

CANDIDATE FORUM

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of Boardman) that raised prices on property taxes when it was actually the business (at the Port) that used 90 to 95 percent of the water.

Jerry Healy: I am running again (he is an incumbent) to volunteer for citizens of Morrow County. The port has done an exceptional job in salary growth for the county. The port has also participated in communities throughout the county. The first priority has to be work force development so we can keep our kids in Morrow County and get them into these good paying jobs at the port and keep them here.

Rick Weiss: I have a desire to serve and it is not so much what the port does, but how the port is perceived and I want them working to improve that to the entire community. There is some sense of distrust in what is the port is doing and how is what the port is doing going to affect me? There is distrust particularly for people who are land owners near the port district. When the port is making plans those plans are reported but what is behind the scenes and what plans are being made and how is that going to affect properties near the port? I don't think that is being communicated well and there is a lot of nervousness from people.

Q: As a port commissioner who do you serve and what can be done to properly serve the people or populations that you are serving?

Stokoe: We serve all the citizens of Morrow County. I have a big issue with north south county. I am about the entire county. The Port doesn't just affect the county it effects the region. Work force training program is outstanding. It gets high school students back into our communities.

Tallman: The Port serves the entire county. The CREZ III (Columbia River Enterprise Zone) fight between county and city on who was going to get the money gets back to conflict of interest. As a city police chief (Stokoe, who Tallman is running against) is in charge of a budget and he can direct and steer money to this budget and fill in those interests. You are not serving the best interest of the county when you are serving your city budget needs. There were not mikes (during CREZIII negotiations between the Port, County and City of Boardman) where they talked. They do not care about the south end of the county. You need to be aware that those things were said and that they did get said.

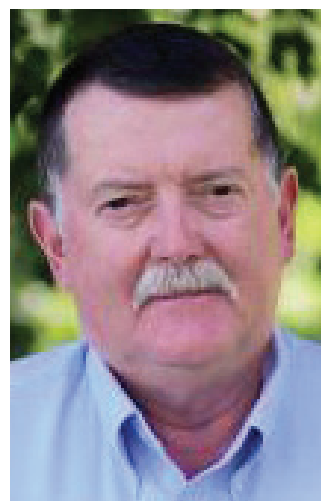
Healy: The only reason the Port is where it is at and does what it does is for the people of Morrow County. We are not building infrastructure for industry we are building this as a path for the citizens of Morrow County for jobs and the ability to stay here.

Weiss: We serve the citizens and it should have nothing to do with north-south. It says in the port by laws one of its primary functions is to solicit citizen input to help make the decisions we make (at the Port). Is the Port asking for opinions from the public? How are we soliciting public opinion?

Kilkenny: I would be representing all the people in the county for the good of the whole county. I would hope the Port would do better to support



John Kilkenny



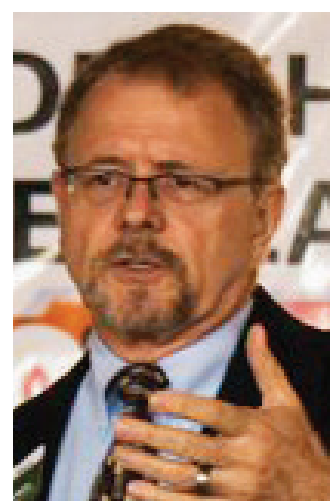
Jerry Healy



Rick Stokoe



Johnathan Tallman



Rick Weiss

the small and medium size businesses, as much as it does to support the larger businesses. More emphasis on small and medium businesses. There also needs to be more transparency and engaging people in the area on what are their thoughts.

Q: What area of the Port's services need additional resources or attention?

Tallman: There are two different kinds of port meetings, one that is public and one that is in executive sessions, and they don't say why they are going into executive sessions. There are conflicts of interest of Port members who own businesses on the sidelines, and they are able to steer the conversation and also go to budgets that they want money to go to. It is the lack of transparency at the Port Commission, and the executive sessions and the conflict of interests that have to be addressed.

Healy: There are a lot of areas not fully up on resources that are needed in order to carry out the jobs we need to carry out. We run a very lean shop and some employees have lot to do. We could always use more people.

Weiss: Has more to do with that we have done quite well with the large businesses but if the entire town is going to grow we need the development of small and medium size businesses. That is part of the strategic plan we need to focus on, and how do we do that?

Kilkenny: The Port should work better with other agencies cities and the people in the area. Painted Hills announced they were locating a (new beef) processing facility in Gilliam County. The question was asked why couldn't we get that in Morrow County? The answer was 'We almost did.' Other people in the area didn't know about this (opportunity). Maybe if county government and other people in the area had known about this opportunity it might have come to this county. Instead of doing everything in a closed shop (the Port) they could engage the whole community, which could have helped recruit Painted Hills to locate in Morrow County instead of Gilliam. The Port needs to engage the whole community to develop more small and medium size businesses.

Stokoe: It's important we continue to invest in our infrastructure. We have been able to obtain federal and state dollars to invest in our infrastructure for

businesses to locate here and create jobs. We have the fourth highest county for family wage jobs in the state. If we continue to attract those opportunities for businesses both big and small we will continue to add opportunity for the kids so that we keep them here in Morrow County.

Q: What are your ideas on county-wide distribution of monetary funds? (The Port does not distribute money directly in the county, so the questions is directed at the Columbia River Enterprise Zone, which does. Several Port commissioners are appointed to the CREZ to, along with others, make those distribution decisions.)

Healy: I have been a Port commissioner a long time and the Port has not had available funds to distribute. This is a CREZ question because that is where the disposable income is. Originally the money was to go to those (taxing) districts that were impacted by the new business. (That) is where the money went. There is an annual meeting of CREZ and I think they have done a good job of distributing funds.

Weiss: We have a need for a significant increase in housing. When you see such a significant increase in employment in Morrow County, and such a small percent (of the employees) living in Morrow County, that has to be addressed. With quality of life decisions they have done a good job with the SAGE Center.

Kilkenny: It keeps coming back to housing. It is unfortunate that we have been able to create all these jobs yet people have had to drive from Hermiston and the Tri-Cities to work here. The Port has never been a real estate developer, but anything the Port can do to help in any way with (housing) infrastructure would help. I would reemphasize work force development so we can get people trained so they can stay here and live here and support schools and businesses in the county, but they need housing.

Stokoe: The Port has never had money to distribute to communities. We have sent work crews out to help communities, but the question is referring to CREZ. Ten years CREZ has invested \$21 million county wide to help with housing and other projects.

Tallman: The Port just bought the Boardman golf course. I would like to see a prospectus for the rate of

return on that investment. They are doing something with Red Rock (a bio fuel company in Lake County getting \$65 million in Port bond funding) and I would like to see the rate of return on that money we are spending. City of Boardman is going to do a dog park and the chamber said the Port is going to do \$90,000 of work to flatten the ground, so to me what is our rate of return on those funds that are distributed. There is no process (in spending).

Q: Do you think the CREZ distribution is equitable and successful?

Weiss: I can't answer that. I have only been here (in the community) 18 months and not observed that process. What if have seen the money seems to be moving out into the whole county.

Kilkenny: I think people's intentions are good on this. (He read off a list of the money distribution numbers around the county.) It is a conversation we need to continue to have.

Stokoe: CREZ is more that just the Port. CREZ II is the county, Port and city of Boardman. CREZ board has taken a wide approach based on population the fairest way. CREZ is supposed to (distribute money to) just special districts affected by those businesses using CREZ. If you based your decision on that there would be zero funds coming to the south end. However, we wanted to make sure we give it to all of Morrow County.

Tallman: There are four categories in the CREZ distribution., But there are conflicts of interest. Port board members are able to steer money to their businesses and to their budgets. An example is the Morrow County Sheriff got no money from CREZ, but the Boardman Police Department just got a whole bunch of money. We need to make sure there are no conflicts of interest that is very important, as much as the character and integrity of the people you elect, as where that money goes.

Healy: Equitability is in the eye of the beholder. There is more money now and that makes a difference. There are different pots of money, and there were guidelines set by the CREZ board 10 years ago. There is some distribution based on population, and some on flat payments and I don't think there is any

question it's been a very successful program (CREZ money distribution).

Q: What element of the Port do you think is most effective and why?

Kilkenny: I think the port has done a fantastic job using the resources they have. They have a location transportation hub with freeway, river and railroad, and the available electricity and lots of land they have done a good job of diversifying from a few agriculture products years ago into so many different industries.

Stokoe: We have a strong team. It's important we get product from farm to market especially our ag products. Good vision from the former port board members has contributed greatly to this success. There is a lot going on and we do a good job.

Tallman: There is a high turnover with jobs at the Port. There is a 50-75 percent turnover with jobs we need a tax base for people who are living and paying taxes here. Amazon data centers are a sugar rush, and we have seen it with Netflix and Blockbuster when within five years a business can go out of business. We need to make sure they stay in this community and make an investment in the community including a tax base for Morrow County.

Healy: One area is planning and looking to the future. That is an exceptional job we do at the Port. Strategic plans have a great purpose for infrastructure. We are very effective at planning.

Stokoe: We have done a good job at economic development, especially moving from food processing into other industries that have now come into the Port. We have very impressive long-term planning looking five-ten-fifteen years down the road.

Q: Do you feel it's important to keep county citizens informed of Port activities and businesses and how could the Port keep citizens better informed of its activities?

Stokoe: We put out the Port report but there are certain things we cannot discuss in public meetings. There are non-disclosure agreements and companies very careful about their process. As soon as able we try to get that information out. Commissioners realize keeping the community informed is imperative and

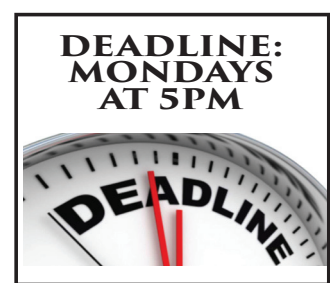
we are working diligently to make that happen.

Tallman: I have reached out to the Port and have been avoided because I wanted specific information. I was ignored trying to find out how much people pay and what the Port is doing. I have an issue with the Port of Morrow being a public entity and signing nondisclosures. That is a huge conflict of interest that needs to be addressed. Those nondisclosures are not in the best interests of the county residents and nondisclosures need to be addressed for a public entity.

Healy: Communication is very difficult skill for a public entity. You can always do a better job. For years we did a horrible job and recognized it. We brought a communications person on and she does a wonderful job with communications. Do we need to improve? Yes, we do. We are just so busy working on a job and then put it on the shelf and start on the next one.

Weiss: Commutations is very important. Erika (Erika Lasater, Port Communications Manager) does a terrific job on getting out what the Port is doing and what it has done. The biggest issue is what is the plan. Somebody has property near the Port they can see activity around the Port area. They want to know if the activity or purchases are going to affect their property. What is going to happen to my property if the Port is doing something next door? What is happening and is my property going to lose value based on what is being done? And they can't get an answer to that question from the Port. These people need to know.

Kilkenny: It is about relationships and doing things in the open and engaging everyone. The Army Depot is an example. When a decision is made to leave the property to the Port, and the county and the tribes and Umatilla County are not aware of it at the time. How can something like this happen? You have to have trust and engage people.



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