, I was in support of city residents being exempt (by showing their driver's license) since they are already paying for the city's budget through their property taxes.