

Putting our county's priorities in order

In order to serve Clatsop county residents more effectively, I want to discuss some issues related to serving as a commissioner. Reimbursement for all actual and necessary expenses incurred on county business while outside the county is both required by the county charter and essential for commissioners doing that business.

I think the purpose of county government is to deliver services, especially to the people who live here. My goals for my own county service are:

1. Housing, affordable and available, for those who live and work here
2. Economic development, ecologically sustainable, to create family-wage jobs
3. Resilience, supporting preparation, response, and flourishing afterward for all people in all hazards situation, for greater public safety.

GUEST COLUMN
LIANNE THOMPSON



The acronym for all this is HER. I believe that all commissioners have goals for their service on the board, and I want to discuss them at a board retreat or work session.

In the context of providing efficient and effective services to serve the people and the place, I perform liaison assignments. Many of my liaisons are outside Clatsop County, involving travel that takes time, energy, and money to support. Other liaisons are in-county, and they also take time, energy, and money to support.

In-county travel expenses (mileage and meals) are not reimbursed. Outside-county travel expenses are,

as required by the county charter, in a line item in the budget.

How does my work and the work of my fellow commissioners integrate with each other and with the work of staff to benefit county residents? The answer to that question is defined in the board's strategic plan, its mission statement and its goals.

Absent the whole board's definition of its mission statement, strategic plan, and goals, I abstained from voting for the county budget in 2015 and gave my reasons in writing. I called for the whole board to define its work and a work plan with goals. I didn't see an appetite for that process or result from others, and I promised to pursue it on my own.

I have done that by defining my goals, above, HER. I have pursued relationships and collaborative partnerships to implement these goals into reality. That includes attendance

at three conferences: Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, March 9 in Portland; Mass Timber, March 27-30 in Portland; Oregon Prepared, April 11-14 in SunRiver.

In these and in every travel and training opportunity, I minimize expenses by billing as little as possible. Often there is no lodging and minimal meals. I depend on the generosity of friends and family for lodging and meals, and often eat energy bars and take-out food from the grocery store deli. Mileage is the main portion of my expenses, except when it saves time to use a hotel.

The board rules are incomplete, in that they contain no "ends" policies, and thus don't allow us to measure our own or our county manager's progress toward meeting them. There is also an arbitrary limit on travel and training to 20 percent of the total line item for travel and training expenses allocated for each

commissioner, with no correlation to outside Clatsop County liaisons or activities.

I received a letter from the board chair, attached. I then requested and received data from the county manager about the amounts authorized and expended in the past four fiscal years for this travel and training line item. That is also attached.

Notice that the line item use has gradually increased, but the amount authorized has not expanded. Nor has it ever been exceeded. Nor is it related to work load, goals, or plan.

Notice also that we have not had a discussion of commissioners' work, what it is and how it integrates with staff's, or how it relates to goals.

All these questions need addressing.

Lianne Thompson
Clatsop County Commissioner
District 5

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't raise water rates

The minimum Cannon Beach utility bill 20 years ago was \$20.28. Today it is \$46.42, a 129 percent increase. Had utility rates risen along with inflation, it would be \$29.

In 1991 the city passed Ordinance 91-8, raising the lodging tax from 5 percent to 6 percent, with all proceeds earmarked for water and sewer reserves. I estimate that the city collected roughly \$6 million over the last 25 years under this ordinance.

In the mid 1990s, the city built a water filtration plant. It was funded by a bond. In the last 10 years, the city upgraded the waste water system. It was also funded by a bond. I can only think of three major water/sewer projects funded from these reserves: replacement of the pump station in the Stephanie Inn parking lot (roughly \$750,000); cost overruns on the waste water plant (about \$1 million); and the north end water tank (maybe \$500,000).

If the city claims these reserves no longer exist, it would suggest a diversion of funds or an embezzlement. A safer explanation would be that these funds are just invested in unusual investments, such as an RV Park (\$3 million), 58 acres of clear cut (\$500,000), chicken and egg sculptures, etc.

If these proposed improvements are actually needed — which I question — then the discussion should be about which investments will be sold, not how to raise more money.

Ken Quarles
Cannon Beach

Vote for Lori Lum-Toyooka

My name is Stephanie Snyder and I, along with my husband Ryan Snyder, own and operates Martin Hospitality and a small collection of hotels and restaurants in Cannon Beach. I am writing this letter today in support of Lori Lum-Toyooka for a board position on the Seaside School District.

I have known Lori for 15 years and have watched her impact on the community in which she lives and the communities in which her company serves throughout Clatsop County. She is extremely involved in the local schools and currently serves alongside me on the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

for Broadway Middle School. Lori is very involved with volunteering for fundraising efforts and in efforts to help kids have special opportunities at school like cultural events, assemblies and field trips. Lori has been strategic in her leadership and has an ability to inspire those around her.

Professionally, Lori is striving with their business at Lum's Auto, not only being considered one of the best employers in Clatsop County, but also in their efforts to meaningfully engage locally and give back in time and treasure to the community.

These brief comments share my absolute support of Lori and her efforts to join the school board for the Seaside School District. I know she would be a fantastic fit; dedicated and passionate.

Stephanie Snyder
Cannon Beach

Vote for civility, common sense

On May 16 we have a very important choice to make. That choice is, what kind of Port Commission we want to have. There are three positions up for election. This balloting is for the entire county. In other words, all voters can vote the three positions up for election. There are no boundaries or districts. The commissioners represent all the citizens of Clatsop County, so you may for all of the positions.

There are three candidates who should get your vote. They can help restore credibility and bring much-needed civility and common sense back to the Port: Jim Campbell, Frank Spence and Dirk Rohne. These men all bring experience to the job.

Jim Campbell has been on the Port Commission. He has shown the ability to work with the others on the commission and to be a calming force. Frank Spence has years of experience in finance working as a city manager and county administrator. Dirk Rohne served as a county commissioner and on the Clatsop Community College Board. He understands how to get things done.

The present situation at the Port is, to put it mildly, unacceptable. It seems that daily we read about something, be it costly mistakes that cost the Port money, outbursts at a meeting, or commissioners making accusations of other commissioners. This is no way to operate a Port. By voting for Jim Campbell, Frank Spence and Dirk Rohne, you

will help restore order, continuity and just plain sanity to the Port of Astoria.

So join many others and me and vote for Jim Campbell, Frank Spence and Dirk Rohne on May 16.

Bob Lennon
Warrenton

No shows

Last Wednesday, April 26, a candidate forum for those seeking an Astoria Port Commission position was held at the Warrenton High School. Three of the candidates did not appear. Two had agreed to participate and the third made excuse after excuse for not coming. What part of a representative democracy do these men not understand?

They are seeking to represent all citizens of Clatsop County not just those who live in Astoria.

By not appearing, the 30 plus members of the audience who came to hear all the candidates did not hear what these three know, why they are seeking office, what they see as the issues facing the Port and what solutions they have to solve those issues. These three have not demonstrated they understand the basic requirement of an elected official to be accountable to the public they seek to represent.

I am voting for the three who did attend and did answer the audience's questions. Dick Hellberg, Pat O'Grady and Steve Fulton will represent the public interest of all Clatsop County.

Patricia Roberts
Gearhart

Return sanity to Port

I can only express total disgust at the behavior of some of the board members of the Port of Astoria at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 4 as reported in The Daily Astorian and by someone who attended the meeting.

During the past 22 years, I have sat on the board of several local governments and have also attended the meetings of many others. In all that time I have never seen any board member act in the manner that is constantly reported in The Daily Astorian concerning some on the board members of the Port of Astoria.

When the Port board meetings become so contentious that one of the board members ends up in the hospital — there is definitely a problem

that must be addressed. The voters must get involved — say "enough" — and vote off the board those creating the problems.

Please remember that all registered voters who are residents of Clatsop County are eligible to vote for all three (3) positions listed for the Port of Astoria Commission. The Port is an economic engine for the entire county, which makes this election very important to all residents of Clatsop County.

We need to return some sanity to the Port of Astoria Commission.

Please join me in voting to elect Campbell, Spence and Rohne to the board of the Port of Astoria.

Carol Gearin
Warrenton

Tell Fulton no

I witnessed the most disgraceful performance of my 30 plus years working with or for ports by an elected official, Stephen Fulton, at a recent Port of Astoria commission meeting. In my opinion, his total disregard for decorum, process and truth is an insult to the many who voted for him in his first bid. It is vital for any level of decency and progress going forward for the Port of Astoria that Fulton is turned back and Jim Campbell is retained in his current position.

During the meeting, which was disjointed due to constant interruptions by Fulton, who sat lazily in his chair smirking and taking great relish in challenging, arguing and pontificating to some unseen audience he seemed to be playing to. His disrespect for the board chairman, the manager and the recently retained legal counsel is an affront to the professional staff, and the mission and vision of the Port of Astoria. Fulton has shown us repeatedly that he respects no one and nothing while he banters for attention as some type of expert, of which he is not.

Fulton told us in his first bid that he wanted to bring an experienced and collegiate personality to the board and assist in mending broken relationships with other agencies; he has done exactly the opposite. His credibility is nil and allowing him to remain on this essential board for all Clatsop County residents will further undermine this port's ability to succeed.

Tell Fulton NO and reelect Jim Campbell who has

shown dignity and professionalism while serving the port district. And, while you are doing so, check the boxes for Frank Spence and Dirk Rohne who have pledged to re-connect this public body while respecting the voters who deserve better.

Also, please vote, the election in May is open to all of Clatsop County registered voters, so regardless of your location within Clatsop County, you can choose one each from each position on the ballot.

Bill Cook
Astoria

A thank-you from AAUW

As a member of the Seaside Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW), I would like to thank eight of our local businesses for participating in our Equal Pay Day activity on April 4. Sleepy Monk Coffee, Sea Level Bakery & Coffee, Divine Grounds, Caffe Latte Espresso & Gifts, Seaside Coffee House, Java Reef, By the Way, and Mé Latte all offered discounted prices for women on that day to help raise awareness to the issue of pay equity.

Equal Pay Day is the symbolic day on which women's earnings finally catch up to what men made in the previous year. In the U.S., there is currently an approximate 20 percent gender pay gap between women and men — and that percent is even worse for women of color and moms. This takes its toll over the years for women and their families. The pay gap is closing but at such a slow pace it will not reach equal pay until 2152.

Kudos to the previously mentioned businesses for bringing attention to this important issue.

Nancy Kruger
Warrenton

Integrity and smarts for Port

Jobs. The local economy. Our kids and their future.

These are just some of the issues at stake in the May 16 Clatsop County election. That's when voters get to elect the policy-makers for the Port of Astoria, Clatsop Community College, local school boards and the Clatsop Care Health District.

I'm supporting Frank Spence to be commissioner of the Port of Astoria. The port

benefits the entire county and is partly supported by county taxpayers. The port deals with all kinds of challenges, including pollution from up-river, safety requirements, industry demands, increased automation, and federal rules regarding oversight, safety and trade.

Frank has served on the Port's budget committee for two years and knows what it takes to keep the Port running effectively and within budget. His career as a city manager and county administrator has provided him with the skills, experience and integrity to keep our Port running well and wisely.

I'm especially glad Frank is running because it's more important than ever to have commissioners looking out for the welfare of the entire county. Frank doesn't create dramatic headlines. Instead, he wants to do the right thing — and make the best decisions for all of us.

I'm voting for Frank Spence and hope you will, too. Ballots are due by 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 16. Postmarks don't count.

Laurie Caplan
Astoria

Vote for Mary Beth Cottle

The reasons I am voting for Mary Beth Cottle for a board member of the Clatsop Community College are her experience, her vision and optimism to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

As an educator in English literacy development and technology for 23 years ages 5 through 21, she has also evaluated and developed curriculum for those same ages. As a member of an active weekly Cannon Beach committee called "Voices in Action," Mary Beth is an excellent listener and team player dedicated to improve our democracy. As a technology board member for the Cannon Beach Community Chorus, she is enhancing communication for busy members via Facebook.

You can rest assured that Mary Beth will work tirelessly to advocate for the arts, vocational training and technology for both the main campus and satellite centers.

Jeanie McLaughlin
Cannon Beach

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