

# Candidates for Vernonia City Council answer questions on issues

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set policy; to work cooperatively with other councilors, the mayor and the city administrator. And, to make good decisions based on facts and common sense, stay within budget and, if possible, decrease instead of increase spending, and be able to make difficult decisions; which may mean not filing an open position.

**Nicks** – Serving the citizens of Vernonia, not personal agendas.

**Smith** – I believe the council is to set policy and procedures and to oversee the city administrator. Also the council is a representative of the community so they have to listen to the citizens and try to make the most logical and best decision

for the majority. You can't please everybody but you have to make the best decision possible.

**Tschache** – Someone that listens to the people they represent and then synthesizes those ideas into processes and projects that will benefit the most possible citizens. You need to pay attention to the business of the city and offer enough transparency, creating an attitude of trust. I have unique abilities in having spent so many years as a Systems Analyst and even a Systems Manager in the Information Technology and Services world. Just like a Systems Analyst, a councilor has to constantly stay current, be discerning and keep a finger on the

pulse of the city.

## 5. How do you think the city's tight financial situation could be handled?

**Ball** – In our current fiscal situation, the city must provide those services mandated by our city charter first. While some additional services may see a reduction in funding, my hope is, given some time to build the budget back up, we can begin to increase those secondary service budgets. Our first step toward this recovery may be providing policies and procedures to guide staff and council in decisions impacting the budget. Creation of policy through research and careful study is a better method than making decisions "off the cuff". Precedents that have previously been established this way have been hard to back away from.

**Burch** – City council needs to be able to make the tough decisions and be able to say no to things they just can't afford. We need to re-evaluate how money is being spent and see if we can't budget tighter.

**Helmer** – One thing being done is the funds verification report; where departments have to have spending approved prior to purchases. The other thing is the "hold" on spending will be beneficial. The belt tightening is a long time coming and overdue. The positive of the tight financial situation is that it provides opportunities for citizens to step up and help fill in the gaps.



**Ed Johnson**

**Johnson, E.** – First of all, we need to find more revenue, ways to generate or bring in revenue without it costing the average citizen of the community. We also need to look for ways to curtail spending.



**Steve Johnson**

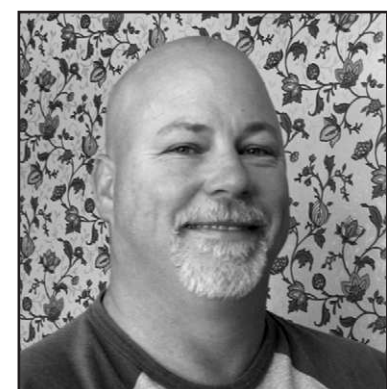
**Johnson, S.** – By looking carefully at the budget. Are things necessary? Are there other options that would meet the need? We need to look at available options, like the state's surplus program, and discuss decisions with the people affected and be mindful of the concerns of everyday citizens we're representing and serve their best interest. I think I have

an ability to understand a solid versus a false premise argument. I am able to use good critical thinking.



**Marilyn Nicks**

**Nicks** – We need fiscal responsibility and spending accountability. The city needs a purchasing program. We need to make sure we have the tools to do the job.



**Ernie Smith**

**Smith** – I think the city administrator has made one of the first steps by scrutinizing spending and like I said earlier, we have to start thinking outside the box, such as using private contractors to do some work instead of doing everything in-house where you have hidden costs.



**Burt Tschache**

**Tschache** – Firstly, we need to bring in some light, green industries that will create jobs and spread the burden of the infrastructure costs, so we can all pay more reasonable monthly bills. I believe the Learning Center can be used

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Brad Witt is bringing business and economic development to our district. Capital formation, workforce development and community investments are putting his constituents back to work.

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Brad Witt knows that investments made in education create successful careers, competitive businesses and a strong economy. His advocacy for quality education earned us the "Education District" nickname.

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**Marilyn Nicks**

**Vernonia City Council**

Paid for by Marilyn Nicks