

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Choosing the city manager

The possibility that six of the seven Baker City Council members who plan to hire a new city manager later this year won't still be councilors when that person starts work seems at first glance a questionable prospect.

But Mayor Loran Joseph says the situation is considerably more nuanced.

And he makes a compelling case for why the current slate of councilors should hire the new manager rather than leave the task for their successors.

This circumstance arises from a confluence of factors.

Fred Warner Jr., who has been city manager since 2016, is retiring at the end of the year. This is not a secret, to be sure. The Council started the recruitment process several months ago, and 14 people applied. On Sept. 17 a committee comprising three councilors — Joseph, Lynette Perry and Jason Spriet — met and pared the list of candidates to six, one of whom later withdrew. The City Council interviewed the five candidates by Zoom on Oct. 5 and 6.

On Tuesday night the Council announced that it would invite three finalists to Baker City in November for another interview. They are Scott McClure of Monmouth, Oregon, Steve Ashworth of Alpine, Wyoming, and Jonathan Cannon of Saluda, North Carolina.

More importantly, Joseph said he believes a vital part of the finalists' visit to Baker City is a chance to meet with the councilors who are elected Nov. 3 but who won't be sworn in and take office until early January. Joseph said the opinions of those councilors-elect about the finalists will be "highly influential" in his decision about whom the city should try to hire to replace Warner.

How many of the councilors who will vote on the hiring decision will actually oversee the new city manager — although the manager runs the city's day-to-day operations, the Council alone has the authority to hire or fire the city manager — depends on the election results Nov. 3.

Of the seven current councilors, only Lynette Perry will definitely remain; she was elected in 2018 to a 4-year term.

Among the six other councilors, Joseph, Randy Schiewe and Larry Morrison will leave the Council at the end of the year. Joseph and Schiewe were not eligible to run for re-election due to term limits, and Morrison did not file as a candidate.

The three remaining incumbents, however, are on the Nov. 3 ballot — Spriet, Doni Bruland and Arvid Andersen. If voters re-elected all three, then four of the seven councilors who choose the new city manager will retain their seats in the new year.

The bottom line is that from one to four of the current councilors will retain their seats in 2021.

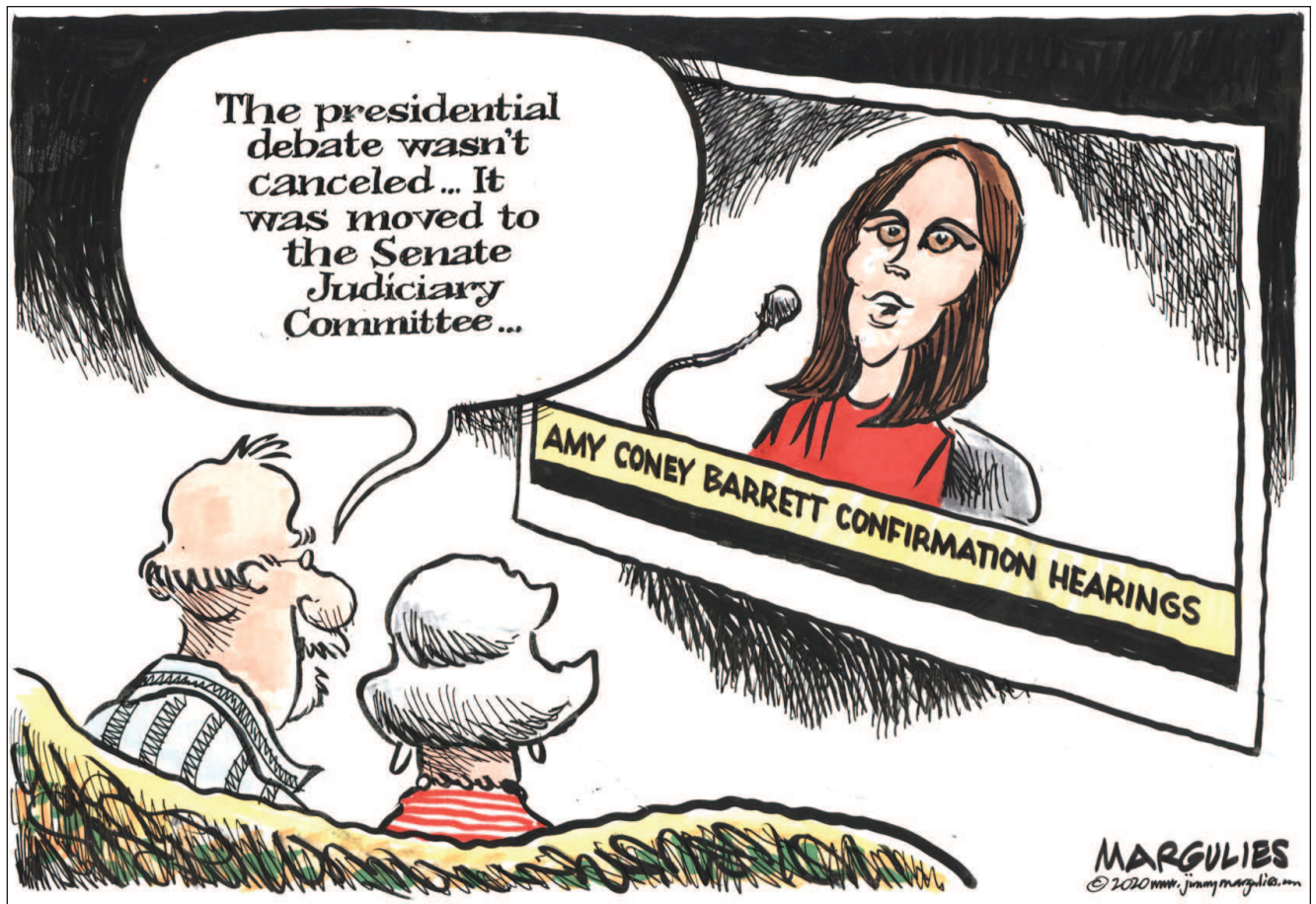
Joseph acknowledges that some people advocate for leaving this important decision to the slate of councilors who will actually work with the new manager. But he contends that it's preferable to have the new manager ensconced at City Hall by the time the new councilors take office. That's sensible. The alternative is to saddle the new councilors, even as they're trying to move ahead with their priorities and become familiar with their duties, with the need to recruit a new manager, a process that would take at least several months.

The obvious counterargument is that an even worse scenario is to leave the new councilors with a manager they don't support. But Joseph thinks that is extremely unlikely, and his reasoning is sound.

The newly elected councilors, though they won't have a vote in hiring the new manager, will have a chance to express their opinions to the current councilors after meeting with the finalists. Joseph said he believes all are highly qualified. He's also confident that whoever is elected to the Council Nov. 3 will reach a consensus with the incumbent councilors about the best candidate. And if that's not the case, Joseph doesn't believe the current councilors would decide to hire a manager the councilors-elect dislike.

The best-case scenario, and the one that seems likely to happen, is to start a new year with a new crop of councilors to represent Baker City residents, and a new manager ready to carry out the councilors' goals.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## Your views

### Republican Party should replace its elephant symbol

We seem to live in an era of symbols. Mascots are often caricatures which may be well drawn but whose character is based as much on lore and reputation as the actual observed behavior of the model which inspired the symbols. Symbols themselves evolve, age, and vary in relevance with time. One symbol which is aging and fading in relevance is the avatar which has represented the GOP for too long now — the elephant. A traditional stereotype of the elephant was perhaps best expressed by Simon and Garfunkel in their song "At the Zoo" — "elephants are kindly but they're dumb." I doubt that many current GOP worthies — or their opposition — would agree with that sentiment. Perhaps the elephant should be retired and replaced by another mascot, already in use by a state, whose model's behavior, lore, and reputation more closely illustrates that of the present GOP leadership and the drift of much of the party itself. The wolverine, while already a state mascot, has the reputation and real characteristics to suit a new role as the party symbol. Even the species Latin name, *gula gula*, is a natural to be included in a rally cheer.

Let's allow the old elephant its sunny days in the pasture, give the GOP a new, dynamic, and appropriate avatar, and, lest we forget, having had the wolverine appropriated from it, Michigan would now deserve a new, strong, graceful, and handsome mascot with a tie to the state's history and culture. The Impala?

Buck Pilkenton  
McEwen

### Baker County Republican Party's City Council picks

Citizens of Baker City: The Baker County Republican Party recognizing the opportunity to make a difference in Baker City government this election year has taken the unusual step to endorse Republican candidates for the non-partisan seats on Baker City Council, in accordance with our bylaws.

There are 13 filed candidates for the six open seats. Out of the 13 candidates, nine are registered Republicans. All nine candidates were invited to participate in a vetting process. Six were chosen for the six seats up for

### Letters to the editor

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election. The Baker County Republican Party unanimously endorsed based on the vetting, the goals of the committee, and the values expressed in the Oregon Republican Party platform.

We are proud to endorse for filling the six open Baker City Council seats:

- Kerry McQuisten
- Joanna Dixon
- Betty Milliman
- Doni Bruland
- Shane Alderson
- Johnny Waggoner, Sr.

These six candidates ask for your vote. Ballots will be in the mail Oct. 14. Please check off each name on your ballot, you are only allowed to vote for six. Make sure to return your ballot to an official County drop box by Nov. 3. We do not advise mailing your ballot.

Suzan Ellis Jones  
Chair  
Baker County Republican Party  
Bridgeport

### A Republican who feels he has to vote for Biden

I watched the debates, and am deeply frustrated. As a registered Republican, I'm appalled that so many in the GOP still support Trump. He's an abysmal president.

If you believe in democracy and our Constitution, please look at The Lincoln Project, an organization of prominent Republicans dedicated to protecting democracy by "holding accountable those who would violate their oaths to the Constitution and would put others before Americans." The founders have 200 years experience getting Republicans elected. Their goal is to defeat President Trump in this election. I urge you to go to <https://lincolnpject.us/> and read it.

The list of Trump's screwups is too long for a single letter. To start, he refuses to condemn neo-fascist domestic terrorism, which is unconscionable. Fascism is one evil our fathers/grandfathers fought against

in WWII. Now a U.S. Senator says democracy isn't important to our nation. We should worry.

Trump isn't a conservative — his budgets prove that — and his business history is sordid.

Most telling is his bullpucky about the pandemic. His leadership on public health and safety is atrocious. Our nation is one of the worst in the world in handling COVID-19. Trump lies about it regularly. He trashes the very science that probably saved his life from the disease.

This is why the New England Journal of Medicine, for the first time in over 200 years, endorsed defeating Trump. Scientific American, the oldest monthly magazine in the country, endorses Biden, the first time that mag has ever endorsed a candidate.

I haven't voted for a Democrat for president for over 35 years. This year, like Sen. McCain's widow, Pence's former homeland security/counterterrorism adviser and others, I have no choice but to vote for Biden.

Rick Meis  
Baker City

### My choices for the top six City Council candidates

Baker City Council race this year is an opportunity to elect some new blood into city government, which should not be taken lightly. We have some remarkable candidates running for the six open positions. One of my personal favorites is Kerry McQuisten. Kerry is a 7th-generation Baker County resident, a graduate of Baker High School and Willamette University. She owns and operates a successful publishing company in Baker City, which sells books internationally. I have known Kerry since she was a kid. She is the type of solid citizen we need on city council. Kerry supports small business, including agriculture and mining. She understands the custom and culture of Baker County.

Please join me in voting for Kerry McQuisten for Baker City Council. I also recommend voting for Joanna Dixon, Betty Milliman, Doni Bruland, Shane Alderson and Johnny Waggoner Sr. for the other five seats that are up for election this year.

Chuck Chase  
Baker City

## OTHER VIEWS

### Editorial from The New York Daily News

The eight justices of the United States Supreme Court must let the counting for the 2020 Census continue until Oct. 31, refusing the Trump administration's devious request that it stop immediately. If the justices are smart, and they are plenty smart, they will stay clear and let lower court rulings stand.

Trump and his Cabinet have practically turned meddling with the constitutionally mandated count into an

art form. An ugly one.

First, the highest court rejected plans by Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to unconstitutionally include a citizenship section on the questionnaire. Soon, they are poised to hear a separate appeal from Trumpites, an unconstitutional attempt to keep undocumented immigrants out of the apportionment of congressional seats.

The shenanigans over when to shut things down are more of the same. After Ross rightly pushed the normal July 31 end date to Oct.

31 due to the pandemic, he tried to back it up to Sept. 30.

Advocates sued to keep the Halloween date, and a California federal judge agreed. Ross then sneakily announced an Oct. 5 deadline, leading the judge to force the department to tell every Census employee: "As a result of court orders, the Oct. 5, 2020 target date is not operative, and data collection operations will continue through Oct. 31, 2020. Employees should continue to work diligently and enumerate as many people as possible.

Contact your supervisor with any questions."

The trial court ruling was sustained by a three-judge appeals panel. The Supremes should decline yet another hearing; there's no dispute between courts.

This is basic but crucial stuff: All the people in the nation must be counted. There's no harm to finishing the tally on Oct. 31, but there would be great harm to a rushed finish that misses millions and results in underrepresented, underfunded cities and states.