

City Council Candidate Questionnaire

NAME: Ronald Schwartz

POSITION SOUGHT: SW Ward 4

1. Please describe why you are seeking the position of City Councilor. It is easy to stand on the side line and criticize decisions made by others. It is also easy to say it is not my problem, let someone else deal with it. The City of Grants Pass has been very good to me and my family. Both of my boys, born and raised here, are still living and working here. This is home, and it pains me greatly to witness the turmoil and disruption that has occurred over the last few years.

I think I have something to offer, and I know I can bring some stability to the council. I can be a team player when need be, but I can also argue a good point and hold fast to what I believe to be morally and ethically correct, and in the best interest of the citizens of Grants Pass.

2. If elected, do you have any specific things you would like to accomplish during your term on the City Council? The term I am running for expires in November of 2010. This is a short period of time, but I would like to work on funding to replace the Public Safety levy. Although this is a good bench mark for how the department is doing, it is disruptive to the entire city. I was working for the department when the levy failed in the early 80's. Fourteen police and firefighters were laid off. It took 12 years before the staffing levels returned to the pre failure level.

I would also like to take a close look at the waste water treatment plant capacity. Unless something has been done since I retired in 2004, a major expansion and upgrade are looming in the near future. Prior to my retirement DEQ was looking at requiring all storm water be treated prior to returning to the river. If this is still in the works, it is huge. I don't believe this expansion could be accomplished through water and sewer rate increases.

3. Please provide us with a listing of your prior community and civic involvement in Grants Pass (or other communities). As the Director of Public Safety I sat on many committees. Some of these were mandated, such as the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council, but many of them were by choice. I was a member of the Women's Crisis Support Team board, Mediation Board and the Elder Abuse Board to name just a few. I have been an Elks Lodge member for 11 years. In 2007-2008 I was the Exalted Ruler, (CEO), of the Lodge.
4. Please tell us your understanding of the role of Economic Development and what you believe should occur with Economic Development during your term. Economic Development is a vital tool in predicting necessary job markets based on national, regional and local economic trends. A good Economic Development plan takes into account the age of our current workforce, the types of jobs available to the workforce, and what types of jobs will be needed in the future. I feel that Grants Pass is lacking in family wage jobs, forcing our children to move from the area to find suitable employment.

Healthcare is becoming one of our largest employers in our area. Three Rivers Community Hospital is currently the largest employer in Josephine County. As the population continues to age, the health care service industry will continue to grow. Grants Pass needs to continue to recruit clean, safe and stable businesses in the professional and business service area, along with healthcare and other service industries.

5. What role do you believe Tourism promotion and the Tourism program should play in Grants Pass over the next four years? I believe tourism is a vital component to the health and well being of Grants Pass. I think that tourism promotion should be a priority, and I believe the city of Grants Pass is doing a good job to date. With over 2000 motel hotel beds and 60 restaurants within the city limits, we are a destination. The natural beauty of the area along with being the first gateway to the Redwoods and the coast is an asset we should expound upon.
6. The decisions on the Urban Growth Boundary will be made in the next couple of years. Please tell us your understanding of the purpose, and your views on the extent (if any) that the Urban Growth Boundary should be expanded. Designating an Urban Growth boundary is a process mandated by the state of Oregon to determine how large a city will grow. This process is designed to take in the needs of the community, while conserving agricultural land and fostering orderly economic and efficient growth rather than urban sprawl. As the buildable land within the city diminishes, and it appears to be doing so, urban areas, contiguous to the city limits and buildable, need to be designated as the city's urban growth boundary. The city determines how fast the urban area is incorporated, by vote, and I believe the current economy has determined that we should not be expanding at this time, but the Urban Growth boundary needs to be determined for future growth.
7. What is your position on signage for local businesses (i.e. it should be expended, reduced, regulated, unregulated, etc.), and why? I was working for the city when the current sign code ordinance was written. I believe we need a strict sign code so that we can boast of being tree city USA and not bill board city USA. I believe the size and locations of signs should be regulated.
8. The community survey annually asks about how citizens perceive growth and the impacts of growth on the community. Please describe for us your position on community growth. Grants Pass and the surrounding areas are going to grow. I think it is important that we do not grow past our abilities to provide infrastructure and adequate services. At this time, with our economy struggling, I am for moderate well managed and well funded growth.
9. This City is actively evaluating parks and recreation plans. What is your position on the proposed park plan, and to what extent do you believe that parks should be directly funded by local taxing efforts? I believe we should have a master parks plan. I remember the first thing I saw driving across the Rogue River into Grants Pass was Riverside Park. I was impressed that the city was providing recreation, play grounds and green open spaces to the citizens. I have lived in cities that were asphalt jungles, and Grants Pass has worked hard to

ensure this does not happen here. I believe that parks should be funded through park SDC's, grants, donations, endowments and volunteer efforts. I do not believe that parks should be built through local taxing efforts.

10. Please let us know your position on the funding of Public Safety (fire, police, building enforcement). Public Safety is currently funded through property taxes, hotel motel taxes and the Public Safety levy. Every tax dollar that comes into the city is used to fund Public Safety. The Public Safety levy, though a good bench mark for how the department is doing, needs to be eliminated. Funding for public safety needs to be stable funding, without taking away other critical city services. I proposed a funding program when I was the Director that would offset some of the costs of doing business. This program involves billing insurance companies for Fire/Rescue response to accidents and medical calls involving non city residents.
11. Do you believe taxes and fees in Grants Pass are too high, too low, or about right, and to what extent do you believe these should be changed? I do not think that taxes or fees are too high. I think the city has done a good job of keeping taxes and fees in line to date. The city must be aware of the impact that higher taxes and fees have on those in our community that are living on fixed incomes. With the economy currently stagnant, and those on Social Security not receiving cost of living increases, taxes and fees should be held in check.
12. In your opinion, what role does the downtown play in the future of Grants Pass? I think we have a vibrant down town. I think that a healthy downtown is critical to the health and well being of our community. A building moratorium limiting new businesses to buildings of 35,000 square feet or less, and the continued free parking in the downtown corridor are important steps to ensuring our downtown survives. I believe that the downtown should connect to the river, and the relocating of Wheeler Toyota was a good move to this end.
13. . Please provide us with any other information you believe makes you the best candidate for the City Council. I would love to serve the city of Grants Pass in the capacity of Councilor. I have no agenda, and I am not backed by any special interest groups. If elected I will become the voice of the people to the best of my abilities.