

LIBRARY BOARD CANDIDATES

These six candidates are running for five seats on the library board that will be created to oversee a new library district should voters approve it.

Mike Crawford

(although, due to an error in the office of the County Clerk, it will appear on the ballot as Michael Crawford).

City: I live on Eden Bench outside of Troy.

Years in the county: I was born and spent my youth here in Wallowa county. I returned here to live full-time six year ago.

Unique qualifications: The day-to-day operation of the libraries is not the role of the board but is the responsibility of the individual librarians; therefore, specific library experience is not a requirement. The responsibility of the board is to establish vision and goals for the district, hire/name the district director and set policies, which will enable the director to meet those goals. I believe that my service on several boards over the years, including my current service on the Wallowa Valley Library Foundation and the Wallowa County Educational Service District boards, along with my extensive experience in project management, uniquely qualifies me to serve on the library district board.



Why do you want to be a library district board member?

I firmly believe that libraries are an important part of our community. I have served on the Wallowa Valley Library Foundation board since the beginning of the process to form the district and feel that I have a responsibility to continue to devote my time and energy to the continued success of our libraries.

Why do we need a library district when the city's already take care of this service for free?

The current service is not free, it is a line item in the budget of every city, paid for by taxpayer dollars. It is also subject to being slashed from the budget at any time, just as happened to funds for the county library. The library district will provide stable funding which, by law, cannot be diverted for any purpose other than libraries.

What is your vision for the library district?

Libraries in the 21st century are not just about books, they are about access to information through all available means. My vision for the library district would include additional hours along with all of the existing, and possibly expanded, services now provided plus new, innovative, services to address the impact of technology on our lives and to provide access to all forms of information.

How will the new library district, if formed, go about listening to the taxpayers of the district and their needs?

Much of the access to the library district will be provided by statute, such as open meeting requirements and budget committee composition rules, but more importantly, the library district must be open and accessible to all citizens. Each board member must be willing to engage in dialog with members of the community and bring any concerns or suggestions before the board for consideration. A well-publicized rotation of board meeting locations, between each of the communities served, might provide additional accessibility.

Tammy Crawford

City: County resident (near Enterprise)

Years in the county: 60

Unique qualifications: Retired teacher, 30 years Enterprise School District; taught reading for 30 years, certified reading specialist; taught math for 30 years, certified math specialist (through Algebra I); years of experience in both collaborative work and business meetings through school, church, social and service organizations



I love Wallowa County. I love living here. I have always been proud of all the diverse opportunities that our county has to offer citizens of all ages. I have seen too many programs reduced or eliminated due to budgets. Our school, city, and county boards are all doing the best they can with the funds they have at their disposal. Dedicated volunteers have worked hard over the years, but we have lost a lot. I don't want our county to lose any more programs, and without the library district, we will lose so many more.

First, the services provided by the library are not free. They are paid for with tax dollars. Second, the city library services "feel free" because of the cooperation between the city and county libraries. If the district is not approved, each person who lives outside of the city limits of Enterprise, Joseph or Wallowa will have to pay an annual fee to use any library service. This is estimated at \$70, which is more than the estimated tax increase that the average homeowner would see if the district is approved.

I envision a cost-efficient, forward-thinking, and technologically up-to-date county-wide library system that will provide all the services the county now has and more. Wallowa County should continue to have a library system that we can be proud of and point to as a reason for new businesses and families to move here.

The library district board, like all the other boards in the county, will be available to the taxpayers for input. Board meetings are open to the public and board members, I'm sure, will be willing to listen to taxpayer ideas and concerns both at meetings and individually. Their input would be weighed with all the facts and opinions available as the board deals with everything that organizing and directing our library district will entail.

James Fanning

City: County resident; up river from Imnaha about 13 miles.

Years in the county: 18 and I have maintained a residence here for more than 40 years.

Unique qualifications: I am a retired public school teacher and principal. I have supervised librarians and library operations at the elementary and secondary level in three different school districts.



I believe that all of Wallowa County's residents should have access to a stable, unbiased sources of information. I want to actively support their right to research and continue to learn. I support our county's residents' right to enrich their lives through the pleasure and the joy of reading. A county library district, funded by taxpayers, would provide the financial stability needed to provide the required resources for residents from year to year. I also believe that information should be easily accessed and include a wide range of materials and media.

If the county library disappears at the end of June, people in the outlying areas of our county could be denied access to library services that are currently offered because we have a county-wide system.

Our small city libraries without additional money and staff will not and cannot provide the same level of services we've become accustomed to.

It is my hope that our new Library District will support Wallowa County residents by providing quality, unbiased information services to help our County's families and their communities prosper, so Wallowa County as a whole will be more prosperous. I envision a library district board that will provide the leadership and resources to build information services that are dynamic enough to meet the needs of all residents, local agencies, local governments and local service organizations.

The district is required to hold open public meetings with opportunities for citizens to comment except when issues requiring confidentiality are being discussed. But that is not enough. Board members should make every reasonable effort to let our public know what we are discussing, planning and deciding. These efforts should include public announcements in the newspaper and on the radio, posting and distributing flyers and leaflets, paid advertising if necessary and speaking at meetings of local organizations and agencies.

Nora Hawkins

City: Wallowa

Years in the county: Born and raised, 36.

Unique qualifications: Board member for the Wallowa County Fund; small business owner.



I would like to see board members from across the county, and I want the lower valley to have representation. I have also lived in communities with thriving libraries and would love to see those opportunities and services available in Wallowa County.

Many people don't know a lot of the city library programming is made possible due to funding that comes from the county library. These funds, as well as books made available to kids and elders, will all disappear if the county library closes. Loss of the county library funding will likely also cause the city libraries to have to charge for membership, either to their own residents or all county residents that do not live in their city limits.

That the measure passes and that an opportunity to provide new and expanded services to all the residents of the county is made possible.

We plan to hold public board meetings and be available individually to hear the needs of taxpayers. There are also clear state laws to ensure that districts are accountable to the public and protect their involvement in budget planning.

Olivia Losby

City: Joseph

Years in the county: 20

Unique qualifications: I am the daughter of Bob and Stephanie Williams. I presently serve on the Joseph City Library Board as the chairman, and have been a part of the board for almost four years. For more than four years, my husband and I have owned and operated a business in downtown Joseph. I have strong management and business skills, which, in addition to being active on the library board, uniquely qualify me to run for the library district board.



I want to be a board member because I have an abiding interest in the libraries as well as the community. As a supporter of this district, I want to help in any way I can to help bring it to fruition. I am willing to devote time and effort to see the district through.

The cities have all done an excellent job taking care of the libraries. Unfortunately, the libraries in each city are nonmandated services, so if a budget shortfall were to occur, the libraries would be at risk to go first. The district would help protect the libraries from closing if such a shortfall were to transpire. In addition, the libraries would become a more efficiently-run service where administrative tasks can and would be consolidated to free up resources and personnel time.

I envision a collaborative, efficient library network that will continue to provide not only the services that everyone already knows and wishes to maintain such as rural branches in Troy and Imnaha, Deliver-Me-A-Book and early literacy programs, but also more services and programs that can and will be provided with the increase in funding.

I believe we want to be as transparent and open as possible. Meetings will generally be open to the public, and community members are more than welcome to share their ideas and input. We could also rotate the locations of the meetings to ensure citizens have easy access to them.

Karen Patton

City: Joseph

Years in the County: 50 plus

Unique Qualifications: Small business owner, public school teacher, ESD superintendent; knowledge of public meeting law, policy development, governing board roles and responsibilities, budget management, audit compliance; Eastern Oregon Hub Board Member ; Knowledge of county library services providing early literacy experiences for children birth through age 5; GO STEM Hub Advisory Board Chair; Conducting meetings



I want to offer my experience working with public entities and governing boards to assist the new district. I believe that all of our county residents should have access to basic media services.

A library district will provide a dedicated funding stream that has the potential to leverage available resources, to consolidate and improve media services while remaining locally responsible. Without satellite services, the communities of Imnaha, Troy and county residents outside city limits risk losing local access to a public library.

To effectively, efficiently manage resources to equitably provide media services to all residents of Wallowa County.

Regular board meetings will be the primary place for taxpayers and constituents to express their needs to the governing board of the district.