

# Voters: Port of Morrow is second largest port in Oregon

Continued from Page A1

Stokoe has worked in law enforcement for more than 31 years and has been Boardman Police Department Chief since 2011. He was appointed as a port commissioner in 2015 and reelected in 2017.

Stokoe said he has always been involved in the community, and on regional and state boards. Some of his local volunteer work includes the Morrow Education Foundation, coaching youth sports and as a volunteer ambulance driver for the Morrow County Ambulance District. He said he sees his service on the Port of Morrow Commission as another opportunity to help Morrow County.

“It’s extremely satisfying to me to give back to the community,” he said.

Stokoe said if reelected, one of his biggest areas of focus will be on helping the port create and retain family wage jobs for the region. Part of that is making sure the infrastructure is in place to support development, he said, and being fiscally responsible.

He said he is proud of the work the port commission has done so far.

“We’re the second largest port in the state, and that comes with a lot of hard work,” he said.

## Jonathan Tallman

Jonathan Tallman is one of two challengers running against Stokoe for position 1.

Tallman is an owner of the local, family-owned Boardman coffee shop The Farmer’s Cup. He said the business has seen “triple digit growth” but managed to avoid the waste that often comes with such fast growth. He said he can bring similar skills to the Port of Morrow, which has also seen rapid growth.

Tallman has been at odds with the Port of Morrow Commission and other local officials for more than a year now, as Umatilla Electric Cooperative has pursued an easement to build a transmission line through the Tallmans’ property to accommodate new growth, and



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

A sign marks the entrance to the Port of Morrow’s East Beach Industrial Park on July 17, 2020.

threatened to use eminent domain if the family doesn’t sign an agreement voluntarily. Tallman said he feels there has been a lack of communication throughout the entire process from the port and others.

“This is the only way I can be part of the conversation,” he said.

Tallman also has criticisms about the way the port commission operates in general, and said he feels current commission members have too many conflicts of interest and are finding ways to use the position for their own gain (Commission members interviewed for the article denied this allegation and said they recuse themselves from any decisions that may have even an appearance of conflict).

He said he feels there is “a lot of waste” in what the port is doing, and as a commission member he would focus on reducing that waste. He also wants the port to do what it can to promote more housing development so that employees of port businesses have a place to live in the county.

## John Kilkenny

John Kilkenny is running against Stokoe and Tallman for position 1.

Kilkenny said he is a lifelong Morrow County resi-

dent, other than a brief stint in Pasco, Washington, and has been farming in the area for 40 years. He has served on a number of local boards, including 12 years on the Morrow County Planning Commission and time on the Morrow County Rodeo Board.

“The port has done a tremendous job of growing and diversifying ... and I’d just like to continue that,” he said.

While Kilkenny praised the port’s growth, he said there are some areas he would like to focus on improving if elected, including recruiting more small and medium-sized locally owned businesses.

He said he feels the port and county could work better together than they currently do, and would like to see more “synergy” in that relationship.

He also would like to see a stronger emphasis on job training locally, to retain more young people who grew up in Morrow County and are ready to start their careers. He said he knows the port can only do so much when it comes to housing development, but he would like to see the port commission find more ways to expand housing options in the county.

“Unfortunately, a lot of people who work in Morrow County don’t live in Morrow

County,” he said.

## Jerry Healy

Jerry Healy is running for reelection to position 3 on the Port of Morrow Commission.

Healy was born and raised in Morrow County and lived there most of his life, other than college and a stint in the Peace Corps. He said he has now been on the Port of Morrow Commission for about 27 years, but is ready to continue his service.

“It’s a dynamic position,” he said. “It keeps you excited about what you’re doing. There are tremendous things we have accomplished for our community and for the county.”

Healy said one of the most important things the port commission needs to continue to focus on is how to provide training and opportunities for people already in Morrow County, to encourage them to stay after high school graduation or come back after pursuing their education.

“For decades, our number one export from the county was our young people,” he said.

He said the port has already been improving on that through the workforce training center, internships and other programs. He said during his service on the

## CANDIDATE FORUMS

Boardman Chamber of Commerce held a virtual candidate forum for Port of Morrow Commissioner Position #3 candidates on April 13, and the video is available on the Boardman Chamber of Commerce Facebook page.

The chamber will hold a virtual candidate forum on its Facebook page for Position No. 1 candidates on Tuesday, April 27.

commission, the port has also done a good job of diversifying its economic base, and of strategic planning — something it is important to continue.

“There are a couple of ports in the state of Oregon that have run out of property, and we don’t want to be there,” he said.

## Rick Weiss

Rick Weiss is one of two candidates challenging Healy for position 3 on the commission.

Weiss is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Boardman. He said while that wouldn’t seem to lend itself to serving on the port commission, past experience would, including time working in public policy in Arizona, experience as a small business owner and his bachelor’s degree in political science.

Weiss and his wife moved to Boardman about 18 months ago, he said, and jumped into community involvement, including their instrumental work in starting the Boardman food pantry. He said the Port of Morrow is a significant part of the community, and “it just seems if I’m going to be involved in the community, that is an area where I could have some influence.”

He said as someone newer to the county who doesn’t own a local business affected by the port’s decisions and who doesn’t work for a local government entity, he feels he can bring an objective voice to the port commission, focused on what’s best for the community as a whole.

“I’ve got fresh eyes,” he said.

He said if elected he would work to bring additional transparency and communi-

cation with the public to the port’s proceedings.

## Chandler Schaak

Chandler Schaak is the third candidate running for position 3, but did not return calls and an email sent to the contact information listed on the filing form.

According to the filing form, Schaak lives in Boardman and is an insurance agent.

## Joe Taylor

Joe Taylor, a local farmer who grew up in Morrow County, has served as a Port of Morrow commissioner for 16 years, and is running unopposed for another term.

He said he was actually a little disappointed no one ran against him, as contested races help bring up good ideas and areas for improvement.

Taylor said he was motivated to run again by projects the port has been working on that are not yet complete, that he would like to see through. If reelected, he will also represent the port on the Columbia River Enterprise Zone board for the first time, which he said he looks forward to.

Taylor said he is proud of the work the port has done in recent years, including the transition to a new port manager and the port’s strong growth — a trend he said is likely to continue.

“That’s going to take some planning and foresight,” he said.

Taylor said he wants to see the port continue to do what it can to help bring more housing options to Morrow County.

“It’s not a big input we have, but we have a little bit and I think it helps,” he said.

# Fair:

Continued from Page A1

gather in downtown Stanfield for the community’s first major public event for over a year, organizers said.

Owners brought their vehicles from across Eastern Oregon and Southeast Washington for display at the “Show and Shine” event. Bemrose said it was clear that people were eager to get out, with some showing up in the early hours of the morning.

“I think it’s been helping a lot of people,” he said of the event. “People love taking their cars out, and they’ve been really cooped up, so this has been really helpful to a lot of people.”

Vendors at the event served hot dogs, hamburgers, kettle corn and other delicious treats while live bands on the front steps of the library played classic rock, blues and bebop, giving the sunny spring day a feeling of normalcy — which for many had been missing.

“I’m impressed,” said Longhorn, who helped organize the event with Stanfield Parks and Recreation. “I’m super excited about the turn-



Bryce Dole/East Oregonian

Classic cars line the downtown streets in Stanfield for a “Show and Shine” event on Saturday, April 17, 2021.

out. It confirms in my mind how much people are ready to have a little sunshine and happiness, and see the good things we’re missing out on.”

Looking out on the groups of people meandering into shops along Main Street, Longhorn spoke optimistically about her hopes for the community of small businesses rebounding after months of hardship.

“That’s the goal is to help our local community see what we have,” she said. “Just because we’re small doesn’t mean we can’t offer fun things.”

Kathy Baker, a lifelong Stanfield resident and owner

of Fun Fashions Boutique in downtown, said that many customers from out of town had waltzed through the store throughout the day, as well as some local residents who hadn’t even known the store was there.

“It’s huge,” she said of the event. “It helps us as a small community. It brings people into our community.”

Baker added that she hopes events like the fair bring notoriety to local businesses after the closures brought by COVID-19.

“Stanfield just doesn’t get recognized for some reason,” she said. “I don’t know why. We have, like, 10,000 cars

come through here on (Highway 395). It’s crazy.”

A block from the clothing store, dozens of residents lounged in the sunshine throughout the day over meals at the Broken Barrel, a bar and grill serving classic pub food like sandwiches and wraps, as well as burgers with titles like “Trust me” and “Let’s go nuts!”

Martha McClusky, the restaurant owner, said she hopes the fair is held every year. Several other attendees said the same.

“It’s so nice to see people out and moving and being in the sunshine,” she said, adding she was glad to see regular customers returning to the restaurant. “There’s a lot of new people and faces we haven’t seen for so long. There was almost a full year there where people weren’t able to come in and see us.”

McClusky said the street fair is a great example of how Stanfield is continuing to grow.

“This is just making my heart happy to see events happening here,” she said. “I hope that we see many more of these events added to bring our community closer together and get to know our neighbors.”

# Decision:

Continued from Page A1

is also an Irrigon city councilor and an elected member of the Umatilla Morrow Radio & Data District Board of Directors.

McBee began speaking with the Oregon School Boards Association and the Umatilla County Elections Division to get their advice before eventually turning to the Pendleton School District’s legal counsel.

McBee said the district’s attorney soon identified Oregon Revised Statute 338.035, which states, “a

member of the school district board of the school district within which a public charter school is located may not be a voting member of the public charter school governing body.”

But by the time the district confirmed Spencer couldn’t serve on both bodies, McBee said it was already after the filing deadline, which also serves as a dropout deadline.

Kim Lindell, the Umatilla County elections manager, said she consulted with the Oregon Secretary of State’s Office, which advised her to keep Spencer on the ballot, and then let her make a decision should she win. The specifics of how the situation

is handled, Lindell said, lies with the school district.

An enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Spencer said she got involved in these races because of her desire to add representation to the board as a “BIPOC woman of color” and to help out children in Pendleton and on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

“My goal is to serve youth however I can,” she said.

Spencer said she hasn’t decided which board she will serve on yet because at this point, her winning seats on both boards is still a hypothetical. Attorney Patrick Gregg is the other candidate for Position 7, and if he wins, the

discussion over holding seats on two school boards will be moot.

Spencer is still a member-elect of the Nixyaawii School Board, which like Pendleton won’t seat its new members until July. She added that she’s kept the school board chair of Nixyaawii apprised of the situation.

For her part, McBee said she isn’t trying to tip the scales for or against Spencer, but just trying to help the Pendleton School Board follow the proper procedures and statutes.

Ballots for the May 18 Pendleton School Board elections will begin being mailed out on April 28.



Contributed Photo

Athena-Weston School District Superintendent Laure Quaresma said junior Aiden Wolf is “a leader in our school. But he’s a deep-thinking, quiet leader.”

# Heritage:

Continued from Page A1

said. “But he’s a deep-thinking, quiet leader. He’s really sincere in what he said about caring about his home, caring about the land. He’s very dedicated to anything he invests himself in.”

Quaresma said Aiden has made efforts to share his culture with fellow students.

“He organized a powwow for our district,” Quaresma said. “He brought in drummers and dancers just to share his way of life with us.”

While Quaresma said there is still hope the assembly in Texas could be

rescheduled, so far there are no firm plans to do so.

Meanwhile, students chosen for the assembly are creating essays and other works to share their voices. While Aiden’s essay is an example, he isn’t done yet.

“I’m thinking about making a video,” Aiden said. “It would talk more about my culture and my way of life, rather than just my hair.”

Quaresma said organizers of the Rural Youth Assembly are attempting to gather the videos and essays made by students and organize a virtual assembly, if an in-person one in Texas isn’t possible.

Aiden’s essay can be read at [ubne.ws/aidenwolf](http://ubne.ws/aidenwolf).

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT:

[www.EastOregonian.com](http://www.EastOregonian.com)