

EDITORIAL

Waive filing fee for City Council

The Baker City Council is wise to try to make it easier for residents to file as candidates for the Nov. 3 general election, during which six of the seven seats on the Council will be open.

The issue — as with so many things these days — is the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the city's current rules, residents who want to run for City Council must pick up a petition from the city and then collect valid signatures from at least 46 registered voters.

Obviously the pandemic, and the recommendation that people seek to stay at least 6 feet apart, makes the collection of those signatures a significantly more daunting proposition than in the past.

Oregon election law, which Baker City follows, allows an alternative way for candidates to get on the ballot — pay a fee.

But the City Council has to pass an ordinance setting that fee. Councilors took the first step Tuesday, approving the first of three required readings of an ordinance.

The deadline for candidates to file is Aug. 25, whether they choose to gather signatures or pay the filing fee.

That fee was originally proposed at \$50, but the version councilors approved Tuesday sets it at \$25.

Not an exorbitant amount, to be sure, but neither is it a trifling sum for some people.

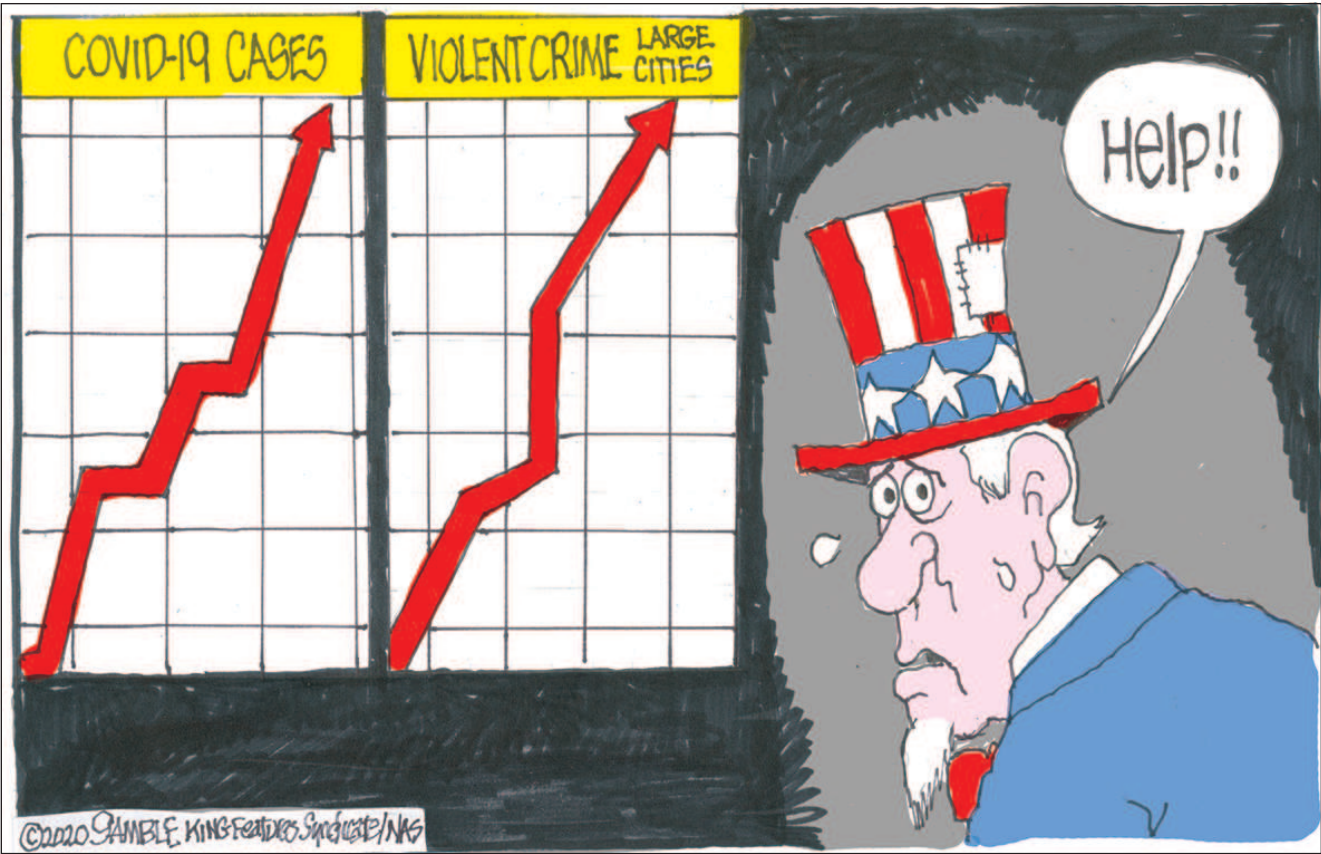
The Council's goal of making candidacy as accessible as possible is a laudable one.

To that end, councilors should eliminate the filing fee altogether.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor

Letters to the editor

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Biden needs to focus on one thing with VP pick: Knowledge

We are four months away from what is shaping up to be a very strange presidential election — the strangest in many of our lifetimes.

Americans will vote in an atmosphere of deep and bitter division. We are at each other's throats in a way we have not been since the 1960s. In some ways it may be worse than the 1960s.

We will also hold this election in the context of a pandemic and parallel to a new social movement both idealistic and nihilistic; both positive and destructive.

Finally, our choice is between two aging men with, in very different ways and for very different reasons, little apparent understanding of the task before them — the importance of the presidency at this moment in the nation's life. Neither seems to have a vision of unification and neither has a positive program for jobs, trade, infrastructure, energy, conservation, debt or expanding personal opportunity.

Donald Trump, 74, seems to have less than total control of his emotions, and Joe Biden, 77, seems to have less than total control of his faculties.

The best thing the president could do is dial down his rhetoric and run on his record, the record of a traditional Republican with some tweaks and additions — like on trade and prison reform.

That probably will not happen and, if it did, the now deranged national media would not give him credit for it anyway.

The best thing that Biden could do is to reassure the people about his evident mental and physical fragility.

A majority of citizens in the country like and respect Joe Biden. He could be a healer. But we would all be fools to ignore the truth that recent years have been hard on him (no shame in that) and that the calendar exerts its own undeniable force.

If elected, Biden will be 82 when his term ends — older than Ike (71), Reagan (77), de Gaulle (79) or Churchill

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(81) when they left power. Konrad Adenauer, in postwar Germany, was 87 when he departed office.

What Biden ought to do, for his own political fortunes, as well as the country, is amend his vice presidential promise — that he will choose a woman as his running mate.

He ought to say:

I will pick the best person I can find; the most qualified; someone who can step into the presidential office if need be with no learning curve.

If, in the end, it is a woman, that's grand.

If not, well, I have to do what's best for the nation.

This would reassure the country.

For there is a high chance that, if Biden is elected, his vice president will become the president.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan was fond of quoting President John F. Kennedy on the needs of democracy. He said that democracy needs patience, public virtue, discipline and determination — many moral traits. But it also needs knowledge.

The president must understand how our system works, how the federal bureaucracy functions and how foreign policy is conducted. He or she needs to fully understand recent problems and challenges on all these fronts.

Biden does. It is important that his running mate does, too.

Biden should do what Barack Obama did: Pick someone with knowledge.

He should not do what John McCain did: Pick a walking gimmick.

One cannot help but notice that some of the names now on Biden's short list are people who have been in the Congress, or even public office, only a few years.

The best person on his list is Karen Bass — a five-term congresswoman from California deeply involved in prison reform and knowledgeable about foreign policy who is also a former speaker of the California State Assembly. She possesses the two qualities Biden needs — calm and experience.

Still, he should broaden the search.

- Consider someone like Janet Napolitano, who has been a governor, a Cabinet member and run the largest university system in the nation.
- A Senate veteran like Patty Murray would hit the ground running.
- One may be permitted to dream of a national unity ticket with Condoleezza Rice as the running mate.
- Both senators from New Hampshire, Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan, are also former governors.
- Sen. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin is as exciting as watching paint dry, but she has long experience in local and state government and both houses of the Congress. And, oh yeah, she would break a barrier.

But that's not what is most important right now.

Biden has his base. And he doesn't need a stunt to wake up his campaign, like McCain did. There is no need to box himself in.

He does need to reassure us.

The rules for veep selection are simple: First, do no political harm. Second, pick someone qualified.

Why not at least consider someone whose competence and civic spirit is so well established that he brings prestige to the veep-ship — someone like Robert Gates or James Mattis?

Go with knowledge, Joe. This year more than ever. For you, for us.

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OTHER VIEWS

Boeing can regain trust by embracing transparency

Editorial from The Chicago Tribune:

On Oct. 29, 2018, Lion Air Flight 610 crashed into the Java Sea shortly after takeoff, killing all 189 passengers and crew. Less than five months later, Ethiopian Air Flight 302 plummeted shortly after departure, killing 157 people, including eight Americans. The model at the center of both crashes was the 737 Max, built by Chicago-based Boeing Co.

Now, after a six-month hiatus, Boeing's production of the passenger jets has resumed. Can the flying public, already rattled by the enduring COVID-19 pandemic, feel safe aboard a 737 Max?

Government test flights have wrapped up for Boeing's 737 Max. The Federal Aviation Administration still has to analyze data from those flights. If everything goes

as planned, however, the aircraft-maker could get the FAA-ordered grounding of 737 Max jets lifted as soon as September, and the airlines could take to the skies with passengers aboard by the end of the year, The Wall Street Journal reports.

Something else has to happen alongside that 737 Max reboot, however, to restore the American flying public's faith in Boeing: an ironclad, nonnegotiable commitment to transparency.

The U.S. Transportation Department's inspector general's office recently issued a report laying out how Boeing withheld pivotal information about the 737 Max's flight control software as the model was undergoing certification from the FAA. Problems with that software, known as the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation

System, were at the center of both fatal crashes. Investigators said the glitch put the airliners into a sharp dive that could not be stopped by the pilots.

"Early in the process, Boeing included limited information in initial briefings to FAA on the Max's flight control software, MCAS, which subsequently has been cited as a contributing or potentially contributing factor in both accidents," Inspector General Howard Elliott wrote in his report. "As a result, FAA was not well positioned to mitigate any risks related to MCAS."

During one early certification meeting with FAA officials, Boeing representatives used 482 slides over a two-day span to explain critical 737 Max flight controls, but devoted just two lines of text in those slides to the MCAS, ac-

cording to the report. Later, when Boeing made major alterations to the system, it did not mention those changes to FAA engineers involved in the certification process, the report stated.

It wasn't until after Lion Air Flight 610 crashed into the Java Sea that the FAA began a detailed review of the MCAS. That marked the first time the FAA was "presented with a full picture of how MCAS worked," the report stated. Boeing began a system revamp, but 737 Max aircraft continued flying. Less than five months later, Ethiopian Air Flight 302 crashed.

The 737 Max fleet has been grounded ever since. Boeing's bottom line — and its reputation — have taken a massive hit. Dennis Muilenburg lost his job as CEO. Boeing has made the technical changes to put the 737 Max on

track for an eventual return to service. That won't be enough, though.

Boeing must convince the flying public that transparency will be applied to every stage of the development and making of its aircraft, every meeting and information exchange with the FAA — the regulatory body responsible for making aviation safe. The airplane-maker will have to take a hard look at a company culture that allowed opacity to seep into something as important as the certification process for a new passenger jet model.

A pandemic-weary American populace eagerly awaits the resumption of normalcy, and a return to days when flying for business or vacation are routine. For that to happen, however, aviation giants like Boeing must ensure they have — and safeguard — the full trust of the American flying public.