



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2022

SECTION C

STEELE COUNTY Times

2022 Election

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

ELECTION SPOTLIGHT:
MEET THE CANDIDATES • LOCAL ISSUES ON THE BALLOT

A complete guide to local, state elections

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Can you stand one more political story? How about 11?

The Steele County Times has compiled information for every candidate who is running in a contested race for an office that serves Steele County in some capacity.

That means school boards in Blooming Prairie, Ellendale (NRHEG), Medford and Owatonna; city councils in the four cities; the Steele County Sheriff; and state legislators with a portion of their district lying within the borders of the county.

(We are not including the U.S. Congressional District 1 race,

or any of the state executive offices.)

Every candidate received a questionnaire – the same for each candidate in the specific race – and was given about 10 days to complete it.

Their answers, unedited except for clarity, appear here. If a candidate didn't return the questionnaire, that is noted among the other responses.

Incumbents in each race are denoted with an (i) behind their name. In elections at the state level, the candidates' parties are also listed.

Some of these candidates – specifically, those running for State House and Senate, as well the

two running for Steele County Sheriff – have been answering questions about policy and issues for weeks. We recommend visiting our website, steele-countytimes.com, and clicking on the "Decision 2022" tab to see their responses.

Running unchallenged

What you won't see in our voter guide is the candidates who are running unchallenged.

As voters head to the polls on Nov. 8, in some cases, it'll be business as usual for these offices:

Steele County Board
Four of the five county commissioners are up for re-election –

all of them are running unopposed.

James Brady (District 1), John Glynn (District 2), Rick Gnemi (District 3) and Jim Abbe (District 4) are expected to retain their seats.

District 5 Commissioner Greg Krueger's term expires in 2025.

Blooming Prairie City Council
Barring any successful write-in campaigns, BP Mayor Curt Esplan will retain his seat, as will council members Brad Clark and William Newman.

Esplan has been mayor since defeating incumbent H. Peterson in 2016. Newman has had a seat on the council since 1994; Clark first took office in 2010.

Ellendale City Council
Mayor Matthew Bartsch is running for his second two-year term; council member Scott Groth will keep the seat he's held since 2010.

City council candidate Jon Asplund is the lone non-incumbent in the seven races. He filed for the seat which has been held by Stephanie Kibler since 2014; she did not file for re-election.

Medford School Board
Incumbents Allison Janke, Jenny Jones, and Whitney Winkels are running unopposed.

Janke, the veteran of the trio, was first elected to the board in 2010.

Jones won her spot in 2014; Winkels was elected in 2018.

All seats are four-year terms.

Owatonna City Council
Four seats are open on the Owatonna City Council – and just one is uncontested.

Dave Burbank, who represents the Third Ward, is running unopposed. He was first elected in 2014 and has yet to face a challenger.

If you have any questions about polling places and times, or any concerns about voting, visit steele-countygov/elections and click on the "Voter Information" tab, or call the Steele County Auditor's Office at 507-444-7410.

JOHN JASINSKI

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Crowded slate for 4 seats on Owatonna Board

This may be the one to watch.

Four seats are open on the Owatonna School Board; all four incumbents are running for re-election, and seven others are vying to unseat them.

For more coverage on these candidates, please look at the Oct. 5 edition of the Steele County Times or visit our website. In that edition, you'll find coverage of the candidate forum featuring 10 of the 11 candidates that was held Oct. 3.



LLOYD BRANDT
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have lived in the community for 32 years. I am married with 5 kids, 16 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. I own a local electrical contracting business. I have volunteered with the Hospitality House, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, Habitat for Humanity and donated to local fundraisers.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I am running for school board because I have one grandchild and 6 great-grandkids in the school system, and I don't agree with the direction our current board and administration is headed or how they are performing their jobs. We need more open communication and transparency between the board and public.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

This is my first time running for public office, so I don't have anything in my past that has really prepared me. I do know however I care about what our children are being taught and how our tax dollars are being spent.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE?

I think we need to get back to the basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic in our grade and middle schools so our children have a good foundation to build on. Instead, our students are being introduced to subjects that they are not developed enough to understand and leaving them confused and unable to concentrate on their basic skills. At the high school level, we need more guidance counselors and more course options for trades skills and opportunities for credits through apprenticeship programs just like the college credit programs. For the taxpayer we need transparency on how the tax dollars are being spent.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

To compromise with people with different opinions you need to keep an open mind, respect other's feelings and use open and honest communication.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

The simple answer is no. No one should have to give up their personal beliefs, that's what makes us individuals. I personally would rather be hated for what I am than be loved for what I'm not.



JAN GUSE
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My name is Jan Guse. I have lived in the Owatonna area pretty much all my life. I grew up in Medford and in 1982 I got married and moved to Owatonna to raise my family. I have 2 children. They both attended Owatonna Public Schools and graduated. I have 4 grandchildren ages 3-10. I worked for the United States Postal Service for over 33 years and the last several years I worked as the Owatonna Postmaster. I worked closely with the community and local businesses. In my job I also mentored craft and management employees to develop their skills and helped them with upper mobility in the Postal Service. I was a mediator for conflict resolution and taught classes about workplace harassment. I retired last year. I enjoy going fishing, gardening and spending time with my children and grandchildren.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I want all students to succeed. I want parents to know that they would have an advocate for their children. I'm a good listener and I follow up on issues. We all had to adapt tremendously during the pandemic and it was very tough on our children emotionally, mentally and academically. We need to move forward to ensure that our children feel safe, confident and prepared for the future. I want to ensure mutual respect in the classroom resulting in academic excellence for all. I want to encourage effective communication. This will result in building trust, providing clarity and resolving conflict.

A.) I am accessible. I am retired and have the time to work on school board issues.

B.) I am bold. I am willing to ask the hard questions, and I am dedicated to being part of the solution when difficult decisions need to be made.

C.) I am committed to help provide our students with a path for success whether they graduate and continue on to post-graduate studies, join the military or enter the workforce. Students from Owatonna Public Schools have a bright future as we will help prepare all students to be confident, critical thinkers who can attain their dreams.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

Working for the United States Postal Service I believe I have learned valuable leadership and mentoring skills. I worked with million-dollar budgets and negoti-

ated local contracts with unions. I worked with the community, local businesses and individuals. I am very good at following up on issues, questions or concerns when they are brought to my attention. I always worked with my employees and customers in a very respectful and transparent manner.

Sometimes people may have not wanted to hear what I needed to tell them but I was always honest. I have developed excellent communication skills and I believe I am a good listener who wants to understand.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE?

I would like to address communication as well as academic excellence. I believe communication is the key to building trust with the community, parents and staff.

Communication provides clarity so that people understand why decisions are made and what information was used to make the decision. Often when people are given an explanation, they feel better about the decision, even if they don't always agree with it. Communication resolves conflicts. We need to listen to what the concerns are so that they can be addressed.

Academic excellence. We need to get back to the basics and be sure that our students thrive in basic skills. The pandemic was tough on our children and we need to work extra hard on getting our students back on track of academic excellence. We need to be sure our teachers have the tools and the support to be effective in the classroom.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

It goes back to communication. The most important factor is to first respectfully listen to everyone's opinion and reasons they feel the way they do. I would also explain my opinion and the WHY. The issue would need to be discussed in a calm and respectful manner. I would look for the best compromise that would be ethical and best for our students, parents, teachers, staff and the taxpayers.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

I would need to listen to the reasons a particular issue would be against my personal beliefs and would need to be explained what decision is considered the "common good." What seems to be to the "common good" to one person can be much different to another. I am always willing to listen unjudgmentally to an issue to hear all the specifics about it before I would make a decision. I am not one to go with the flow unless it is going in the correct direction. I would never just vote for something because it is the easy way.



ELIZABETH HEDLUND
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am a physician assistant with 21 years of

medical practice. Ryan and I have been married for 22 years and we have 4 children, 2 are biological, 1 is adopted from Haiti and another came to us through foster care and is now a permanent member of our family! They range in age from 20 down to 6 and have given us lots of experience in the public school system. We are very involved with our church and I have been teaching Sunday school for 10+ years. Several years ago, we discovered a list of family values and have adopted it as our own: Love God, Family First, Work Hard, Tell the Truth, Be Kind to Others. We instill these values daily!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

As a parent, I have concerns and questions about the changing culture and environment of our schools. This includes possible changes in curriculum, including the addition of CRT ideologies in various classes and comprehensive sex education at all ages. I am concerned about distractions in the classroom, especially poor and disrespectful behaviors. Plus, I'd like to improve lines of communication for parents and community members with school leadership. Many parents have similar concerns; I want to address those concerns and be a voice for parents.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

My career is based on service to others. Working with patients in all walks of life, listening, understanding with compassion, creating a path to evaluate and treat each individual is my goal. Through our adoption and foster care training and experiences, I have developed in-depth skills for working with people, helping through trauma, and most importantly being able to help children from hard places. Over many life experiences, I have been a mediator, working to create understanding between people and finding solutions to difficult situations.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

I've narrowed my main concerns to these three things: curriculum, classrooms, communication. Changing curriculum with new ideologies as noted previously is concerning for myself and many others. I would like to see a return to basic fundamental education: reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, history. Classrooms need to be conducive for teaching and learning, otherwise our students are not going to reach their potential and we are not going to keep good teachers. This means instilling basic values such as respect, kindness and honesty, with appropriate consequences for poor behavior. Parents and community members need to have open lines of communication with district leaderships, the school board, teachers and staff.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

First, ask questions. We need information to know our starting

point. Find out what has worked or not worked in the past. Seek to understand. With a variety of perspectives and life experiences, we can work to understand where others come from and why they believe what they do. Create neutral ground and common values. I believe that most parents, community members and school staff truly want what is best for our children and our community and our future. Then create steps for moving forward while using the school district's mission and vision as a guide.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

I suspect that most of us believe that our personal beliefs are what is best for the common good. As a Christian, I understand that not everyone has that same moral foundation and I do not expect the public school system to teach from a Christian worldview. Therefore, our schools' educators should remain neutral and not teach personal religious beliefs. The same is true for personal political views and personal sexual beliefs and behaviors. I do expect, however, that different worldviews and opinions will be respected, even in disagreements and healthy debates.



MIKE HERMAN
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I was raised on a farm outside of Mt. Lake, MN. Following high school, I joined the Marines with the intent of doing one tour and then heading to college. As I have found out many times, God may have a different plan - I retired from active duty after 21 years of service. In 2006 my wife Diana and I moved back to Minnesota, where I had an offer to join Driessen Water. Three years ago, I was offered the position of CEO with Driessen Water.

Diana and I have four kids and two grandkids. Our son, our daughter and our granddaughter reside here in Owatonna, one of our other daughters resides in Miami and the oldest daughter and our grandson reside in Santa Rosa, CA. Diana and I purchased a hobby farm east of Owatonna nine years ago where we raise a few horses, some chickens, a couple of ducks and have various other critters all over the farm. I also currently serve as the vice chair on the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and will be the Chair for the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce in 2023.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I believe that over the past couple of years our schools, parents, teachers and mostly our kids have been challenged and have suffered with all of the things that have transpired over the past couple of years. With COVID past us, it is time to once again demonstrate strong leadership, support and investment in our kids to provide them the safe and intellectually stimulating environment

where they want and are able to learn. We must provide them the platform for them to succeed in becoming the leaders of our community, state and country.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I believe that with my past military experience, current experience as a CEO and serving on several boards I have gained the leadership experience required to build trust with our parents, teachers, administrators and fellow BOD members. In gaining this trust I will be able to be a part of facing tough decisions and challenges that will arise and make the decisions that are in the best interest of all involved.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

At this time not having served previously on the school board, I do not have a specific issue that I could say is a priority to immediately address. I do believe that the Board needs to rebuild trust with the parents, open the channels for communication and listen with the intent to learn what the parents are concerned about and are saying.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

First and foremost is listen. Listen to what all parties are saying before leaning toward a decision or a solution. To bring people to a compromise you have to gather all the facts, concerns and thoughts from all involved. After that and having built a level of trust, you can then make the best decision with the information collected and be able to state the "why" for the decision. I believe if you actively listen to all parties, demonstrate that you are engaged and open to all, that you will be able to come to compromise with most all with differing opinions.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

If the question refers to would I vote for something that is in conflict with the principles for which I said I stand for in running for this Board, the answer is no. If there is a vote that is in front of me that pertains to operations, financial, etc., and that I may personally have some reservation but believe that is overall the best decision for all involved, then I could after weighing all options.



JOSH INDAHL
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My wife and I moved to Owatonna 9 years ago and have 2 boys, ages 10 and 8, who both attend Lincoln Elementary. I work as a machinist at K and G manufacturing in Faribault and have been a machinist for 15 years. I enjoy watching sports but specifically football and basketball,

going to watch my kids' sports (if I'm not their coach), deer hunting, hiking, and just hanging out at home. We attend Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and volunteer in various ways.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

The overall culture of the school board and our district has changed in a way that I and other parents do not agree with. Over the last few years of watching how our school board has acted and what they are allowing in our schools convinced me I needed to run. Our current board no longer feels the need to listen to parents about important issues. Instead, they make you address the board as a whole and provide no response, like talking to a brick wall. They ignored the public outrage over CRT and are now slowly going along with the current nationwide gender identity craze. None of this helps our kids learn. None of this fixes the fact that half the kids that graduate from Owatonna are not at grade level in reading and math.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I would say doing foster care taught me a lot. It taught me how poorly run some public services are but if you get involved you can really change the life of someone that was a complete stranger.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

- 1) Listening to parents about their concerns
- 2) Rooting out CRT and the gender identity craze
- 3) Moving funds within the budget to help kids, not add more administrative positions
- 4) Add to collaboration with local businesses to help kids get into the trades

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

Have honest open conversations where you both might not like what you say, but you respect their honesty and they respect yours. This happens on a regular basis in my job and you have to put your ego aside to see the other side.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

That depends on your definition of common good. According to my definition of common good, I wouldn't have to go against my personal beliefs. I just see the common good differences from other people.



JOLAYNE MOHS (I) TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My husband, Scott and I moved to Owatonna in 2005. All three of our children are products of the Owatonna Public School System. I have two children currently at Owatonna Middle School and one child at the high school. I am the director of outreach at Trinity Lutheran Church.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I believe a strong educational system will change the trajectory of a life as well as a community. I have been a board member for the past 9 years and have been a part of numerous positive initiatives and experiences within our schools and our community. I am running again this year to help finish what has been started: I want to make sure we finish our commitment and do what is best for the community regarding the existing high school and help support the new high school to completion, along with a fully implemented Career Pathways program. I will remain a good financial steward of taxpayers' money with a balanced budget and support of the strong leadership we have throughout the district.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I am a business owner and have worked within the mental health industry for over a decade. I have been involved with multiple non-profit organizations over the years as well:

Owatonna Hospital Foundation; Owatonna Library Board; Rachel's Light; Owatonna Foundation Trustee; Community Corrections Advisory Board; recipient of United Way's 'Volunteer of the Year' Award; board member of Big Brother Big Sisters; former 'Big Family' match within BBBS; Board Chair of Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative, to name a few. All of these experiences have allowed me to learn more about the needs of the community, needs of businesses, organizations and clubs.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

We need to remain committed to the existing high school and make sure the next steps for that building and piece of property are going to benefit the community. I will help support the completion of the new high school with being on-budget and on-time. School funding continues to be a delicate balance between the needs of the school and the responsibility of taxpayers, especially our agricultural community. As the Treasurer – I am committed to maintaining a balanced budget like we have done the past 9 years of my time on the board.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

Respectful and healthy dialogue of disagreement is fundamental to the success of any organization – it doesn't matter if it's a private business, non-profit organization or a public school district. Being able to agree to disagree is another sign of a healthy organization.

Seeking to understand, gaining perspective and clarity on facts as well as perception, is key. At the end of the day, decisions need to be made regarding the best possible outcomes of our students.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

It has been my responsibility for the past 9 years and will continue to be my responsibility as a board member to make decisions that benefit all 5,000 students that attend Owatonna Public Schools every day.



APRIL ST. MARTIN TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My name is April St. Martin. I have lived in Owatonna for almost 30 years and I am a 1996 OHS graduate. My husband, Corey, who was born and raised in Owatonna, and I have three children. All of our children have been in the Owatonna Public Schools. We have been blessed with two grandchildren. I am on the OHS task force to recommend the disposition of the current building after this year. I am also on the Owatonna Lacrosse Association Board and I am on the Family Unity Network at my church. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends at home and at church.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

With the support of my husband and family, I decided to run last spring after speaking with parents and community members who expressed a desire to have more of an active voice in what their children are being exposed to and taught in the public schools. I believe I can be that voice because PARENTS ARE THE ANSWER!

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I am a concerned parent and community member who has attended almost every school board meeting for over 16 months. For over four months I have been endorsed by the Minnesota Parents Alliance.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

My most significant issues are transparency, student proficiency levels and policy vs. financing.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

The best way to address differences is to listen and ask questions. I will encourage open communication and respectful dialogue.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

I will look into every issue and be able to account for why I vote or didn't vote for something.



MARK SEBRING (I) TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My name is Mark Sebring and I grew up in Owatonna, graduated from OHS and attended the University of MN. I am married with two grown sons that also received an excellent education from the Owatonna Public Schools. I enjoy my career as a Financial Advisor, having been in the business for over 30 years, and also am a co-owner of a small business in Owatonna.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I have served on the Owatonna School Board for 10 years as I believe

in public education and that a quality school system is the foundation of a strong community. Each of our educational experiences provides us a unique lens as to "how things should run," and I thoroughly enjoy serving as that conduit between the community and our school system.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

In the time that I have served on the school board, we have made critical and lasting decisions regarding budget cuts, decisions regarding the redistricting of our elementary schools, negotiated several contracts and successfully passed a levy and two bond issues. The common denominator is that big issues require patience and perseverance toward a common goal.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

In the short run, there are several objectives to address. First is the transition for students and staff to the new OHS location, as well as the disposition of the existing OHS site. A long-term facility assessment is in order for several properties to determine the best utilization of programs and space. A longer-term objective is to monitor the educational experience of our students coming out of a pandemic. Students missed the classroom experience and our teaching staff is working hard to recover lost ground due to remote learning.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

Differing opinions are healthy and necessary to long-term growth and success in our school system. Recognizing that we rarely "stay the same" while we strive to improve demands that all perspectives are respected and engaged.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

School board members understand that articulating personal beliefs is expected when collective discourse is required. Correspondingly, when a vote is taken, the prevailing majority will maintain the support of all. Yes, I have and will continue to set my personal beliefs aside for the "common good."



LORI WEISENBURGER (I) TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am a parent of three Owatonna graduates, having raised them in our community since preschool. My family and I have lived in this community for over 24 years now. I am an attorney by training and currently lead the compliance area at Federated. My career there began over 20 years ago. I served numerous non-profit boards before my start on the school board 8 years ago. Those include the Montessori Children's House, Crisis Resource Center and Music Boosters. I'm passionate about public education and the foundation it can create for our students to pursue their own dreams and goals. I was the first in my family of origin to graduation from college. I have experienced the foundation for lifelong learning

and dream-building that can occur in public education. I want to help further that for others.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

It is an exciting time in our district. We have all our students in the buildings, learning and engagement and social interaction is occurring daily, hourly and by the minute. Teachers and students are having a great start to the school year. Seeing the new high school operating as I envisioned when knocking on doors is something I don't want to miss. Finally, I think there are elements in our community who seek to undermine the good things we have going. I want to stay the course and keep us on this good path.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

The past eight years of board service have prepared me for this next term. My experience in helping discern our best path forward, whether on the high school bond, operating levy, hiring of the superintendent, work on policy or finance committees have all made me more knowledgeable, more informed and better prepared to lead in the next term.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

I want to continue the good work and energy in our public school system and support educators in their work. The opening of the new high school and further refinement of the Career & College Pathways curriculum within that new school is an exciting program. I look forward to promoting and further supporting that initiative. Continuing to improve our students' learning is paramount. In particular, I look forward to helping navigate toward improved preschool opportunities for our earliest learners.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

Respectful dialogue is the starting point. Listening, sharing perspectives. In my experience on the Board, I have found that many disagreements arise because of misunderstanding of the facts, the circumstances. I've always been responsive to those who reach out via email or otherwise to address concerns, getting them to the right resource within our district to help sort out the issues.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

Yes. I'm committed to engage in the research, discussion and understanding necessary, to be sure I am voting with the relevant information being considered. At the core, the work on the Board is to govern the district to meet the needs of all. Sometimes that means taking a path or approving an action that is not entirely in keeping with my personal position.



COLIN WHALEN TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have lived in Owatonna for 29 years. My wife,

Sherri, and I have been married over 26 years and have two children, both currently attending college. I have a career in Information Technology working as a systems developer for over 29 years at Federated Insurance. My job requires a unique combination of complex problem solving, logic skills, effective listening and being an effective communicator. I enjoy time with family, traveling, anything outdoors and attending auto races. I also play guitar and have been involved musically in the community and church for about 20 years.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

Living in Owatonna for over 29 years, in addition to both our kids receiving a great education here, has made me realize serving on the school board is an impactful way to support our community. With school district topics getting increased attention, I feel poised to make a positive impact.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

For several years, I have played a lead role in planning the Hometown Sampler concert series to benefit Community Pathways. In addition, I have served on multiple church committees, am an active "Big" for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern MN, and am a current member of the Riverland Foundation Board of Directors.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

I expect many issues will need to be surrounded in the upcoming four years, including staffing needs, facilities, budgets, educational topics and others. One priority is to strengthen academic achievement. Meeting this goal starts with effective and clear communication to build trust between all stakeholders in our children's education. Parents, teachers, students, administrators and school board members all play a critical role in helping students reach their academic potential. We need to focus on excelling in the basics, while addressing distractions that hinder learning.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

Differing opinions are important to consider for nearly any topic. Effective discussion ultimately produces the strongest results. When differences of opinion arise, work directly with the person or people involved. Communicate with the same respect and patience you would like in return. I would seek to identify the core issue, listen to concerns and challenges, find common ground and be a humble leader.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

The "common good" can take on different meanings, some of which don't actually do as the phrase implies – good. If someone is elected to public service, the constituents expect a high level of honesty and integrity. A person must weigh the facts presented around an issue, in addition to strategically considering how a recommended solution may affect people if moved forward. Ultimately, all of these factors, combined with a person's beliefs, experiences and wisdom will factor into their vote. This process of critical thinking is the job of a board member, not to look to the group to direct them how to vote.

Newcomer Falvey challenges Jasinski in Senate 19

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
My name is Kate Falvey. I grew up in the Cities, but went to

high school in Pella, Iowa. I am a teacher in Faribault Public schools – I teach German at Faribault

High School. I have a BA and an MA in German from the University of Northern Iowa. I have

been a teacher for 17 years and this is my 4th year teaching at FHS. My husband, two daughters and I also live in Faribault. My hobbies include: gardening, walking my dog and the marching arts. I have been involved in theater a little bit as well, having been in the “Something Rotten” production at the Little Theatre of Owatonna last spring.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?

A couple of things convinced me to run for office, both people and issues. I was recruited by the DFL in the spring to run and after the Supreme Court pushed the abortion discussion/decision-making back to the State houses, I was convinced I needed to run because if the Supreme Court was going to continue to do things like this, it will become increasingly more important for the State house to have strong leaders who work for their constituents. I have two girls in middle school and want them to have a good education. The non-decision at the end of the last session also pushed me to run.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Mostly, I want to go back to a time where 1: money did not decide policy or be the factor that gets someone elected and 2: representatives worked together to come to the best decisions for all people and did not fence-sit or play party politics. We used to have politics like this. I also believe that being a legislator was never meant to be a full-time job. The founding fathers had “real”



KATE FALVEY – DFL
FARIBAULT

jobs, went to make laws for their neighbors for a few weeks or months, then went home to their jobs. It is disappointing to me that politics has become a career to so many – it is also disappointing that the easiest way to be involved in politics is if you are retired or independently wealthy. The system is not designed for “regular” people to participate in it very easily. I also believe that there should be term limits in all elected offices, again, because politician was never meant to be someone’s career.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT?

The number one issue facing the MN Legislature as a whole IS the fence-sitting. I saw politicians talking a big “we’re working together” game on tv, but when it came to the vote, the parties split and voted exactly as we thought they would, exactly as their party told them to vote. The budget surplus vote was a victim of fence-sitting and many people in District 19 are suffering directly (and immediately) because of it.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY?

Steele County residents are proud of their communities. They want to stay here. They want their communities to thrive and to offer their residents all of

the amenities that the Cities provide. The investment in small business and Main Street USA benefits everyone in the area. People want to feel safe, they want to be able to live affordably, they want to earn enough money to take care of their families. I think all people – especially folks who live in smaller communities – have similar goals and they expect the people they elect to represent them to work together and make things happen.

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING?

I think I am the best candidate for State Senator for District 19 because I am NOT a politician. I am a teacher. I am a parent. I am a spouse. I am daughter. I could go on, but you get the idea. I know how to make deals. I know how to get people from different backgrounds, different walks of life, and different ideologies to work together toward a common goal. I have a drive to get the job done, no matter how long it takes. I will do my job in St. Paul, then come home and do my real job. I will connect with my neighbors, hang out at city functions, and support the arts. The community will see me around town at the grocery store and I welcome conversations with them. I will seek input from all groups in order to make sure the needs of ALL members of our communities are being met.

Incumbent Sen. John Jasinski did not respond to the questionnaire.

KEEP GENE DORNINK WORKING HARD FOR THE CITIZENS OF DISTRICT 23!

SINCE BEING ELECTED IN 2020, SENATOR DORNINK HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY FOR...

- Supporting law enforcement
- Providing permanent tax relief including eliminating the tax on social security to combat inflation
- Cutting red tape for businesses and farmers
- Empowering parents in their children’s education
- Safe and secure elections

OUR HOMEGROWN, HARD-WORKING, COMMON SENSE SENATOR NEEDS YOUR VOTE!

VOTE GENE DORNINK NOVEMBER 8TH!

DORNINK
MINNESOTA STATE SENATE 23

Visit www.DorninkForSenate.com to see and learn more about Gene.

Paid for by Dornink for State Senate Committee
P.O. Box 111, Albert Lea, MN 56007

Mike cares about the future!
It starts with the education of our children

Back to the Basics for Owatonna schools

- ★ Safe learning environment
- ★ Academically challenging
- ★ Nurturing community
- ★ Enjoying the arts and athletics

MIKE HERMAN
FOR OWATONNA SCHOOL BOARD

MikeHermanforSchoolBoard.com

Prepared by and paid for by Mike Herman for Owatonna School Board Committee, 8624 Rose Street, Owatonna

VOTE COREY SAMORA

FOR MEDFORD CITY COUNCIL

Please Vote Nov. 8th

Prepared and paid for by Corey Samora, Medford, MN 55049

Former teachers battle for House 23A



PEGGY BENNETT (i)-GOP
ALBERT LEA

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

In 1981, I left the suburbs of the Twin Cities where I grew up for my first teaching job in Albert Lea. I worked for 33 years as an elementary school teacher in the Albert Lea Area Public Schools (including one year in Wells.) I earned my master's degree in special education a few

years into my teaching career and taught mostly first grade, including some special education. I retired in 2015. I loved teaching and had the honor of being chosen Albert Lea Teacher of the Year in 2011 and MN State semi-finalist in 2012. Teaching children wasn't just a job to me; it has a special place in

my heart and is part of who I am. I have a some "fur-kids" ... my two-year-old, 105-pound Shiloh Shepherd, Hawken, and my friendly Ragdoll cats. My close circle of family and friends are very important to me, and I enjoy gathering with them often. I also have over 750 "kids" – all my former students who are very special to me and many of whom I still stay in contact. Being part of my community through civic and church volunteer efforts has always been important to me. I spent many years serving as a volunteer in Albert Lea working with struggling, disadvantaged and troubled youth. Being active in my local church is important to me as well. I am the current state representative for District 27A and find it a great honor to serve our area communities in this way. Some of my hobbies include dog training (I taught my previous Shiloh Shepherd how to read commands), history and genealogy, reading, and writing. My goal is to someday (if I can ever find the time!) write a historical fiction novel based on the real lives of my great-grandparents x5 who lived during the Revolutionary War.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE? I was happily teaching first grade and it had never even entered my mind to run for office. Someone asked me to consider it and I thought they were crazy! I never liked politics because I don't like all the name-calling and game-playing. I had always said I would never get involved in politics. What convinced me in the end was my "kids" – all those who have been in my elementary school classroom over my 33 years as a public-school teacher. I want them – and all Minnesotans – to have the same freedoms and opportunities to succeed that have been a part of this great nation for generations. I love people and I believe people should come before politics. I have found this job to be a great honor and joy – frustrating sometimes, yes, but well worth it. **IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?** First, ramp down the rhetoric and divisiveness. Honestly, the name-calling and "my way or the highway" mentality that goes on in politics reminds me of a first-grade class-

room – not the adult world. These should have no place in the legislature. It is so important for legislators to be open to listen to all ideas. Political dialogue, debate and respectful argument are important. It's when listening and dialogue shuts down that the greatest problems arise. Secondly, omnibus bills – those giant bills containing a huge number of smaller bills. I believe the biggest barrier in getting things accomplished at the Capitol is the omnibus bill. They are the reason we get so much junk legislation passed and the cause of the huge end-of-session impasses. Omnibus bills poison the ability of legislators to work together on the things they can agree upon. I have offered omnibus bill reform legislation multiple times in the past and will continue to push on this issue. There is more than one way to solve a problem and I am open to new ideas. I have been collaborating over the interim with fellow like-minded legislators to find new ways to reform this process. I won't give up until it's done. **WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A**

WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT? This is tough to whittle down to one issue – because I really see three top issues: crime, the economy and education. However, I will touch on one: crime. Minnesota is now sadly one of the top crime states in the nation, and Minneapolis has become a murder capitol in our state and nation. Unfortunately, flawed Democratic policies – well intended as they might be – are a direct cause for this out-of-control lawlessness in our state. This crime problem is not just a metro issue. It is starting to bleed out into our beautiful rural communities as well. Local law enforcement tells me that theft is a big problem locally, including a huge rise in catalytic converter theft. Criminals have now brought fentanyl to our communities as well. Tragically, Albert Lea has lost two young people over the last few months to fentanyl overdose deaths. No one should have to worry about getting hit by a stray bullet while barbecuing in their backyard or getting carjacked while visiting a friend. Supporting law enforcement and our police

See BENNETT on C6 ►

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION



VOTE FOR
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10 YEARS OF PROVEN LEADERSHIP

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MARY HINNENKAMP-DFL
ALBERT LEA

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

I was born and raised on a dairy farm in central Minnesota, near the small town of Freeport. I hauled bales and picked rocks with my eight older brothers and cooked meals, and canned with my mom and two sisters. The work was hard, but we worked as a team and that made everything easier and more rewarding. My life has always involved public service and helping others. After graduating from

St. Cloud State College, I joined VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) with my husband Ted, working to improve the lives of the people and the local economy of Ballard County, Kentucky. We next worked as group home counselors in New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, helping struggling youth return to their families. When I gave birth to twin sons, Tad and Josh, we settled in Albert Lea. Ted began a 42-year career at Legal Services. I

ran a work-program for struggling youth, helping them to find and keep their first job. Then I began teaching English at the Albert Lea Area Learning Center, a program for kids who were struggling to earn their diplomas. Ultimately, I became the director of the Albert Lea Area Learning Center (ALC), helping students make and carry out a plan to graduate. During this time, we adopted our daughter, Tess. I spent the last five years of my teaching career at Fountain Centers, a chemical dependency program for teens. I am a member of St. Theodore's Catholic Church here in Albert Lea. I have been a leader of the committee that presents the Martin Luther King Birthday event for the past 35 years in Albert Lea. I am a member of AAUW (American Association of University Women). After retiring, I volunteered at Southwest Middle School and Halvorson Elementary School, working with kids until COVID ended my volunteering. I love to read fiction and biographies, and I love spending time with my children and three boisterous grandchildren. WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE? Sometimes, a person needs to step up,

whether at a church or an organization, to take on a leadership position. This is what I did, stepped up, when I decided to run. I care about the schools and kids in this district. I care about the communities large and small in this area, and want to work to ensure we get the resources we need to survive and thrive. Growing up a farm girl, I want to make sure farmers, large and small, are respected for their expertise and love of the land, and have a seat at the table when policy decisions are made. IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE? If I could change anything, I would eliminate the excessive amounts of money in our politics, specifically election campaigns. When the Supreme Court ruled in Citizens United that corporations could freely contribute to campaigns, it gave them an even stronger influence and power. I know I will be grossly out-spent by my opponent from her own campaign chest and by forces and organizations who support her. I have door knocked on over 14,000 doors across District 23A, in all 24 communities, to introduce myself, tell folks what I care about, and to hear about their concerns. Door knocking has been my way to use hard work as a counter balance to all that money that will be spent against me. And, I want to bring a commitment to compromise to the Minnesota House. Just voting NO is not the way to help this district grow and thrive. I will reach across the aisle and seek compromise to bring resources to the district. WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU

HELP TO RESOLVE IT? There are a number of important issues facing Minnesota and this district. My opponent, Rep. Peggy Bennett, and I may seem to be a lot alike. We both are retired teachers. We both live in Albert Lea. And we both had the honor of being chosen Teacher of the Year in Albert Lea. But that is where the similarities end. Some years ago, during a debate, Ms. Bennett said that she was not sure that schools should provide free breakfasts to students, that it would weaken the family. At the time, I was the director of the ALC and we provided free peanut butter and jelly toast every day before, during class breaks, and after school for students who were hungry. Why? Because we felt no kid should go hungry. And, of course, we understood that hungry kids don't learn when their stomachs are growling. It was our direct and simple solution. Ms. Bennett recently described the state's \$9 billion dollar projected surplus as money burning a hole in a kid's pocket. I see it as an opportunity to help the folks in this district: Help kids catch up because of COVID interruptions with more support staff, mental health counselors, and smaller class sizes. Provide cities with the money to invest in badly needed upgrades to their wastewater treatment plants so our cities can thrive and grow. Provide the folks in our towns with libraries, senior centers, and other core services. Help families still recovering from the pandemic with day care and other supports. Make no mistake, if we give away the surplus as big tax breaks to the wealthy as my opponent prefers, we will be faced with tough local choices: let our schools and cities and counties begin to deteriorate, or raise property taxes and user fees to support

them. Both are unacceptable. Rep. Bennett has supported restricting women's access to reproductive care. I am a woman who has given birth to twins, had a miscarriage and adopted a child. I think we need to trust women to make decisions about their own bodies and families and support them in those choices. WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY? I have knocked on over 14,000 doors in all 24 towns in District 23A, and I have listened and learned. People all over this district are volunteering at churches, libraries and schools. They provide daycare for their grandkids and great-grandkids. People check on their neighbors and give them rides. They join organizations and give generously of their time and talents. I see the kind of spirit and commitment to others that makes southern Minnesota a great place to live. I want other legislators to understand that I am committed to the citizens of our district and will work tirelessly to ensure we get our fair share from the state surplus, so that the citizens of this district get what they need. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING? All of my life I have worked with a team of people to identify and solve problems, to improve the lives of people, skills that are necessary to get things done at the legislature. I am the best candidate for Minnesota House 23A because I am ready to roll up my sleeves and work together with community members and legislators from both parties to make sure southern Minnesota remains a great place to live.



KATE
FALVEY

FOR MN SENATE DISTRICT 19

I am Kate Falvey and I am running for State Senate for District 19. I am a teacher in Faribault Public Schools. As a teacher, I know the value of hard work, learning, research, and studying. I also know the value of empathy, understanding, cooperation, and perseverance. The people of District 19 need someone new who is NOT a politician, who can work with those who have differing viewpoints, and is able to achieve goals through compromise by never giving up, no matter how long it takes. I will bring TEACHER MAGIC to the State Senate to fight for full and equitable education funding, take a stand to keep our medical decisions private, and develop policies that make the system more equitable for all citizens.



VOTE NOVEMBER 8TH



@kateforMNstate | www.kateformnstate.com

Produced and Paid for by Committee for Kate (Falvey) Committee

Former teachers battle for House 23A

◀ BENNETT from C5 officers is extremely important to me. This includes properly funded police departments, meaningful law enforcement training and holding criminals accountable for bad behavior. These are all things (and more) that I will push for next session to return Minnesota to a safe, law-abiding state. WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY? Our local southern Minnesota communities are full of the most friendly, generous and hardworking people around. Most anyone here would give you the shirt off their back if you needed it. We are farmers, teachers, nurses, small business owners, plumbers, carpenters, moms, dads, grandparents, retirees and more. The people here care deeply about each other, about their state, and their nation.

Most are very concerned about the direction our state and nation are going and want to see some significant changes before we reach the point of no return. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING? I was a problem solver when helping my struggling students in my classroom, and I've now carried that problem-solving tenacity to the legislature. That's why, when I entered office, I made it my goal to make sure we fixed the huge nursing home funding deficit that our state was experiencing. During my first year in office, I was part of a successful legislative effort that made significant reforms in how the state reimburses senior care facilities. Those reforms helped to boost employee pay and keep nursing home doors open. That's why I have continued those problem-solving efforts in

other areas as well, including bringing in more state dollars for roads and bridges without raising taxes, and making it possible for foster kids to be a part of their siblings' lives. That's why, last biennium, while in the House minority, I worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get my evidence-based government bill passed. This legislation will make sure our tax dollars that are being used for education grant programs that are effective and work – not on those that don't work. I want to carry this principle to all government spending. When I meet with people, we may not always end up agreeing on everything, but it's important to me that they walk away knowing that I'm willing to listen, I treated them respectfully, and that I care – because I do! I sure would appreciate your vote this election. Thank you!



VOTE April St. Martin For School Board

As a School Board Member of I.S.D. 761 I will...

- Establish a school climate that reflects our community.
- Ensure all families and individuals have the opportunity for public discussion.
- Foster 100% transparency.
- Commit to answer all inquiries and concerns in a timely manner and with due diligence.

I am seeking your support to ensure all community members are represented and have a voice.

Parents Are The Answer

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Prepared and paid for by April St. Martin Committee, 427 Larch Ave, Owatonna, MN 55060

Former Austin mayor challenges House 23B incumbent



PATRICIA MUELLER (i) – GOP
AUSTIN

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
As a Minnesota native, I moved to Southern Minnesota after I graduated from college with my English Education degree and married my husband in 2004. Though we spent three years teaching in China and five years teaching in Indianapolis, southern Minnesota was our home and the place we felt most connected to. Throughout my teaching career in Minnesota, I taught one year at Roseville Area Middle School, three years at Blooming Prairie High School, one year at Owatonna Middle School, and five years at Austin High School. In 2018, I graduated with a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on literacy. I earned my Doctorate in Education Leadership in May 2022. Both my husband and I are active in our church and work with the multicultural communities in Austin.

Currently, I am the State Representative for MN 27B and am running for re-election for the newly formed MN23B district. I am also a short-call substitute teacher for the Austin Public School district. When I am not working, I enjoy traveling (trying to get used to camping), hanging out with my friends or family, reading, playing music, leading worship at my church, going on photography dates with Dan, and walking with my Australian Shepherd.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
There is a saying that empowered women empower women. That is certainly true for me. A couple of women who were serving in the MN House and Senate met me at a local GOP event. After talking with me and hearing me speak, they encouraged me to run. I was immediately resistant as I loved teaching and had no intention of leaving the

profession I had dedicated my life to. During the 2018-2019 school year, I was talking to my students about how people asked me to run for office. When I told them I wasn't going to do it, my students were the ones to finally convince me. They said, "You told us that our voice matters Mrs. Mueller!" I had to concede knowing that it was important for my students to see me put my words into action.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?
We need to stop passing large omnibus bills. Our Minnesota Constitution says that bills are to be single-subject only. And while the Minnesota Supreme Court has ruled that omnibus bills are constitutional, it is bad government. In the early 1970s, there were approximately 3,000 bills passed. In the 2021 session, there were only around 30 because all provisions were shoved into large omnibus bills. Not only do omnibus bills make it impossible for the public to really know what is being passed but it also traps legislators into making impossible decisions. There are many policies that both sides of the aisle support. But when the party that is in the majority includes "poison pills" into a large bill, legislators are forced to either accept things that go against their conscience or philosophy of government, or they have to vote against policies that they actually support. Let ideas stand on their own merit. Smaller bills that are single subject

will be more transparent and produce better legislation for the people of Minnesota.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT?
Hard-working citizens are watching their paychecks buy less and less. With record inflation and high gas prices, Minnesotans are feeling the strain on their family budget. It is important to pass permanent and meaningful tax relief so more Minnesotans can keep their hard-earned money. Minnesota is the 5th-highest taxed state in our union, which drives people and businesses out of our beautiful state. The social security tax is a perfect example of taxing our citizens out of Minnesota. We need our senior citizens to stay as they have institutional wisdom and make our communities stronger. But if they cannot afford to stay in Minnesota, they will move.

In addition to tax reform, we need to audit our agencies. In 2021, legislators passed a \$52 billion budget. And yet, we continue to hear that programs are underfunded and hear reports of millions in fraud. We need to focus our resources on the core functions of government and local communities where local leaders can use the funds for their specific needs. More local control will be more effective and more transparent than large government programs that only offer one solution to complex issues and are ripe for fraud.

WHAT DO YOU

WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS OR STEELE COUNTY?
I am immensely proud of our community, specifically Blooming Prairie as that is the area of Steele County that is in my district if I am re-elected. Blooming Prairie invests in their community. The businesses are active and passionate about supporting local school or church events. The Blooming Prairie Education Foundation is supported by members who dedicate their time and money. The schools are willing to take risks and do whatever it takes to make sure their students succeed. When there was a lack of child care in the area, the local citizens took it upon themselves and opened the Leo Augusta Academy. And when a person is struggling – illness or other tragic events – the whole area comes together to support them with food and finances. I have personally attended the BP Cancer auction and heard the stories of victory and bravery. This community is proud of its history and excited for the future. I want to make sure that funding for education and infrastructure is balanced and localized so that Blooming Prairie is able to continue its legacy of excellence.

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING?
Your elected officials are public servants. We are citizen legislators, which means we are to work and live amongst

the people we represent. We must learn from people with first-hand knowledge. When I was a teacher, I learned from my students as much as my students learned from me. The representative-constituent partnership is similar. Ultimately, I try my best to vote in a way that best serves my constituents and stays true to conservative values.

Because of my almost two decades of experience as an educator, I know how to collaborate with others and examine complex issues. Your representative needs to think critically and listen to others so the best solution is created – one that limits unintended consequences. I have been able to work with our job providers, our childcare providers, teachers, and our housing providers along with local government leaders to address issues that prevent our citizens from thriving.

Your only currency is the relationships you build with others on both sides of the aisle in the House. No one representative can pass legislation alone, so he or she must discuss and demonstrate the merit of bills. I am proud of the relationships that I have built that will only benefit my constituents.

It has been my honor to be the voice of this part of Southeastern Minnesota in St. Paul these past two years. I have been present and available as possible to learn from as many people as possible. If elected again, I will provide unique representation, protect our God-given rights, and fight for fiscal accountability and transparency.



TOM STIEHM-DFL
AUSTIN

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
I'm the retired mayor of Austin, Minn., from 2007-2020. Prior to being mayor, I was an Austin Police Officer for 30 years, 1976-2006.

My wife Sarah and I have three children and six grandchildren.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
We see our society being torn apart, our institutions, including law enforcement, being attacked daily. We need

politicians who will pull us together, not tear us apart.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?
We need politicians who will put citizens ahead of party affiliation.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A

WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT?
It is hard to pick just one issue. As a former law enforcement officer I plan to prioritize public safety.

I will use my experience and try to build bridges across the aisle to pass legislation that will help communities build relations with law enforcement.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW

ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY?
I would like them to realize that the needs of rural Minnesota are just as important as the needs of the metro area.

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING?
Experience, both as mayor and as a former police officer, and having raised a family in rural Minnesota.

MINNESOTA HOUSE DISTRICT 19B

Petersburg faces challenge from Owatonna

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
As a lifelong resident, I have been dedicated to serving our communities, businesses and families, including serving on the Claremont/Triton School Board, a board member of the Minnesota School Board Association, a member of Steele Waseca Cooperative Electric advisory board, council member of Trinity Lutheran Church, and as treasurer of the Southeast Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. I served as the church administrator for Trinity Lutheran Church for 21 years. Currently I am the Minority lead on the Transportation Committee and finishing my fifth term as a state representative serving this district. These diverse experiences give me the skills and knowledge

to effectively represent this district and serve in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
With my previous experience in public office, I felt it was time for me to serve my community in the Minnesota Legislature. I believe everyone should serve their community in one way or another, this is one way I can use my gifts and talents to serve.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?
That we would take the time and energy to talk, negotiate and compromise on state policy decisions. That we wouldn't settle for what is easy, but rather to

spend the time to make it right. That legislators could re-earn the trust of those they represent by being open and honest, not only to their fellow legislators, but also to their constituents. That doesn't mean we will agree with everything or that we need to change our core values, but it will go a long way if we understand them.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT?
I am not sure if this is a legislative issue, but the State of Minnesota is facing a crisis in its identity. We are being pulled apart with divisive language that is pitting one group against another. The rhetoric is not bringing us closer together or

uniting us, but rather putting wedges and barriers between us. We are going to have to learn to accept that we are all unique, but also that we are all Minnesota citizens and children of God. It is extremely difficult to get beyond the labels we put on each other and ourselves. We need to learn to be tolerant of each other's differences, but also to hold each accountable for their actions. Only when we stop using our energies against each other and come together can we solve the problems of the future.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY?
Whereas Steele County has many



JOHN PETERSBURG (i)-GOP
WASECA

similarities to the rest of Minnesota, it is also unique in many ways. Minnesota is very diverse in both people and needs, and one-size-fits-all policies may not be appropriate for Steele County. I will continue to share the needs as well as the strengths of Steele County with my

fellow legislators.

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING?
See the answer to the first question.

DFL Challenger Abdulahi Ali Osman did not respond to the questionnaire.

Austin attorney, incumbent pursue new Senate 23



GENE DORNINK (i)-GOP
BROWNSDALE

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
I've lived in southern Minnesota my entire life. Having been raised on a dairy farm, I was taught about hard work, responsibility and teamwork. I met my wife Vicky while attending vocational school in Austin, and since then we have been blessed with a house full of the laughter and joy of our children and grandchildren. Having had experience growing up on a farm, working

as a union carpenter for 22 years, and being a small business owner, I understand the issues that families are facing. As your State Senator, I've learned to listen and communicate with our community members, and I'm prepared to serve the communities that have given me so much.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
Through the years, as our children were growing up, we would

take them to the Capitol. We would meet with several state representatives. Those elected leaders invested time in us and showed us the process. With each trip to St. Paul, I became more interested and involved in politics. A State Representative asked and encouraged me to run for office after he announced he was retiring. He shared with me that we have a part-time legislature and needed more people willing to serve. We need more citizens in office and not career politicians. With my background in agriculture, being a union carpenter, and as small business owner, he believed I had the experience and knowledge needed to serve.

With those words of encouragement and support from my family and friends, I decided that our Senate district needed new leadership. We needed someone to work for the people, not party politics. It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve the past two years in the Minnesota Senate. I have made it a top priority to talk with local experts on many subject areas and ensure every constituent has a voice. With the relationships I have built and all I have learned over the past two years, and

with your support, I can continue to be an effective voice for our way of life in the Minnesota Senate.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?
The legislature needs to pass bipartisan legislation that is widely agreed upon by the people of Minnesota. Currently, legislation is jammed into bloated omnibus bills and popular policy becomes a bargaining chip in negotiations. We need to get back to single bills, which increases transparency and make it easier for every Minnesotan to understand what is being passed.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT?
I believe the Minnesota Legislature needs to get back to the basics. Governments are instituted to protect our freedoms and liberties, not dictate our daily lives. The members of the Legislature should be transparent, accountable and public servants to the hard-working people of Minnesota, not self-serving activists.

We also need to ensure that every Minnesotan has a voice and we restore equal balance to power, instead of one-man rule. Essentially, we need to work together to elect people who are willing to put their constituents above politics.

I have been willing to work across the aisle to come to solutions in my first term as your State Senator. I talk and listen to community members and legislate with their guidance. I am focused on rebuilding our economy, restoring public safety and creating excellence in education. I will be a strong voice who prioritizes service above self.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY?
The people in Senate District 27 – and now Senate District 23 – want to have their government work for them. They want a government that will listen and help them solve problems together. The folks in our community, especially in Steele County, are hard-working and always willing to lend a hand to a neighbor in need. We appreciate and support our law enforcement; we want help from the state for infrastructure

projects and we want a less intrusive government.

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING?
As a union carpenter for 22 years, a small business owner with an agriculture background, a parent and lifelong resident of Southern Minnesota, I understand the values of our community. During my first term in the Senate, I fought back against reckless government expansion and tax increases, pushed for policies that help grow jobs, worked to strengthen our economy, and invested your tax dollars wisely.

I am working hard to get money back in your pockets because you know what is best for your family – not the government. I am working to make our communities safer by respecting police and holding violent criminals accountable. I have been given so much and there comes a time to give back to your community. I'm not running to make a career in politics. I am running to be a servant of the people and make Southern Minnesota a place where everyone can be successful. We need more citizens in office, not career politicians.



BRANDON LAWHEAD-DFL
AUSTIN

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
A lifelong commitment to southern Minnesota values. I was born and raised in Austin, Minnesota. I attended Austin High School.

I attended St. Olaf College, where I graduated with honors, and was inducted into Phi Alpha Theta (historical honor society). I was deeply honored, when legendary St. Olaf Orchestra conductor, Steven Amundson, wrote: "Brandon was one of the finest violinists to have ever attended St. Olaf College in my 38 years on the faculty... He received the highest honors bestowed to a music student at St. Olaf College." I received my juris doctorate from William Mitchell College of Law.

I met my wife at St. Olaf College. We are Christian and our denomination is Lutheran.

All of our children received a public education. Our oldest son,

Brock, was the first student in the history of Austin High School to receive the prestigious MSHSL "Triple A Award" at school, section and state levels (award for excellence in Arts, Athletics, Academics). Brock is currently attending St. Olaf College, where he was inducted into Chi Alpha Sigma (National Athlete Honor Society), and has been nominated to be a Rhodes Scholar. Our daughter was in National Honor Society in high school, and is currently attending St. Olaf College. Our youngest son is a junior at Austin High School, and plays on the football team.

I have worked as an attorney in private practice, and have argued before the Minnesota Supreme Court. I believe my experience in the law, relating to common issues, like criminal, family law, personal injury, and landlord-tenant issues will be invaluable. I

have several published cases at the appellate courts.

I paid for my education by working as a professional violinist with The Who, Moody Blues, Richard Marx, Amy Grant and others. I have a good sense of humor, as demonstrated by being a fan of the Minnesota Vikings. I'm an avid fisherman and outdoorsman.

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
When riots and insurrections are characterized as normal political thought, it's a red flag that "The Middle" isn't being represented. Partisan politics has created deep divisions and extremism. I want to start a new political movement that seeks to be issue-focused and holds representatives responsible for getting the work of the people done.

My biggest political influence was my grandfather, Leon Lawhead, who enlisted in the U.S. Navy after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As luck would have it, Grandad was bunkmates with Byron "Whizzer" White, President Kennedy's appointment to the United States Supreme Court. This caused our family to move from Republican to Democrat. In the election of 1960, Justice White told Grandad that everything would change because Kennedy was Catholic. Being a Catholic and running for president was quite controversial back then. But though he was a devout Protestant, Grandad always believed in separation of church & state; and that everybody, regardless of religious affiliation or race, should have a fair shot at the American Dream.

That's what Capitalism is all about, and the role of government is to create a playing field that's fair for everyone without quotas or handouts.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – WHAT WOULD IT BE?
I want to fundamentally change the manner in which politics is currently being conducted. The tribalism and partisanship have caused people to lose their voice. I want more collegiality, and discussion, where people can debate whether policy ideas are right or wrong, not who is "good or bad."

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE FACING THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE, AND HOW WILL YOU HELP TO RESOLVE IT?
Partisanship and accountability.

I believe there should be a centralized location, where citizens can review a side-by-side comparison between candidates on issues. The technology is there, where voters can efficiently compare and contrast candidates and their stance on issues. People don't know what their representative is actually doing.

For example:

- my opponent seeks to outlaw abortion (even in cases of rape and incest). My opponent wants criminalize abortion. That's out of touch with our district.
- In SF 3679, my opponent seeks to bring religion into the public schools. So, that means that the Taliban could be radicalizing your children during school. I think the schools have enough on their plates, and we need to be teaching the 3R's, music

and sports. Religion is a family matter and I want the government out of it. That's out of touch with our district.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE OTHER LEGISLATORS IN ST. PAUL TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS, OR STEELE COUNTY?
Steele County and Southern Minnesotans are hard-working people. We are hungry to get back to being first. Not first, when ... first, if ... or first, but ... Just first!

Give us a look, and bring your businesses down here.

WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING?
I have the education and impartiality to apply critical reasoning, and get the work of the people done. I have seen how statutes are interpreted by the courts for over 25 years. So, I know how something will be applied in practical terms.

I believe we can fundamentally change our economic outlook. I just had a private luncheon with the Governor and the First Lady a few weeks ago. While they seek to create ONE Minnesota, I could see a twinkle in their eyes, and they have a special place in their heart for us in Southern Minnesota. This is the governor's old congressional district. He loves us. It's doubtful we will ever have a governor from southern Minnesota in our lifetime. We have a special opportunity. My opponent walked away from a deal, which would have given the largest tax cut in Minnesota history, plus money for infrastructure and education. I will work WITH the governor to get things moving again.

We also have Jeff Ettinger, the former CEO of Hormel Foods, who is running for Congress. I will be tapping into his business knowledge and all that he brings to the table. I want to bring to state government what Jeff seeks to do at the federal level. With the governor as an ally, I believe we could get more done in the next four years than what's taken place in the last 40 years.

Our economic problems are not new. The truth is we have been sliding for the past 25 years. We now have an opportunity to change that.

Political Ideology: fiscal Conservative/social Liberal

I seek to bring a new political movement, which rejects partisan politics in favor of serving the people:

Let's Meet in the Middle:

- Fiscal Conservative/social Liberal
- Pro-choice
- Small business owner
- Attorney with over 25 years experience fighting for individual rights over government intrusion
- Defend the 2nd Amendment
- Fully fund public education, and encourage public-private educational partnerships for dynamic and innovative student learning
- Address affordable housing by forging public-private partnerships, which provide local private investors low-interest loans
- Reduce inflation and strengthen the economy by improving community safety and infrastructure

My guiding principle in governance will be southern Minnesota, first.

I hope you'll vote for me.

4 seats open, 3 contested on Owatonna council

AT-LARGE



DAN BOEKE (i)
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am an Owatonna native, married an Owatonna native (Laurie Strohschein) and raised my two children in Owatonna. I graduated from OHS in 1972 and then attended Bemidji State University and graduated with a degree in elementary education, a coaching certificate and a focus on business. I owned and managed a small business in Owatonna (Harland's Tire and Auto Center) for over 40 years. I have served on the Owatonna Park & Rec board, the Owatonna Planning Commission, Trinity Lutheran Church personnel committee and taught Sunday school. I have served on the North Central Tire Dealers Board of Directors, the Owatonna Youth Hockey Board and coached youth hockey and baseball. I am a lifetime member of the Owatonna Elks Club and served on the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce Board. I now proudly serve on the Owatonna City Council.

When I retired, I worked for Owatonna ISD 761 as an educational assistant. I enjoy golf and grandchildren.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

It is my privilege and honor to run for the City of Owatonna Councilman at Large position. I would like to continue the work I have started, that I enjoy and that I am committed to! I feel that my openness, my transparency, my ideals, my ability to listen and absorb other ideas make me an ideal councilman. I am a team player. My work on budgets and expenses in the private sector gives me an advantage working through the clutter.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

In my pre-retirement life I served the public, my friends and neighbors for over 40 years. I was a trusted go-to guy to repair autos and buy tires. I served ag folks, medical-industrial-commercial-retail-white collar-manufacturing folks and got a great education in what makes each person unique and how to solve each person's problems, through listening!

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

Quality of life in Owatonna is paramount. Safety, security, infrastructure, education, medical availability and parks are all items that make Owatonna a great community. I want to continue to address the availability of success for all individuals; each citizen will be treated with respect and given opportunity to flourish.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO

SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I can compromise with anyone, by listening and finding common ground, not always needing to win. By believing that Owatonna comes first, I will be able to adjust as needed to any issue.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

Yes, I can put aside my personal wishes and beliefs for the common good. A close election win does not give anyone the affirmation that the other side does not matter. The good of all Owatonnans is the priority.



PENG OLSON
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am a 30-year Owatonna resident and employed as the Community Relations Manager for Federated Insurance. I earned graduate and undergraduate educational degrees in leadership and organizational management and business administration. I've been a strong advocate of civic leadership, economic empowerment and inclusion, currently serving on the boards for the United Way of Steele County, Owatonna Foundation, and Alliance for Greater Equity.

My dad served in the military during the Vietnam conflict, which is where he met my biological mom, hence the origin of my first name. I grew up among a blended family and have lived across several states (Va., S.D., Neb. Minn.). I wed my high school sweetheart, Bob Olson and we've been married for 31 years. He works for Owatonna ISD #761 and is very active leading the construction of Owatonna's new high school. My greatest joy is reflected through my children raised here in Owatonna – Lydia (29), Garrett (27) and Reid (23). I truly enjoy spending time with my family all over the U.S., the adventure of domestic and international travel, and connecting with all aspects of my Asian ethnicity.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I genuinely care about Owatonna and all of its residents. We have a beautiful community and I am blessed to be a part of it. I am running because I believe that people want to live in a community with a vision, purpose and transparency. I believe I'm qualified for the task – I represent a fresh voice to city government, new leadership, new ideas, and I'm a forward-thinking individual. I am committed to solving issues and being a part of solutions that are in the best interests of the greater community. I believe this requires a proactive approach and ensuring more voices are invited to the table.

It is time to offer representation, including processes that better reflect the diverse views of our community. I will help strengthen the city's public engagement culture – to

ensure residents, businesses and non-profits are collaborative partners. I want to increase equity and empower new perspectives in our city's work, ensure economic development increases quality of life, strengthen our essential services and ensure long-term stability with our city's infrastructure.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I have been and continue to be passionate toward creating possibilities, activating public participation with purpose and fostering a greater sense of belonging. I initiated and led the Pool Together – River Springs Water Park Initiative, Owatonna Forward's "community visioning" project and guided citizen advocacy campaigns to help pass Owatonna's more recent public-school referendums (2015, 2019). To assist with small business pandemic support, I helped architect and implement the Jumpstart Owatonna funding program. Currently, I am collaborating with grassroots citizens to implement an online public engagement platform – Engage Owatonna – to more accurately inform and involve our citizens in community problem solving and decision-making. The leadership commitment and accountability required to execute these past and current endeavors have tested and equipped me well to serve our community.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

High on my list are strengthening the city's communication and public engagement, housing inventory and taking care of our fiscal budget during these inflationary times.

Through firsthand experience and feedback from community members, I believe the current culture and systems intended to support public engagement are not achieving the desired outcomes of our community. While there have been successful city-initiated engagement efforts, some members of the public do not trust its processes. Some do not understand how city staff and the city council's decision-making works. Boards/working groups have broad discretion over how or whether to engage community members and are not seen as welcoming, consistent, transparent or representative. There is also a lack of diversity and balance of viewpoints.

I am interested in Owatonna's economic development, and more specifically addressing our shortage of affordable/starter housing and childcare. Affordable housing is a community need of Owatonna, not just a segment of our population. We must get innovative with our childcare challenges. I want to see the city partner with others and prioritize these issues to help bolster recruitment and retention of a future workforce. Without a workforce, we are not positioned to sustain and grow our population, jobs and tax base.

Taking care of our fiscal budget during these inflationary

times is of utmost importance. As we each manage our personal households, we give consideration to what is essential, needed and what can wait. We must apply these same principles to our city's budget and anticipated work. I want to keep our current level of services, continue a sensible tax structure, and support long range planning and innovation to lower city costs.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I believe that communication is key to the creation of shared meaning. One of my greater strengths is being authentic – connecting and bridging diverse groups, making it possible to work together. To work toward compromise, I intentionally talk to people and create relationships built on trust, reciprocity and durability – all of which make agreement and joint action possible.

I seek to have a better comprehension and appreciation of the other person's opinion. I work toward compromise by being adaptable and responsible about my own position. I pay attention to help me learn – often soliciting other's opinions to understand their needs. It's vital that people feel heard, even if things don't go the way we anticipate. When I have learned both the "what" and "why" of others' opinions, there is a good chance of creating shared meaning. That is how I work toward compromise.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

My childhood and life experiences have shaped my personal views and values. They are what guide and help me decide what is right or wrong and what I will or won't do, including what is possible or achievable. However, I'm not one to assume my personal beliefs to be fact, which can be limiting.

I see myself as an open-minded individual, committed to learning and crossing boundaries when needed. I believe that people are honest in nature. I am willing to vote against a personal belief but want to understand the perspective of what is being shared, consider my own beliefs and then consider what is being proposed for the common good.

WARD 1



NATHAN DOTSON (i)
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have been an almost lifelong resident of the Owatonna area. I have been married to my wife, Joan for 15 years. We have 2 boys, one in elementary school and one at the middle school. I own and operate Dotson Woodworking in Owatonna.

I have been on the Owatonna City Council since 2010. In that capacity I have served

on the EDA; Highway 14 Coalition; OABDC board; and am currently serving on the HRA and Rice & Steele Joint Powers Board. I have also served on the public policy committee and board of directors at the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce where I served as chair. I was also able to act as a Boy Scout troop leader. In my free time I enjoy motorcycle racing with the CRA.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I am proud of the work I've been able to contribute in my role as council member and would like to continue in that capacity. Owatonna is great community to live and work in.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I previously served on a local BPOU as a board member and later co-chair. I also worked with an issue advocacy group working with public policy.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

I would like to see some of the large projects undertaken in recent years come to completion. I would also like to implement a change in how we do street assessments and move to more broadly based street maintenance fund to reduce special assessments to specific property owners.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I am very satisfied with the overall position our council takes with regard to differing opinions. We have been willing and able to make decisions and when not all agree, we accept the decision was made as a whole and all work to implement that decision even if it is contrary to a member's individual vote.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

Yes, there are situations where the will of the constituents may differ from personal beliefs. There may be circumstances where one must determine when to try to lead and persuade.

Ward 1 challenger Seth Madole did not respond to the questionnaire.

WARD 5



MOLLY KERR
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I earned a bachelor of science degree in music industry with a minor in marketing from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Upon graduation I was employed with Ticketmaster as an event support specialist for 11 years, before my family relocated to Owatonna in 2017. I currently serve as the marketing and mem-

bership coordinator at Foremost Brewing Cooperative in downtown Owatonna.

Over the last 5 years my husband, Jason and I have planted roots and made Owatonna our home to work and raise our daughter, Bernadette (6). From the beginning, I have been involved in a variety of local organizations: Owatonna Forward steward; MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers); and volunteering for community charity fundraisers. This includes Chubs Brew-BQ; Alliance for Greater Equity Food and Brew Festival and Hops for Habitat.

In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors with my family and fostering dogs through Pet Haven Inc. of Minnesota.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I am running to represent Owatonna in the 5th Ward because I am fully committed to our community.

The members of our community deserve a clear path for two-way communication where their concerns are actively heard.

I want to continue to grow engagement from our community members at all levels of local government in ways that haven't been tried before. Transparency from our local government is of utmost importance. Honest communication is critical in building trust in our elected leaders.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I was active with the ideation, development and implementation of Foremost Brewing Cooperative in downtown Owatonna. With a focus on the Owatonna community and the revitalization of downtown, Foremost has become an active and growing community asset. My current position as the membership and marketing coordinator and additional activity in local charities, has given me the opportunity to build strong relationships with other local Owatonna residents. With a background in marketing and my other experiences, I'm able to see the big picture when taking on new challenges.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

My focus will be community engagement, fiscal responsibility and transparency. There needs to be a clear path for open communication between the citizens of Owatonna and those elected to make decisions. Community members should be given the opportunity to easily express their concerns and what is important them. By actively listening, I will help to ensure your tax dollars are spent responsibly, resourcefully and in areas that strengthen Owatonna as a whole.

Transparency will be of utmost importance to foster trust and confidence in your local government.

Working for a small business in Owatonna, I have seen the effects of the workforce shortage firsthand. I would like to see the City Council back efforts to attract new workers to Owatonna.

See OWATONNA on C10 ►

Medford City Council to seat 2 newcomers



CRAIG HELGESON
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have lived in Medford for over 20 years, and am a member of the Medford Fire Department for most of that time. I have served as Commander, Training Officer, and on the Relief Association side, Treasurer and President. I have been a part of the Medford Wrestling booster club, and also the Diamond Association. I have been a baseball coach in Medford for over 10 years at the youth level. I currently work in commercial mechanical estimation and project management. I love to hunt and fish, along with watching my kids play sports.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

Medford has a long history of not being prepared for the future. We have not done a good job being stewards of the city's finances. We must open our eyes and take a good look at the needs of the city, not only today, but going forward, and start planning for down the road. I am running because I think we need to elect someone who is willing to make some decisions. I have seen and been at past council meetings that have gone for over 4 hours and accomplished nothing. We have been attempting to address the city's needs for over 10 years, with no action.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN

FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I have a very diverse employment background, from HVAC, firefighting, law enforcement, and project management, that give me a wide view from different angles. I have seen things from an emergency response, but also from a management side. In my current employment, I run multi-million-dollar projects with budgets, hiring and execution of projects.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

The city has a lot of needs, more public works space, wastewater treatment upgrades, hiring/keeping qualified staff, the municipal liquor store, and the fire department building. I have been involved in past talks of a municipal building; I have seen the costs go from a million to three million to probably five million dollars now. This is a prime example of just kicking the can down the road, and continuing to be indecisive. I am not for raising taxes just to raise them and spend, but I think we have to have a plan, we have to make the decisions that give us the best value and not keep pushing it off.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I think everyone should educate themselves, including finding out the opinions of others. I am not always right, and I don't always know the answer to things, but I do the best I can to find them. I am more than willing to sit down, have an open and honest discussion and to hear other people's opinions. Let's talk face to face, chat with me at a sporting event, or call me.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

"The common good" is certainly a phrase that is overused, and I don't use it because it is so subjective. But, this ties into question 5, how do you compromise with people of different opinions, I may have my feelings one way or another about something, but I am willing to listen to others' opinions. If they make a valid argument for or against something, and there is enough feedback on it, I would most certainly vote against my personal belief. There are too many people in politics and government that just talk, but when it comes down to it, there isn't a lot of action, especially when it goes against their beliefs. The voice of the people needs to be heard, and not just at election time.



COREY SAMORA
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have lived in the city of Medford for 9 years. I graduated from Owatonna High School in 2003 and from Minnesota State University Moorhead in 2008. I currently work for Cambria Mortgage and have been in the financial sector since 2010. I've been married to my beautiful wife Allison for 9 years and have three active children: Nicolas, 11; Maddix, 8; Gianna, 4. I enjoy coaching lacrosse for Owatonna High School, volunteer coaching Medford youth football and

watching a good college football game.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I have always thought I could bring a lot of good experience and forward thinking to the city council of Medford. I think there are so many ways we can help create more opportunities and position the city of Medford in a strong position for the future. I also think that the council needs more representation from people that have been and seen other places and different experiences to have a well-rounded council.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I have been working in the financial sector of business for the last 12 years. I have managed many people, places and balance sheets to maximize yields and profits. I really think that when it comes to finances that you need to be in tune with how they work and make them work for us as a city, too.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

I would really like to see the city council have a pipeline of projects, items and expenditures so that we are being proactive to the needs of the city and not reactive. I keep looking at the wastewater treatment issue that raises its head every couple of years. I think that is just an example of something that we could be proactive about and plan for so that it doesn't come as a shock and burden to the already stressed taxpayers. Our city pool may potentially need more maintenance or possible replacement; this is an example of how we can tackle the

cost of this and how we can prepare and plan so this doesn't come as a shock. I truly believe I can bring pipeline management and planning into the council to help us leverage our finances in such a way to be more impactful with where we have to spend.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I think there is always common ground to be had with people that may not share the same specific opinion as you. I also think that it is important that you respect everyone's point of view; they may not see things from the same lens as you and just because of that does not make the wrong. I truly believe most contentious points can be bridged with clear, calm and open dialogue. Are you ever going to win someone to your "side?" Maybe not but you can collectively agree on things that are beneficial for both options. I also don't believe agreement is mutually exclusive to winning another person to share your opinion. I love to have the opportunity to work through things with those that may not share my same view; it lets all involved grow, learn and see things from different perspectives.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

I don't know what this question is implying but I typically will let my beliefs guide my "vote." There are things that all people believe and are convicted about that steer their decision making. I think if you are doing what's best for the community and are guided by your beliefs then that's all you can ask.



NICK SORENSEN
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My wife and I moved to Medford in 2010 and have two daughters that are enrolled in Medford Elementary. My wife is an LPN and I am an electronic technician. We remain active in the community by volunteering and have volunteered in Girl Scouts, Medford Civic Club, Park Board and Capital Advisory Board. We enjoy snowmobiling, camping, fishing, hiking and traveling.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I truly enjoy being involved in our community and working toward common goals and like any other person running for an elected office I feel that I can make a difference.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I served on the Park Board as vice-chair for two years and after it was disbanded, I served as chair of the Capital Advisory Board.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

Medford City Council has in my opinion struggled for years with the ability to pass resolutions on major capital projects in a timely manner. Projects seem to remain on the agenda for years at times and even span
See MEDFORD on C14 ►

OWATONNA CITY COUNCIL

4 seats open, 3 contested on Owatonna council

◀ **OWATONNA** from C9

This will include supporting the branding project being championed by the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and local Owatonna businesses. Creating cohesive brand recognition will allow Owatonna to better communicate the many services, schools, resources and amenities Owatonna has to offer. In addition, a lack of housing remains a major deterrent for prospective new workers to the area. I will support efforts to build additional housing which needs to include a combination of single-family homes, work force accommodations and senior housing.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

When working toward a compromise between people with differing opinions I explore the disagreement to completely understand each person's viewpoint. It is critical to actively listen to learn from each perspective. By having a well-rounded view, it is possible to generate alternatives and find an equally satisfying solution.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSON-

AL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

Yes, as the city council member for Ward 5, it would be my duty to vote in line with the needs and wants of my constituents. I am a huge proponent of community engagement and believe that two-way communication is vital to the success of Owatonna. Community members should be given the opportunity to easily express their concerns and what is important them. By engaging with the members of the community, I will be able to vote the will of the people that make up Owatonna.



BRENT SVENBY (I)
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

As a lifelong resident, I am proud to call Owatonna home. Married to another Owatonna native, Elizabeth Loveless, together, we have raised our four children in this great community. After graduating from

Owatonna High School in 1988, I went on to receive graduate and undergraduate degrees in Urban Planning and Geography, respectfully, from Mankato State University. Currently, I am employed as a senior administrative analyst for the City of Rochester within the Community Development Department.

First elected to the Owatonna City Council in 2005, I have been honored to serve the residents of Owatonna since 2006. In addition, I serve on the Steele County Free Fair Board as a director, at Trinity Lutheran Church and on the From the Heart committee for the past 14 years, providing financial support to local families on their journey with cancer.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

It has been my honor to serve the citizens of Owatonna, by representing the 5th Ward, since 2006.

During my tenure, the council has completed several projects to grow our community and enrich the lives of those that reside here. From the revitalization of the downtown to park improvements, my interests, alongside the work of the council, supports the growth of businesses and overall satisfaction of resi-

dents. While there have been several major projects that have occurred in the community since I was first elected in 2005, there is more to be done.

Phase one of the downtown revitalization is nearing completion and it is now time to begin phase two.

This includes the construction of the city-owned parking lot along Vine and Oak. In addition, our Park and Recreation Department is currently deep into their planning on a number of parks in the community and the potential outcomes look promising and will support beautiful recreational outlets for all. I look forward to continuing my service to Owatonna residents, completing current and future projects while maintaining an economically stable and an amenity rich community in which to live.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

In addition to serving on the Owatonna City Council since 2006, my employment in the public sector has, undoubtedly, prepared my continued work in this role. I have a keen sense of community development, a wide array of

background knowledge, a deep understanding of city strategic planning, economic and community development.

For the past several decades, I have served in various capacities in city government. From city planning to administration, I have established a deep understanding of how city government works, how to navigate necessary conversations/discussions in providing citizens with the best possible outcomes, the questions to ask to remain fiscally responsible and accountable to city residents. I understand the role of a councilmember in the operation of a city.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

As I stated earlier, many significant projects have been/ or are being completed to add value to our community. Through continued and ongoing communication with the residents of Owatonna, I would like to finish the work that has been started. We have developed a strong city strategic plan while maintaining an economically sound timeline for the completion of city improvements and amenities.

The opportunity to continue to serve in my seat on the city council would allow me to con-

tinue to represent the 5th Ward as we complete the downtown revitalization, the expansion of the wastewater treatment facility, and the master planning occurring on a number of our parks, in addition to other strategic plan initiatives.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

While working in the public sector for over the past 20 years, I have learned how to work toward a compromise with people who share differing opinions. I listen, gather facts and work to establish/identify a common purpose to guide our communication. This common purpose serves as a foundation that enables both parties to openly share thoughts and ideas, communicate effectively while working toward a solution that satisfies both parties.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE "COMMON GOOD?"

Yes, the role of a city councilmember is to represent the citizens of Owatonna and not one's personal belief. I don't and have never had a personal agenda when serving on the Council. I simply represent the citizens of our community and consistently base decisions on what is best for all.

I have been married to my wife Michelle, live in rural Blooming Prairie and am an Awesome Blossom Fan for 29 years. I am proud to say our two sons, Blake and Ethan, completed their primary and secondary education in Blooming Prairie. Both of our sons enjoyed the benefits of being students in a smaller school where they were encouraged to participate in all school functions. They chose to actively participate in extracurricular activities such as choir, FFA, wrestling, football and baseball. As a family we have built a strong relationship with the community, continue to have meaningful connections with students and educators in School District 756.

I am running for school board because I now have the time to give back to the school district that gave my boys so much, with their academic and personal growth. Before I know it, my granddaughter will soon be attending elementary school. I want to be a part of an academic team that

As a person who has worked in manufacturing and raised cattle for 30 years, I am very safety conscious. I served on the Safety Committee for 11 years at the Wenger Corporation and concurrently 5 years as a Steele County Safety Board Member. I have always had a

**ARE YOU WILL-
ING TO VOTE
AGAINST A PERSON-**

As a school board member, it is my responsibility to be a voice representing the best interests of the Blooming Prairie School District, not just my personal beliefs. This may involve agreeing to disagree and with a positive attitude moving forward supporting the common good of all. I feel this is key when serving the public.



My husband, Jay,
and I graduated from

The school is the heart of our community, and I want to ensure we See **BP SCHOOL** on C14 ►

A portrait of a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing glasses, a dark blue jacket, a light blue shirt, and a red tie. He is standing outdoors in front of a building with horizontal siding and a white railing. An American flag is visible in the background to the right.



Prepared and paid for by Weisenburger for School Board Committee, 352 East Broadway, Owatonna.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN PETERSBURG
WORKING FOR YOU!

On Election Day, I ask for your vote

John Petersburg for State Representative.



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NRHEG School Board looks for 4 from field of 5



AMY IHRKE – NEW RICHLAND
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.
I’ve lived in the New Richland area my entire life. My husband and I are the third generation living on the family farm. We have 2 children, Taytum (Chad) Erickson and Jace Ihrke; grandson Nolan and dog, Champ. I work at Bonnerup Funeral & Cremation Services in Albert Lea as a funeral director intern. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and traveling.
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I want to be involved in the community and as a graduate of NRHEG, along with children who have graduated and still attend school, I want to continue to see our district grow and provide top-notch education and experiences to our students and their families.
WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?
I was on the New Richland City Council for 10 years, church council, NRHEG PTO, NRHEG after-prom committee, Farm & City Days committee and other various community events.
ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?
I want to continue the traditions of our Panther community and learn about what

new opportunities that we can bring to our students. I think it’s important for our small towns and school district to work together. When there is strength and growth in our district, there will also be growth in our communities, and vice versa.
HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?
The joy in having diversity in a school board is the variation of opinions and experiences. Varying ideas and thoughts can be a great way to create change and growth. Having open conversations about what is best for our students is welcoming to me... It’s how we all learn.
ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”
I absolutely am! All my ideas and thoughts may not be great, but

what is best for our district, students and their families, staff and taxpayers should always trump my personal opinion.



RICH MUELLER (i) – ELLENDALE
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.
Married to Penni for 27 years; sons Jordan 25, Matthew 19 and daughter Mc Kenzie 16. I have been employed by Viracon for 28 years and Casey’s in Ellendale for 7 years. I enjoy sports at all levels, camping and hanging with family and friends.
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

To make sure our students and staff get what they need to make each school year successful as close to budget as we can.
WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?
When I ran the first time I didn’t have any experience in this role. I learned a lot from that board and from the training I got from the Minnesota School Board Association. I have taken that knowledge and ran with it.
ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?
I don’t have any specific issues to address at this time.
HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

A lot of communication and listening. Our present board gets along well and differing opinions hasn’t been that big of an issue.
ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”
That is a difficult question, it would really depend on what the issue was and how it relates to my beliefs.



AARON PHILLIPS – HARTLAND
TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.
Hello, my name is Aaron Phillips. I live on a farm near Hartland.
See NRHEG on C13 ▶



STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN PETERSBURG WORKING FOR YOU!

- Highway 14** - Secured funding that finishes the four lanes between Owatonna and Dodge Center.
- Child Identity Protection** - Authored law that better protects childrens’ credit histories by giving parents the choice to place a credit freeze on their kids.
- Supporting Law Enforcement** - Strongly opposes radical efforts to defund police departments.
- Section 179** - Supported full tax conformity for Section 179 expenses, which helps farmers and small business owners.
- Hands Free Driving** - Supporting law that requires hands-free use of a cell phone while driving.
- Real ID** - Worked tirelessly to ensure Minnesota was qualified and ready for federal Real ID compliance.



On Election Day, re-elect a proven public servant. Vote John Petersburg for State Representative.

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JOLAYNE MOHS GIVES BACK

TREASURER, OWATONNA SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD CHAIR, CANNON VALLEY SPECIAL ED COOP
OWATONNA FOUNDATION TRUSTEE
COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS BOARD
MENTOR - RACHEL'S LIGHT
PAST RIVERLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD
PAST OWATONNA HOSPITAL FOUNDATION BOARD

HIGH QUALITY LEADERSHIP
BALANCED SCHOOL BUDGET

NEW HIGH SCHOOL
CAREER PATHWAYS

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NRHEG School Board looks for 4 from field of 5

◀ **NRHEG** from **C12** land with my wife of 26 years, Jeanette, and our two youngest children; Andrew, a senior at NRHEG, and Faith, an 8th-grader at NRHEG. We have two older daughters that are both married; Morgan, 24, lives in Hartland, and Madeline, 24, lives in Clarks Grove. Madeline is a 5th-grade teacher in Ellendale, and her husband Darren is a math teacher in New Richland. I am a regional sales manager for 360 Yield Center and also farm with my dad. In my spare time, I love to work with my kids on the different sports that they are involved in; I am an assistant varsity baseball coach for NRHEG, and I love to hunt and snowboard.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I am running for this position for many reasons. The first is that I have a vested interest in the school system. This is Andrew's last year at NRHEG, but Faith will still be there for 4 more years, and I anticipate Madeline and Darren teaching there for many years to come.

The second reason is I am very impressed with the job that the new superintendent Mr. Meihak is doing, and would really like to work hand-in-hand with him to make sure the school district's vision is upheld.

The third reason that I am running is to help make sure we don't go through a period like we did these last couple of years. Recommendations that were made at a state level were implemented at NRHEG. I feel these were geared more toward the metropolitan area. We need

to make sure we as a board are doing what is best for our rural MN school, and not what is best for the larger schools in the metropolitan areas. I feel that taking kids out of school for that long of a period did more damage than the virus did itself.

I want to make sure we make the right decisions when it comes to what is best for our children, our teachers and our community. In addition, we need to stop the movement toward taking God out of our schools. There is a movement happening across the country that is trying to take God out of our classrooms. Our country was founded on the principles of our Father and taking those principles out of our schools is the last thing we should be doing. Our teachers do an amazing job, and they should feel like they are respected. However, it is not their place to recommend whether our children should be getting vaccinated or not. They should not be exposing our kids to non-Christian teachings. These are things that should be addressed by a parent. I am a parent and I feel that parents need a voice at the table. Also, drug use and bullying are prevalent in all schools and I feel a big reason is because of the lack of God in our homes and schools.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I have been on different boards, been president of a board and have worked with kids for most of my adult life. I have been coach-

ing kids for the last 15 years, and volunteer at many school activities. I am someone who is a fast learner, is compassionate about any job I take, and will always vote for what is best for the students, the teachers and the community. I am able to form my own opinion, am able to listen to facts, keep emotion out of my decision, and will be a voice for and will do what is best for the students, teachers and the community.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

Like I said earlier, making sure we don't go down the path of other schools and removing God from our school is number one. I am part of the group of adults that has brought FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) back into our school. I think this is an amazing opportunity for student-athletes to honor God through the sports that they play. Drug use, bullying and how kids treat other kids on and off the court are examples of issues in our school today.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD A COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I have always been a fair person. I have worked on other boards, where there has always been a difference of opinions. Everyone that is on the board, part of the administration, a teacher or other employee of the school, or even a community member has a right to be heard. Whether I agree with them or not, they have a right to say what they See **NRHEG** on C14 ▶

Re-Elect
PEGGY BENNETT

PEGGY WILL WORK HARD ON THESE ISSUES AND MORE!

- ✓ Help people afford the high cost of living. Help ALL Minnesotans keep more of their hard-earned money!
- ✓ A government in need of reform — eliminate the HUGE omnibus bills so legislators can work together to pass important bills!
- ✓ Everyone, no matter your political party, should come away from an election feeling like it's fair and Secure. I authored two election reform bills and am committed to work on this issue until it is fixed!
- ✓ Education needs to go back to basics. Teachers are overloaded with paperwork and mandates. We need to get back to the basics of math, literacy, basic science, and history!
- ✓ People deserve to feel safe. I support our police officers and well funded law enforcement to keep our communities safe!



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People before politics.

Visit my website www.Bennett4House.com to learn more about my accomplishments, priorities, and challenges I am working on every day for the people of District 23A.

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MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 19

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BP School Board has 5 candidates, 4 seats

◀ **BP SCHOOL** from C11 continue to offer the best education possible for our students. In addition, I want to see our building project through to the finish line.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I have served two terms on the school board. In addition, my experience in communications and community engagement through my work history is an asset for this role.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

To continue to offer the best education possible for our students, while maintaining our financial health.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

It is important to get the perspectives of others to make the best decisions. I focus on listening and understanding where people are coming from and then creating solutions.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

As school board members, we focus on making the best decisions possible for our kids and community. It is important to get varying perspectives, ask questions and get the necessary facts/information to do so. I think our board does a great job with this currently, and I am excited to serve another term if elected.

Incumbent Rodney Krell did not respond to the questionnaire.



DEAN MESHKE (i) TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have been married to my wife, Marilyn, for 49 years. We have two children, Todd and Lisa. I taught for 35 years at Blooming Prairie High School, teaching math. I also coached various

sports, including boys and girls basketball. I began teaching in Blooming Prairie in August 1970, at the age of 21. I have a bachelor of science in mathematics and a minor in physical education from Mankato State College. Later, I earned a master's degree in education, also at Mankato State College.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I am finishing up my first 5-year term on the school board. I am interested in continuing to build on the momentum we have in our school district. I am very committed and excited about the future of our school district. I am so proud of the support staff, teachers and administration and the work they have done to make our school district one of the best.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I am an educator and I have lived in the community for 52 years.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? WHAT ARE THEY?

I feel my responsibility as a school board member is to do what is best for the students. It is not about my personal agenda but about continuing to expand school programs to meet a wide range of students.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

When faced with differing opinions, I feel it is most important to listen to one another.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

Yes, I am willing to vote against a personal belief for the greater good.



CRYSTAL STUDER TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

My name is Crystal Studer. I am a current Blooming Prairie resident and Awesome Blossom alumni. I work full time as a nurse manager at a local hospital. I have been married to my husband, Mike Studer for more than 15 years and we have 3 children who attend school in Blooming Prairie. I enjoy all types of outdoor activities, traveling and love participating in sports activities with my kids.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

As an Awesome Blossom alumni and a current resident of Blooming Prairie, I am invested in continuing to offer high quality education in our local community.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

As a nurse manager, I am active on a number of committees and workgroups. I enjoy the collaboration and teamwork that happens when bringing people with different ideas and perspectives together. I want to be able to use

what I have learned in leading others to serve my local community.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

No. I have been very happy with our local schools and am eager to learn more about any issues there may be from others in the community.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I first seek to understand. Listening to everyone share their perspective assists me in understanding viewpoints that may be different from my own. This hopefully leads to an agreement that meets the majority of the needs of all participants.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

I think it really depends on the topic. The vast majority of the time, I am guided by my values and beliefs but I never want to say never.

NRHEG SCHOOL BOARD

NRHEG School Board looks for 4 from field of 5

◀ **NRHEG** from C13 feel. As a board member, my job is to listen to what everyone has to say and then make the best decision that I can make based on the facts.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

That is a tough question and difficult to answer without being more specific. If the “common good” is something that will benefit the students or the teachers, then yes, I would vote for it. If it is something that would go against a religious belief, then I more than likely wouldn't vote for it, but I don't see anything being good for everyone if it goes against God. The other thing that is hard is determining if the “common good” is real or if it is perceived as being the

“common good.” Covid was a great example. It was perceived as being the “common good” for schools to shut down, but in reality, it did more harm than good.

Incumbent Richard Schultz did not respond to the questionnaire.



PAT THEUER – ELLENDALE TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I was raised in Blooming Prairie and moved to the Ellendale area after marrying my

husband, Michael. We have 4 grown children-Jeff (Jamie), Jayne (Ian), Jon (Brit) and Jillian. All of them are NRHEG graduates and 3 of my 4 grandchildren currently attend in the district as well. I retired from the school district in 2021 after 24 years of service, primarily in data and office management. Our family has farmed in the area for a number of years and when I am not kept busy with that and my family, I enjoy gardening, cooking, reading and hopefully more travel in the future!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

After living, working and raising a family in the community, I feel that I am ready to make a contribution to helping maintain and move our schools forward in a positive direction. I would like very much to have

the opportunity to help support and represent the students, staff and the community of the NRHEG School District.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

While hesitant to give my perspective on certain issues over the years, I feel at this time in my life, that aspect has changed greatly. Life experiences (along with age, I guess you could say) and the ability to listen to others have given me the voice and courage to not only ask the questions, but to try and answer them as well.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

There are a couple of issues that come to mind out of a field of many that school districts face. Ensuring safety and support of our students and staff is of utmost importance and can include (and certainly not limited to at all) mental health concerns, and great mentor programs for staff. This last one mentioned also brings up the challenge of attracting and retaining quality staff. Lower numbers of teachers available equates to a much smaller hiring pool.

Student achievement. It is definitely not just about test scores; it encompasses everything a child learns from birth through their high school years. Making sure we have the necessary resources available to our students and staff to achieve a successful outcome for

all who attend our district starting from the formative or early childhood years, up through the high school years, is an ongoing process.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD A COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

I try to listen carefully and keep the conversation relevant. Giving consideration to the other opinions and then collaboration and discussion to hopefully achieve a compromise that is acceptable to all involved.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

Yes, I do feel that I could and would be able to vote against a personal belief for the “common good” of all involved.

MEDFORD CITY COUNCIL

Medford City Council to seat 2 newcomers

◀ **MEDFORD** from C10 for decades if the project is large enough in scale. There are factors and justifications; primarily funding of course, but there are state and county grant programs available that will assist with these projects. We need individuals advocating for Medford at the county and state level more than what is currently being done. I would advocate for our city, I would research, contact individuals and pursue avenues that would assist in funding major projects.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

The answer is in the question. I work toward compromise not against it with individuals of different opinions. I have spent the past 18 years in manufacturing working under numerous manag-

ers, with various teams and individuals, and always have found a path to the common goal.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

In my opinion that is what civil service is about, setting aside a personal belief or at least not allowing it to solely factor a decision for the greater good of the community.



JASON WINTER TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have been married 25 years now to my wife Joellen. We have one daughter, Lizzy, as everyone calls her. A granddaughter now, just born on Oct 14th. I went to school here in Medford back in the old building – that's a long time ago. I graduated from here and have pretty much resided in or around Medford most of my life.

I work as an underground utility locator. The job is very enjoyable; stressful some days, other days fun. I meet a lot of contractors, plus homeowners. I am sure quite a few Medford residents have seen me around town or in their yards. The job has taught me a lot about the underground construction side of everything.

I have a lot of hobbies, biggest of them all raising a garden with my wife. I go deer hunting in the fall. I really enjoy

setting up the decorations for our Christmas display and all the joy it brings people that drive by and see it.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR THIS POSITION?

I am running for Medford City Council hoping to bring a different view to all issues that come up in the city and make common sense decisions that best benefit the citizens of Medford. That is a tall task considering whatever the decision might be, there will be some that agree and some that disagree. I look at all issues from both sides of the coin. Weigh the positives and negatives and hopefully make a decision that will work for all.

I want to see this town successfully grow but in the right way. I enjoy the small-town atmosphere but also understand it needs to grow. It's a balancing act.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR PAST THAT HAS PREPARED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC?

I served four years as clerk for Merton Township, a responsibility that teaches a lot. I helped the supervisors along with the Treasurer to make sure to keep the levy down every year.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS IN THIS ROLE? IF YES, WHAT ARE THEY?

There are issues in this town that need to be addressed. Specifically, though, they are all important and all need to be addressed at the right times and within the budget that's available. The biggest issue is the wastewater treatment facility.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD COMPROMISE WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE DIFFERING OPINIONS?

IONS?

It can be difficult to deal with a person that doesn't share your view or opinion, but I listen and try to see it from their side. I take all the info into consideration while also trying to explain my side of the issue in the hopes they consider my view of it also. In the line of work I do, I encounter all sorts of differences with homeowners to contractors and I am always trying to find a way to give them a solution if I am unable to be the answer to their problem.

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOTE AGAINST A PERSONAL BELIEF FOR THE “COMMON GOOD?”

I will vote for or against any issue. I don't just fall in line because I am pressured. I am willing to go around and ask residents how they feel about an issue. I am sure not all residents are aware of all the issues in the town at all times.

Sheriff's race sees rematch of 2018 contest



DARRIN HELGET
OWATONNA

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
I grew up on a dairy and hog farm outside New Ulm, Brown County, MN. I attended New Ulm Area Catholic Schools, graduating from New Ulm Cathedral in 1989. I attended Minnesota State University-Mankato and graduated in 1993 with an A.S. in Law Enforcement and completed Skills at Range Technical College in Hibbing, MN.
Baseball has been a large part of my life; I played amateur baseball for 18 years as part of the Essig Bluejays and I have been a certified baseball umpire through the Minnesota State High School League since 1997. This allowed me to enjoy the game from all aspects. I am certified to umpire levels from Little League to men's amateur baseball.
I began coaching baseball for Owatonna Park and Rec and St Mary's School in Owatonna for eight years, four of those were as the head coach. I also coached youth football for Park and Rec.
My law enforcement career began as a police reserve for New Ulm

tion. This is the first time a candidate for Steele County Sheriff has been offered an endorsement by a bargaining unit.
I have continued my education by attending several leadership courses and other specialized trainings including Live2Lead, Leaders and Followers, Critical Incident Training, Crisis Intervention, and De-escalation training to name just a few. I am currently enrolled in ICLD (Institute of Credible Learning and Development), which is a 180-hour course for leadership.
My career has allowed me the opportunity to be a firearms instructor, participant in TZD (Toward Zero Death) patrols, Field Training Officer, DMT operator and currently oversee the Predatory Offender Registration for Steele County. In my role as a union steward for 15 years, I handle representing union members in disciplinary actions as well as quell many potential issues and work with the county officials on union contracts.
My wife, Mary, and I have three boys, Greg, Jack, and Kevin. Greg is an Owatonna HS graduate and Iowa State University graduate. Jack is an OHS graduate and currently attending the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Kevin is a junior at OHS.
I am a member of St Joseph's Parish, the Knights of Columbus, Owatonna Officials Association, former Owatonna Huskies Bullpen Club Board member (2016-2019), three years as the Minor League Director, Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, and the Minnesota Sheriffs Association. I am also a long-time volunteer for the Muscular Dystrophy Association as a summer camp volunteer (1987-2002, 2022).

WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
The first time I decided to run in 2018 because I saw many things that needed to be better. Now in 2022, those things haven't improved, and certain areas have gotten worse. I was strongly encouraged to run again by coworkers and partnering first responders, including those from the Owatonna Police Department, Blooming Prairie Police Department and Minnesota State Patrol. The massive turnover of staff, both on patrol and in the detention center is abnormal. It is imperative that we retain our quality employees and keep the detention center open and operational.
NAME TWO ISSUES YOU THINK ARE FACING LAW ENFORCEMENT – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – TODAY.
Fewer people are pursuing law enforcement as a career. With that in mind, we must retain the current members of our agency and figure out how to make it appealing to new employees. I believe that by providing more training, developing employees, and having trust in leadership this can be obtained. I believe in not only providing training but finding the strengths in individuals and helping to develop them into leaders and valuable employees that in turn will provide quality service to the citizens of Steele County.
Drug use is a primary factor in many of the calls we take. I believe that having a better relationship with our task force and providing one of the Steele County Deputies to be a part of that team will provide better working relationships and insight into the use, sales, and crimes associated with drugs in Steele County.
The utilization of the K9 unit, providing training in drug interdiction and education in the schools can also play a role in curbing the drug concerns. Drug use leads to many other criminal acts such as burglaries and thefts, assaults, sex trafficking and delinquency and violent crimes.
DESCRIBE THE MOST DIFFICULT SITUATION FACED, AND HOW YOU SOLVED IT.
I recently responded to a 911 hang-up call that had indicators of being a domestic dispute. I knew the location and knew it to be a long-time acquaintance/friend. I was the first on scene. Shortly after my arrival, I encountered the individual. The individual was in a mental state that I recognized as not being normal. This individual was armed with multiple firearms that posed an immediate threat to my partners as well as myself. I was able remain calm, notify my partners of the situation, and coordinate their arrival while maintaining a dialogue with the individual. Through my experience and training, we were able to resolve this situation peacefully. I am confident that the outcome would not have been the same had one of my partners been the first on scene, simply because of the past personal relationship I had with the individual.
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR WORK AND MANAGEMENT STYLE?
Law enforcement is a fluid profession that often becomes reactive due to changing laws, changing crime patterns and populations. Leadership styles must evolve with time as well and work in both proactive and reactive ways to keep everyone safe accountable.
I am a "lead by example" type of individual; I do not expect anyone

to do anything I am not willing to do. By reflecting this, I have gained trust in my coworkers, and I trust that those around me are making the proper decisions. An organization cannot thrive without trust, that to me is the core foundation of a successful leader and organization. We must trust our partners and we must trust that administration will support us. There are times when, as a leader, you must trust that your employees can make important decisions as well as delegate responsibilities. As a leader I want to provide the employees the tools they need to be healthy, successful and confident in their abilities.
WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF?
I have 32 years of experience in law enforcement, 24 years as a patrol deputy with Steele County. Throughout my career, I have continued to develop myself as a leader. My coworkers believe in me to bring new leadership to Steele County and make changes for a healthier, collaborative, and supportive agency. My whole career with Steele County has been as a patrol deputy; I have seen what works, what doesn't work, what negative and positive trends have been happening, and what the current state of the employee's mental health is. This gives me a unique perspective into where the Sheriff's Office needs to change, complacency goes away with a new perspective. I have been able to have candid conversations on what needs to change to make it better. Most importantly, I have the support of my coworkers and fellow first responders; they see the leadership qualities I possess.



LON THIELE (i)
OWATONNA

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.
I've had the honor of being your sheriff for the last 12 years. This position is more than just a job to me. I take it seriously and personally by finding ways to ensure fiscal accountability to the taxpayer dollars and public safety to all residents.
I was born and raised in Steele County and graduated from OHS in 1985. I'm married to Brooke and we have two daughters. I enjoy hunting, ice fishing, and spending needed time with my family. I care very deeply about public safety and its future for this county.
As your sheriff, I understand what a "quality of life" means to residents. I am committed in protecting that way of life. With 32 years of diverse public safety service, I have a visionary leadership that

the Madison (S.D.) Police Department in 1990 as a patrolman. My duties consisted of being the Firearms Instructor, Field Training Officer, Defensive Tactics Instructor, and a member of the Critical Incident Response Team. I was also assigned as the SWAT Team Commander.
In 1997, I was hired as a deputy sheriff for the Watonwan County Sheriff's Office. I continued as a Firearms Instructor, a member of the SW MN-Northern IA SWAT Team, and the Safe and Sober coordinator. I also worked with the MN Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.
In 1999, I was appointed Chief of Police for the Truman Police Department. I attended the MN Chief Law Enforcement Officer CLEO Academy. In 2001, I received an award from the MN Safe and Sober Program for recognition in efforts of public safety.
Now, I had the necessary administration, budgeting, and managerial experience, so I returned home with intentions of running for Sheriff. In 2003, I was hired as a Steele County Deputy and eventually promoted to sergeant. As a sergeant, I implemented new and efficient procedures with vehicle forfeitures and the Predatory Offender Registration. I also streamlined scheduling and coordinated mandatory training for all deputies.
WHO OR WHAT CONVINCED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?
My desire to run for sheriff was to enhance Steele County public safety. This included advancing antiquated equipment

and increasing community involvement.
I was first elected Steele County Sheriff in 2010. I was re-elected in 2014, 2018, and I'm running for re-election to my 4th term as your sheriff.
I completed the MN Sheriff's Association Orientation and I'm a graduate of the National Sheriff's Institute and the National Institute of Corrections.
I continue to pursue extensive professional development by attending training with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, numerous MSA training and MN POST Board continuing education, and I have completed the FEMA Incident Command and Staff Training.
I'm a recipient of the FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Award and I have completed the FBI North Central States LEEDS course.
As sheriff, I've implemented many programs of public safety and have remained within my budget every year. I have found creative ways to reduce costs and have succeeded in securing thousands of dollars in grants, reducing future Capital Improvement Plans.
Since being elected sheriff, I've implemented programs within Steele County that are instrumental to public safety in more ways than just a program:
Operation Child ID, Project Lifesaver; Take It to the Box; swearing in Elementary Patrol Leaders; Operation Extra Eyes; logistical operations at SCFF; K-9 program; vests to Ukraine; School Resource Officer (Medford); bicycle safety; mock crashes; Fatal Vision goggles and exercises with driver's education students; Special Deputy training; posse search-and-rescue exercises; catalytic converter program; currently working on a well-being program, Honor Guard, and Chaplain program.
NAME TWO ISSUES YOU THINK ARE FACING LAW ENFORCEMENT – IN GENERAL OR SPECIFICALLY – TODAY.
Some of the issues facing law enforcement currently have become the new norm. Since COVID, agencies and businesses across the nation have suffered with retention.
Larger law enforcement agencies are enticing recruits with higher wages smaller agencies can't compete with. Another challenge is squad car orders along with changing technology, and the costs associated with it.
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR WORK AND MANAGEMENT STYLE?
To maintain well-being, I've increased training, education and development to all staff. The last six years, all deputies were allowed opportunities for leadership training at no cost to them.
I have always allowed training with other agencies for increased working relationships. Most recently, I succeeded with information on a grant with another agency for their officer to attend FBI-LEEDA training.
I'm transparent with budgeting and office detail. My credentials and experience were earned through countless hours

of hard work and dedication to Steele County.
I like to lead by example. I continue to work nights, weekends, holidays and inclement weather events. Always remaining "boots on the ground."
WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF?
Besides my office work, I represent Steele County on a local, state, and national level:
3rd Vice President for the FBI-LEEDA Executive Board; 4th Vice President for the MN Sheriff's Executive Board; Community Corrections Advisory Board; Chair for the Blooming Prairie Community Foundation Board; Chair for the Steele County Salvation Army Board; Co-Chair for the Steele/Rice Operations Committee; MN Sheriff's Association Jail Oversight Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee; Steele County Humane Society Shelter Committee; Courthouse Security Committee; SE Regional Advisory Committee; Steele County TZD Safe Roads Coalition; Owatonna Rotary; Riverland Criminal Justice Advisory Committee.
My commitment to Steele County is true every day, not every four years when you need something. I work with a team approach with all office personnel who understand the goals of the SCSSO and mission of public safety.
I am the people's sheriff.
Did not answer: Describe the most difficult situation you've faced, and how you solved it.



Vote for Experience and the
most **QUALIFIED** Candidate
for Steele County Sheriff!



Sheriff Lon Thiele	My Opponent
Law Enforcement Licensed Years32 Years	24 Years
Education/Professional DevelopmentCollege - Hibbing, AAS Northwestern University SPSC Grant Writing IPTM (Florida) • FBI-LEEDA Trilogy FBI North Central States LEEDS MN Chief Law Enforcement Officer CLEO Academy National Sheriff's Institute National Institute of Corrections National Center for Missing & Exploited Children Blandin Community Leadership FEMA Incident Command & Staff Training	College - Mankato, AAS
Supervisory/Management ExperienceSheriff • Past Chief of Police • Past Sergeant Past SWAT Team Commander	
Past Agency Duties/ AssignmentsUnion Steward (Sergeants) • POR Coordinator Field Training Officer • Firearms Instructor Defensive Tactics Instructor Critical Incident Response Team Safe and Sober Coordinator Vehicle Forfeiture Coordinator Training Coordinator • SWAT Team Scheduling Coordinator	Union Steward (Deputy) POR Assignment Resigned from FTO Resigned from Firearms
Board/Community InvolvementFBI-LEEDA Executive Board MN Sheriff's Association Executive Board CCA (Probation) Advisory Board BP Community Foundation Board Steele County Salvation Army Steele/Rice Operations Committee MN Sheriff's Association Jail Oversight Committee Criminal Justice Committee Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee Steele County Humane Society Courthouse Security Committee Have a Safe Summer Committee SE Regional Advisory Committee Steele Toward Zero Deaths Coalition • Owatonna Rotary Riverland Criminal Justice Advisory Board	
Programs Implemented For Steele CountyTake it to the Box • Project Lifesaver Operation Child ID • K-9 Unit School Resource Officer (Medford) • Bicycle Safety Mock Car Crashes • Catalytic Converter Program Posse Search and Rescue Training SCFF Operation Extra Eyes- Fair Logistics Vests to Ukraine	
Incident Command ExperienceTornadoes • Train Derailment Blizzard Vortex • SWAT Search & Rescue • Steele County Fair Hope Bank Robbery • Plane Crash Owatonna Protests • Floods and Road Closures	

ACCOUNTABILITY • PROVEN LEADERSHIP • INTEGRITY

Sheriff Thiele is Dedicated to Serving and Protecting Steele County!

RE-ELECT SHERIFF LON THIELE
NOVEMBER 8th

Prepared and Paid for by Citizens to Re-Elect Lon Thiele for Sheriff