

Port of Morrow candidates' forum



Danny Kearns



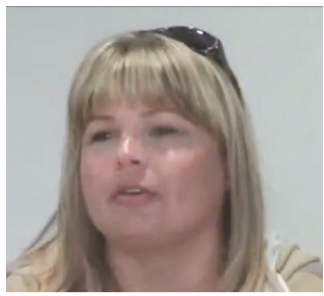
Rick Stokoe



Joel Peterson



Abe McNamee



Heather Bishop



J. Fletcher Hobbs

-Continued from PAGE ONE

ricultural mechanic turned business owner, underscored the Port's role as the "backbone of agriculture" and his intent to apply problem-solving skills to keep operations smooth.

Heather Bishop, running for position 1, is an Irrigon native and city council member in Irrigon. She says she is driven by a passion for uniting the county's divided communities and prioritizing youth. She noted, "The Port of Morrow doesn't survive without Morrow County, and Morrow County would be really not in a great place without the Port."

Incumbent Rick Stokoe, running for re-election in position 1, leaned on his decades of service, emphasizing job creation, infrastructure investment, and sustainable resource management. Stokoe said "We have made meaningful progress at the Port, helping local industries grow and supporting career pathways for young people."

The forum proceeded with four predetermined questions, each candidate given two minutes to respond, followed by audience and online questions.

The first question challenged candidates to recite the Port's mission statement and explain how they would represent all of Morrow County, not just one community.

McNamee admitted unfamiliarity with the mission statement but stressed that the Port serves the entire county, not individual towns.

Peterson read part of the mission statement, focusing on economic development, job creation and water issues, and highlighted the need for collaboration despite disagreements.

Kearns simplified the mission as a bridge between industry and community, advocating for youth-focused initiatives. One of his passions is entrepreneurship and he believes anyone can start up a business and succeed.

Hobbs outlined the Port's mission to build infrastructure and attract diverse businesses for economic stability. He emphasized better communication to involve all communities and offered to visit Heppner and Irrigon to address local needs.

Bishop echoed the importance of youth, proposing internships and education to connect communities.

Stokoe highlighted the Port's role as a key driver of regional economic development, focusing on creating family-wage jobs. He promised to bring stability, drawing on his experience in fostering teamwork among public leaders.

The second question addressed potential conflicts of interest.

Peterson said he had none; he noted his Bank of Eastern Oregon role but pledged to recuse himself from financial decisions.

Kearns disclosed his pump shop's business with the Port and interest in a new venture at the Port's

airport, promising to recuse himself if needed.

Hobbs, whose crop harvesting business indirectly supports Port-affiliated operations, saw no direct conflicts but vowed zero tolerance for corruption and dishonesty.

Bishop cited her city council role as a potential conflict, committing to recusal when necessary and vowing to do the right thing.

Stokoe, serving on various statewide boards, confirmed with the state ethics commission that his roles, including as a police chief, posed no conflicts of interest.

McNamee, with no direct Port ties, mentioned his water district role but saw no issues, promising recusal if required.

Water safety, a critical issue due to nitrate contamination, was the focus of the third question. "How can you ensure the Port acts responsibly with issues like ground water and drinking water?" Rosenbalm asked.

Kearns, living on a well with high nitrate levels, stressed transparency and solutions like better filtration or deeper wells and says he believes there is a solution, but it may take some time.

Hobbs acknowledged the Port's contribution to nitrates but framed it as a broader human issue, advocating for community-driven solutions.

Bishop proposed large-scale reverse osmosis and regular testing, drawing from her children's access to clean well water in Echo and saying she would like to see that quality.

Stokoe clarified that the Port contributes only 4.5 percent to nitrate issues and has invested millions in mitigation efforts, collaborating with the county and water consortium. He acknowledged some problems and past mistakes but emphasized there is more to the story. He noted that nitrate issues predated the Port's existence and affirmed the Port's commitment to resolving them.

Bishop proposed large-scale reverse osmosis and regular testing, drawing from her children's access to clean well water in Echo and saying she would like to see that quality. Stokoe stressed that shutting down the Port is not an option, as it would harm agriculture and other dependent sectors, stating the need to continue operations to sustain the economy.

McNamee, from Irrigon, stressed the need for cost-effective cleanup methods for nitrate pollution before stricter state regulations are enforced. He noted that while the Port's water requires cleanup, the Port isn't solely responsible, as agricultural practices have long contributed to nitrate issues. He emphasized the importance of clean water.

Peterson highlighted his claim that the Port is committed to basically zero-nitrate goals through storage facilities and ongoing research and is researching the most cost-effective ways to solve the problem. He said getting potable water to people is important. He also praised the clean water consortium.

The final formal question compared enterprise

zone agreements to strategic investment program (SIP) agreements.

Hobbs expressed mixed feelings, favoring small businesses over large corporations benefiting from tax breaks. He believes that small businesses pay into the community faster, better and more than when the enterprise zone program is used.

Bishop, less familiar with SIPs, valued enterprise zone funds' community benefits but committed to learning better and more efficient ways to run the Port.

Stokoe defended the enterprise zones, highlighting their nearly identical structure and essential role in attracting major businesses like Amazon to the Port. He noted that large companies have historically chosen the Port due to these enterprise zone agreements. He also mentioned that many agreements with these businesses include bonding provisions to support local initiatives, such as the school bond currently on the ballot.

McNamee acknowledges the economic benefits of large businesses but is concerned about their potential to strain housing and infrastructure. He warns that if these businesses leave for better opportunities, the community could be left with unaffordable burdens. He advocates for sustainable growth to balance these risks.

Peterson saw both as beneficial, with SIPs offering flexibility in fund allocation, citing infrastructure improvements across communities. Payments in lieu of taxes have turned out to be positive, he said.

Kearns compared enterprise zones to risky stock investments and advocated for supporting small businesses as a safer long-term strategy, likening them to mutual funds. He expressed his desire to serve as an ambassador for small businesses and all businesses relocating to the area.

An online question asked about candidates' attendance at Port meetings in the past six months.

Bishop and McNamee admitted to attending none, citing recent decisions to run but pledging future engagement.

Stokoe, with a decade on the commission, missed few meetings, always reviewing minutes or videos. Peterson attended all but one since his appointment to the Port.

Kearns said he had never been to a Port meeting but will change if elected.

Hobbs remotely observed two board meetings to assess board dynamics and felt confident in the board's good-faith efforts, which influenced his decision to run.

The forum ended with each candidate's closing remarks and a final pitch to the voters.

Stokoe reiterated his commitment to jobs and clean water, framing the Port as a model for rural success, and expressed his desire to run for re-election because there is more to do.

McNamee positioned

himself as a community member invested in the county's future, with no personal gain at stake.

Peterson praised the Port's staff and infrastructure, offering his collaborative experience.

Kearns focused on outreach and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth, vowing to champion small businesses.

Hobbs emphasized his role as a public servant accountable to voters, promising fresh perspectives.

Bishop pledged passion and long-term thinking for future generations, especially on water and community unity.

The forum, concluding around 7:30 p.m., showcased a diverse group of candidates united by a commitment to Morrow County's economic vitality and environmental stewardship.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF MORROW PROBATE DEPARTMENT
In the Matter of the Estate of: CAROLE JEAN STEAGALL, Deceased, CASE No: 25PB02841
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned individuals have been appointed as co-personal representatives of the estate of Carole Jean Steagall, deceased.

All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the undersigned co-personal representatives in care of the law office of Bendixsen Law, P. C., attorneys for the co-personal representatives at 245 E. Main St. Suite E, Hermiston, OR 97838, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the record of the court, the co-personal representatives, or the attorneys for the co-personal representatives. Dated and first published on May 7, 2025. s/Lauren Lopez and Rocky Steagall Co-Personal Representatives c/o Cameron Bendixsen, Attorney for Co-Personal Representatives Bendixsen Law, P.C. 245 E. Main St. Suite E Hermiston, OR 97838 Tele: 541-567-5564 Published May 7, 2025 affid 1c

PUBLIC NOTICE MORROW COUNTY LAND USE HEARING

THE MORROW COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION will hold the following hearings of public interest on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Bartholomew Building located at 110 N Court St, Heppner, OR 97836. For information on meeting participation via Zoom, please visit the Planning Department website <https://www.co.morrow.or.us/pc> and click on Agenda, and the Zoom link will be located within the agenda dated for this hearing.

Conditional Use Permit CUP-N-389-25: Kimberly Renteria, Applicant, and Owner.
Conditional Use Permit to allow the storage and operation of a commercial trucking business on a residential property. The property is described as Tax Lot 210 of Assessor's Map 5N26E36. The subject parcel is zoned Rural Residential (RR) and is located outside the City of Irrigon's urban growth boundary (UGB). Criteria for approval include Morrow County Zoning Ordinance (MCZO) Article 3 section 3.040, Rural Residential RR1, and Article 6 section 6.050. G, Standards Governing Conditional Uses, Home Occupations.

Conditional Use Permit CUP-N-390-25: Juan Rodriguez, Applicant, and Owner.
Conditional Use Permit to allow the storage and operation of a commercial trucking business on a residential property. The property is described as Tax Lot 202 of Assessor's Map 4N25E14C. The subject parcel is zoned Farm Residential (FR) and is located outside the City of Boardman's urban growth boundary (UGB). Criteria for approval include Morrow County Zoning Ordinance (MCZO) Article 3 section 3.041, Farm Residential FR2, and Article 6 section 6.050. G, Standards Governing Conditional Uses, Home Occupations.

Land Use Decision LUD-S-083-25 and Variance V-S-057-25: Mary Kay Bellamy, Applicant, and John Flynn, Owner: The property is described as tax lot 3704 of Assessor's Map 2S 26E. The property is zoned Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) and located approximately 1/4 mile east of the Heppner city limits. The request is to site an approximately 40-foot-tall radio transmission tower and 48 ft² support building. The request includes a variance to seek relief from the minimum side yard setback. Criteria for approval include Morrow County Zoning Ordinance (MCZO) Section 3.010 Exclusive Farm Use and Section 7.200(B) Major Variance.

Copies of the staff reports and all relevant documents will be available on or before May 20, 2025. For more information, please contact Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director by email at tmabbott@morrowcounty.or.gov or Kaitlin Kennedy, Code Compliance Planner at kkennedy@morrowcounty.or.gov or by phone at (541) 922-4624.

DATED this 1st day of May 2025
MORROW COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Publish Date: EO - May 7th, 2025; Gazette Times - May 7th, 2025 Published May 7, 2025 affid 1c

FORM LB-1 NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

A public meeting of the IRFPD 6-604 will be held on May 12th, 2025 at 7:30pm at the lone Fire Hall in lone, Oregon. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 as approved by the IRFPD Budget Committee. A summary of the budget is presented below. A copy of the budget may be inspected or obtained at MCGG in lone, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. This budget is for an annual budget period. This budget was prepared on a basis of accounting that is the same as the preceding year.

Contact: Sharon Camarillo Telephone: 541-720-6096 Email: irfpd@outlook.com

FINANCIAL SUMMARY - RESOURCES			
TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS	Actual Amount 2023-2024	Adopted Budget This Year 2024-2025	Approved Budget Next Year 2025-2026
Beginning Fund Balance/Net Working Capital	565,000	384,000	672,052
Fees, Licenses, Permits, Fines, Assessments & Other Service Charges			
Federal, State and all Other Grants, Gifts, Allocations and Donations			
Revenue from Bonds and Other Debt			
Interfund Transfers / Internal Service Reimbursements			
All Other Resources Except Current Year Property Taxes			
Current Year Property Taxes Estimated to be Received	292,984	304,482	299,940
Total Resources	857,984	688,482	971,992
FINANCIAL SUMMARY - REQUIREMENTS BY OBJECT CLASSIFICATION			
Personnel Services	4,300	4,000	4,000
Materials and Services	166,940	175,940	172,000
Capital Outlay			
Debt Service			
Interfund Transfers	401,744		100,000
Contingencies	10,000	10,000	10,000
Special Payments			
Unappropriated Ending Balance and Reserved for Future Expenditure	275,000	502,542	685,992
Total Requirements	857,984	688,482	971,992
FINANCIAL SUMMARY - REQUIREMENTS AND FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES (FTE) BY ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT OR PROGRAM *			
Name of Organizational Unit or Program	FTE for that unit or program		
General Fund	565,000	458,482	791,992
FTE			
Equipment & Capitol Fund	292,984	230,000	180,000
FTE			
Not Allocated to Organizational Unit or Program			
FTE			
Total Requirements	857,984	688,482	971,992
Total FTE			

Published May 7, 2025 affid 1c

The Town of Lexington is now accepting letters of interest for Lexington Town Council Position 4. Letters of interest can be emailed to lexington.oregon@gmail.com or turned into the Lexington Town Hall on Monday - Thursday from 8:00am - 5:00pm, any questions can be directed to Town Recorder Autum Crumpton (541) 989-8515. February 5, 2025 utf

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