

Two Port Townsend City Council seats to appear on primary ballot

Fifty-one candidates step up during filing week

By Zach Jablonski

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PORT TOWNSEND — Primary races are set for two of the three Port Townsend City Council races, while the Position 2 seat drew only one candidate by the end of candidate filing week.

The Position 1 and Position 5 seats on the Port Townsend City Council will appear on the Aug. 3 primary election ballot, with three candidates vying for each position.

The candidate filing week wrapped up Friday afternoon, with 51 candidates running for 38 offices of the 46 seats up for election. Eight seats had no candidates interested.

The candidate page on VoteWa.gov lists 52 candidates. However, one filed and withdrew from running on Thursday, Quinn Grewell, Jefferson County election coordinator, confirmed.

No Port Townsend City Council incumbents are running for re-election in the Nov. 2 general election. When three or more candidates file for a particular seat, a primary contest discovers the two top vote-getters who then face off in the general election.

Ben Thomas, Harold James Sherwood and Cameron Jones will vie in the Aug. 3 primary election to run in November for the Position 1 council seat, which is now held by Mayor Michelle Sandoval. Thomas filed to run Monday, and Sherwood and Jones filed on Friday.

Thomas's top issues are housing, economic development and inclusivity, he said in an email.

He believes the "solution for the currently untenable homeless situation is not beyond our reach," but emphasized he sees the housing crisis as a "multi-faceted problem that requires a multi-faceted solution."

He added that he wants Port Townsend to be more viable for the "'makers,' which is to say those who grow, cook, ferment, craft and build" and pointed out that small business development is hampered by a lack of affordable housing.

He added: "I have a passion to make sure that even the quietest voices are heard," saying, "we have an opportunity here to welcome diversity of race, gender and political viewpoint."

Jones also listed affordable housing as a major issue, and added "food sovereignty, land access, racial and social justice, and any other progressive policies that make us a more inclusive and equitable community, especially in regards to increasing economic stratification and climate change."

"I'm a younger, working class person who understands the struggles inherent in living in

an older, more affluent community,” she said in an email, “so I’m running to represent the more marginalized voices who, as the backbones of our community, rarely have access to a seat at the table.”

Sherwood did not respond by Saturday for a request for comment.

Tyler Myles Vega, Libby Urner Wennstrom and Sky Hardesty-Thompson will face off in the Aug. 3 Primary Election for the Position 5 council seat now held by Pamela Adams. Vega filed to run Monday, Wennstrom Thursday and Hardesty-Thompson on Friday.

Vega is running in hopes of helping solving problems the city is facing, with a focus on the Port Townsend Golf Course and workforce housing, he said in a phone interview Friday.

“The biggest thing on the table this coming cycle for whoever is seated is going to be what happens to the golf course,” Vega said. “I would support high-density workforce housing on that project and that would prime focus of what I would be doing with most of my time.”

Wennstrom, who is the current vice-chair of the Jefferson County Democrats, said her focus would be on housing availability and affordability, with a an emphasis on workforce housing, she said in a phone interview Friday.

While she’s been active in local politics for years, Wennstrom now has the time to dedicate to the city council’s work if elected, she said.

“This seemed like the right time for me personally and for the community. We’re facing a bunch of situations and challenges, as well as a bunch of opportunities, and it just feels like the right time,” Wennstrom said.

Hardesty-Thompson hopes to help with the city issues involving deer, as well as housing for workforce members and homeless community members.

The candidate’s main focus would be workforce and homeless housing.

“Homeless and housing is a real big issue and I’ve spoken with a lot of homeless people and that’s a big reason and it’s something I’ve been considering for a long time,” said Hardesty-Thompson.

Aislinn Diamanti is running unopposed for the Position 2 council seat now held by Ariel Speser.

The Sequim School Board races include Rachel Tax, Derek Huntington, Virginia R. Sheppard and Kristi Schmeck seeking the at-large Position 4 seat, which will appear on the Aug. 3 primary, and Patrice Johnston running unopposed for the District 2 seat.

Incumbent Ron Helmonds will face challengers Glenn T. Clemens and Mike Feely in the Primary Election for Position 3 on the Port Ludlow Fire District No. 3 board.

Jeff Nicholas, Duane Chamlee and Sean Ryan are running for Position 1 on the commission of the Clallam County Fire District 3, which covers a small part of Jefferson County, and will appear on the primary ballot.

Incumbent Paul Mahan will be facing challenger Ronald Leon Jones for the at large Position 5 seat on the Quilcene School Board, while Jon Cooke is running unopposed for the District 2 seat.

Kathryn Lamka and Danille Turissini will face off in the general election running for the District 5 seat of the Chimacum School Board, while both Roxanne Hudson and Mike Aman are running unopposed for the District 1 and District 2 seats respectively.

Both Port of Port Townsend commission candidates are running unopposed, with District 3 incumbent Peter Hanke seeking a third four-year term and Carol Hasse, founder of Port Townsend Sails and co-founder of the Wooden Boat Festival, running for the District 2 position now held by Bill Putney, who is not running for re-election.

Also unopposed are:

- Incumbents Connie Welch and Jennifer James-Wilson, Port Townsend School Board.
- Incumbents Kees Kolff and Mari Dressler for the East Jefferson County Hospital District 2 (Jefferson Healthcare Hospital) board.
- Incumbents Nikki Hay and Carol Young to the West Jefferson County

Hospital 1 board (Forks).

- Incumbent Sandra Wells-Kalama on the Queets-Clearwater School Board.
- Incumbents Mary Fickett and Shirley Towne, Brinnon School Board.
- Incumbents Kevin Hinchin and Ron Hurn, Quillayute Valley School Board.
- Incumbent Deborah Stinson and Steve Craig, East Jefferson Fire Rescue commission.
- Incumbent Melody Bacchus, Quilcene Fire District commission.
- Justin Matheson and Richard Moore, Brinnon Fire District commission.
- Incumbent Ford Kessler, Discovery Bay Fire District 5 commission.
- Incumbent Tony Romberg, Forks Fire District 1 commission.
- Christine Kelly, Paradise Bay Water District 1 commission.
- Incumbents Jim Hueter and Diane (Movius) Martin, Gardiner Cemetery District No. 3 commission.
- Incumbent Laurie Neuenschwander, Quilcene Cemetery District 2 commission.
- Dennis Schmitt and incumbent Larry Robinson, Coyle-Thorndyke Park and Recreation District No. 1 commission.

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