Voters Guide November 4, 2014 Wood County WV

This candidate information is brought to you by the League of Women Voters of Wood County as a public service. Candidate responses are printed exactly as received, including spelling, grammar and content.  Candidates’ responses were limited to 60 words.

**CANDIDATES FOR WOOD COUNTY COMMISSION**

**CANDIDATE: WAYNE DUNN**

Party: Democratic

Biography

I am a local businessman and dentist, having lived in the area most of my life. I am an army officer and helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam. My wife Kay and I have three wonderful daughters. I grew up on a Pettyville farm with 4-H, sports and hunting and fishing. My life has been one of service.

1. What is your opinion of the County Commission’s current meeting schedule?

Response: Achieving an efficient, effective and well run government is a major responsibility of a commissioner. Wood County had 2-3 times the meetings of other counties,often with light agendas. We even now have more meetings than any WV county. By reducing needless meetings, availability to public needs are met efficiently and we save time and money with county departments.

2. Are there any changes in state laws regarding county government that you feel would benefit Wood County?

Response: Three of laws are:  1-assault forensic law exam - protects women from sexual assault  2-punish school board law-was rescinded. It financially penalized school board if assessor appraised  property at <54% of value. 3- change in TIF projects-assessor doesn't have to count individual personal property in base assessed value, thus saving much time and effort.

3. Do you think the county is adequately prepared to deal with an industrial accident or natural disaster? Why or why not?

Response: Wood County is reasonably prepared to deal with disasters. Local plants have plans and practice emergency preparedness. The Wood County Commission has a fulltime emergency planner in Ed Hupp and the 9-11 Center. Simulated emergencies occur annually. The broad-membered LEPC meets monthly. However, a major emergency is normally chaotic and will challenge our community, potentially beyond our immediate capabilities.

**CANDIDATE: ROBERT “BOB” TEBAY**

Party: Republican

Biography

I have a B.S. Degree from WVU in Business Administration, and have served as County Commissioner for 12 years. I am a veteran; (1st Lt. US Army) and an Eagle Scout. My experience includes having been a bank director of Wesbanco and Commercial Banking & Trust for several years. I am presently in the apartment rental business in Wood County.

1. What is your opinion of the County Commission’s current meeting schedule?

Response: I am not entirely familiar with the commissioners meeting schedule and I am sure most of the citizens of Wood County do not know what days they meet. I feel it is important that the Commission meetings are open and made available to anyone who wishes to see and meet with them.

2. Are there any changes in state laws regarding county government that you feel would benefit Wood County?

Response: I feel that the tax law on personal property should be repealed. The tax on personal property is regressive and certainly not conducive to new business and people moving into our state.

3. Do you think the county is adequately prepared to deal with an industrial accident or natural disaster? Why or why not?

Response: I believe the emergency respondents in Wood County are the best trained and equipped in WV. However, consideration should be given to special needs that might be required by the coming “Cracker Plant” and the increase of well drilling in our area.

**CANDIDATES FOR WOOD COUNTY CLERK**

**CANDIDATE: BOB BUCHANAN**

Party: Republican

Biography

For the past thirty years I have owned and operated an accounting/financial planning practice located here in West Virginia serving clients in West Virginia, Ohio and Florida, managing millions of dollars for individuals and businesses. This valuable experience has prepared me to provide leadership to the office of the Wood County Clerk, without a learning curve.

1. Fewer than 1 in 5 of Wood County’s registered voters voted in the May primary election. What should be done to encourage more voters to participate in elections?

Response: Several roadblocks to voter turnout currently exist, education and apathy being two major issues. First I propose that the clerk’s office provide voter education classes throughout the county. Additionally, I would like to launch initiatives with youth to prepare them for future voting responsibilities. Finally, organizing a volunteer poll transport service will assist with getting voters to the polls.

2. With the many functions delegated to the County Clerk’s office, what changes would you like to see to facilitate its operations?

Response: I recommend hiring two accounting professionals to prepare monthly financial statements for the elected officials and county departments, while also offering their services to non-profit organizations saving them money while making money for the county. I would also mandate to all staff continuing education in election laws, estate laws and counseling techniques to better serve citizens.

3. What is the one thing you most want voters to know and consider when voting?

Response: The office is vital to the smooth and proficient operation of the county government. Therefore, it is imperative that the clerk provide leadership with the ability to think outside the box and develop a cohesive team of dedicated public servants.

**CANDIDATE: MARK RHODES**

Party: Democratic

Biography

I began working for Wood County in November 1984 as a Correctional Officer, 2001 as Chief Tax Deputy and 2005 as a Deputy Clerk. I was appointed by the County Commission August 1, 2013 to replace retiring Clerk Jamie Six. I have worked in all aspects of the County Clerk’s Office, including Record Room, Recording Office, Probate, Elections and Finance.

1. Fewer than 1 in 5 of Wood County’s registered voters voted in the May primary election. What should be done to encourage more voters to participate in elections?

Response: We need to stress that every vote cast by a registered voter counts. Many people feel their vote does not make a difference. In 2004, the race for Sheriff was decided by seventeen votes. In 2008, a tie for House of Delegates was decided by a flip of the coin.

2. With the many functions delegated to the County Clerk’s office, what changes would you like to see to facilitate its operations?

Response: The Probate Office needs to be moved to a larger area to permit a third deputy clerk and to provide more privacy to the Personal Representative handling the estate. Current staff is cross trained and can be shifted to cover whichever office is the busiest to better serve the public.

3. What is the one thing you most want voters to know and consider when voting?

Response: I will continue to work to ensure the integrity of the election process and operations of the County Clerk’s office is held to the highest standard.

**CANDIDATES FOR VIENNA CITY COUNCIL**

**NONPARTISAN ELECTION TO FILL ONE VACANT SEAT**

**CANDIDATE: TOM AZINGER**

Biography

Born Wood County. Lived in Vienna 40 years. Eagle Scout. Graduate PHS and WVU. Four children and 17 grandchildren. Small business owner. WV House of Delegates until 12/31/14. Delegate Committees: Government Organization, Veterans, Banking, Insurance, Small Business and Seniors. This experience gives me insight on how to better interact with State Government.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: No. We need long range plans, 5-10 and 15 years. A study done some 15 years or so ago which called for larger tanks, more preparedness for growth, and the replacement of water and sewer lines. These lines in my neighborhood are shut down frequently. They are well beyond their intended life span, and need replaced.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: A survey in the Newsletter would help ascertain the citizens interest and concerns. Another would be quarterly town hall meetings. Each meeting could concentrate on a particular area of interest. Speakers with expertise in the subject matter could be invited. The more people the better. Apathy needs to be overcome.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: We want to make Vienna as inviting as possible for new business to come into our city. We need to have as few regulations as possible with competitive tax structures. Also we want to make living in Vienna a good place to be with the most efficient delivery of services-water, sewer, police, fire service and beautification.

**CANDIDAATE: ROGER CONLEY**

Biography

I am a life long resident of Wood County. Married to Katherine for 40 years.

We have three sons and five grandchildren .I own and operate Conley Fabrication LLC.

We are a manufacturer of transportation equipment and other specialty items. I have been

in upper management positions most of my carrier prior to starting our own business in 2010.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: I think the current infrastructure needs are adequate, however our landscape is changing.

The oil and gas industry is at our steps. The Cracker is becoming more of a reality with each passing day. These changes will require continuous improvements and updates. Any upgrades must be part of the annual budget process. Action through planning, not reaction by surprise.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: By making the residents feel like part of the overall process. Home Rule if enacted would be an example. Share a percentage of the additional revenues with the citizens to help offset the 1% sales tax , allowing the extra revenue to come from shoppers outside the city. The 1% is then a investment not just another tax.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: I believe government including our city must be run like a successful business. We are looking at potentially unprecedented growth in our area. The growth will have to be managed. Expenditures made must be made on best business practice by knowing and spending based on  the return on our investment. I will bring a business persons perspective to city council.

**CANDIDATE: LISHA M. CONNY**

Biography

Lisha Conny is a Graduate of PHS, receiving her Bachelor’s degree from University of S.C., and her Master’s Degree from University of Charleston (2014) with over 20 years of marketing and management experience.  She currently is an owner and Vice-President of TelConn, Inc., a telecommunications infrastructure company on Rosemar Road.  Her great-grandfather (Bibbee) was a long time Vienna city councilman.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: I feel the infrastructure needs are adequately addressed, as the focuses to improve the water tanks, roads & bridges, flood plains, and commercial properties have been tirelessly progressed.  Strategic plans to further envelope park improvements, wireless meters, updated maintenance garages, and city cleanliness & beautification should continue.  Vienna is beautiful, welcoming and its safety for all families is prevalent.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: Resident involvement in civic life is elevated when residents are included in the strategic planning for the city and asked for their perspectives.  Young families and seniors alike need to have safe, dynamic areas and events for our community in which to be involved.  Continuing to provide engaging opportunities for Vienna residents to socialize, increases awareness of our community.

 3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: As a member of City Council, I would like to help stimulate our local economy so that our residents will benefit from the economic growth.  Additional businesses will generate a variety of jobs and will provide incremental income that can be spent in our community.  I would also work to extend the social activities that build a stronger, safer community.

**CANDIDATE: MIKE ELAM**

Biography

I grew up as a Greenmont Grizzly, Jackson General, and Parkersburg Big Red, and now I am a Neale Eagle daddy.  My wife and I have been married for 11 years and have two sons.  I am the Administrator at Cedar Grove Assisted Living and have been in the healthcare field for 15 years.  I graduated from Marshall University.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: Since our infrastructure is heavily used, there will always be the need to improve, repair, and replace.  Areas that I think need to be addressed are the streets that are still flooding when it rains and the sidewalks that are in poor condition.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: The focus should be engaging our population and giving them a way to be informed and offer feedback.  Email and texting are effective ways to communicate with large groups of people.  Involvement in the life of our city, whether it’s a city council meeting or a family event, is about communication.  Attendance is not necessarily an indicator of public interest.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: I’m a family guy and will focus on family events and topics. I can help bring organization, fairness, and structure to the Vienna Recreation program.  In any situation, I’m a person of action.  My pet-peeve is “this is how we’ve always done it”. If you keep doing what you’re doing, you’ll keep getting what you’re getting.

**CANDIDATE: LARRY GODFREY**

Biography

I am a native of WV. I have lived in Wood County for 52 years.  I have been a resident of Vienna for 12.  I retired from Dupont after 35 years. I served 12 years as an elected public official, 8 years on Parkersburg City Council, 4 years Wood County Board of Education.  I served as President of both organizations.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: How do you adequately address a 15 million dollar question in 60 words or less!  Vienna intercity infrastructure has now reached an age where it is in need of a concentrated effort to address major improvements.  Streets, storm sewers and water lines all have a need for extensive repairs, replacement or in some cases totally new construction.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: Vienna is truly blessed.  The residents of Vienna are involved in their city and community.  They work hard to make their community a great place to live, work, and play.  As for recreation, it's outstanding.  We all have a commitment  to our community to get involve and make a change. Join a civic group, committee, or run for public office.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: I would like to say the greatest honor a community can bestow upon an individual is to elect them to be their representative in local government.  I would be honored to represent the citizens of Vienna.  Representing your constituents is the only job you have.  Streets, storm sewers, water lines and attracting new businesses are major concerns.

**CANDIDATE: RENE IMLER**

Biography

 Rene Imler is a Vienna business owner of 7 years, a graduate of WVU Montgomery with a BS in Physics/Mathematics and a resident of Vienna for the past 9 years.  She has traveled extensively and held management positions with companies such as the Department of Defense, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Dell Computer Corporation.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: Overall I believe the infrastructure needs of the city are adequately addressed. As a firm proponent of continuous improvement, I do believe there is always room for improvement. Storm water management, particularly on some major thoroughfares, needs to be addressed. Peak travel time congestion on Grand Central Avenue is an issue from both a safety and convenience perspective.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: Look to develop our unique community identity instead of trying to copy those ideas currently being tried by the communities around us.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: My goals as a council member are fairly straight forward: provide fiscal responsibility and service excellence in city delivered services, maintaining quality of life while continuing to develop and enhance the city as desirable place to live and work, support our local businesses and provide an environment that encourages new business development.

**CANDIDATE: MIKE JACOBS**

Biography

 Currently retired from a local manufacturing plant.  Army military enlisted man (finished active duty 1972). Catholic Christian in faith. Farm Bureau member. Support ideas to help gain benefits for American Vets

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: Vienna as a city is ingenuously strong; we have in our city the best fire and police dept.,I believe in the world .

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: We should keep an open mind to this issue and pray they show up.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: Make room  for the work ethic in the community  and provide oversight for efficient government.

**CANDIDATE: MARGARET "PEGGY" MACE**

Biography

Peggy has been a Vienna resident since 1952. She has served two terms on city council, from 1989 to 1993 and 1997 to 2001.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: Yes, the infrastructure needs are being adequately addressed. City workers are continuously improving our roadways, bridges and water supply.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: I believe the addition of a Boys & Girls Club would encourage civic involvement. It would engage younger citizens and encourage the community to take an active interest in the city's youth.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: During my time as a member of city council, I would like to set the plans for a Boys & Girls Club in motion.

**CANDIDATE: JIM SIMS**

Biography

27 year employee City of Parkersburg retired, electrician by trade, supervisor building and grounds/ floodwall. Supervisor sanitation/ recycling designed, oversaw construction of the facility they now use. In my career worked with water and sewer treatment, festivals, traffic signal repair, grant writing, equipment ordering, personnel, budget preparation. Currently serve on Vienna planning commission and committee to develop emergency plan.

1. Do you feel that the infrastructure needs of the city are being adequately addressed? Please explain.

Response: With the upgrades to the sewer treatment pumping station, the upgrading of water meters and repairs to water storage tanks along with bridge repair at pond run on 28th street we are in pretty good shape although there are always issues with old piping underground.

2. What do you think would encourage more residents to be involved in the civic life of the city?

Response: To get more people involved is to let them know that their efforts are appreciated. When folks take pride and ownership of anything they become more involved. Also if they feel their concerns are being addressed and they see progress they will get and stay involved.

3. What do you want to accomplish as a member of City Council?

Response: As a member of council I am excited to work with present mayor and other council members. First of all I am a team player, but I want to make sure that  the concerns of all citizens senior and young alike are addressed the best and most cost effective for all. And to thank the citizens of Vienna for their vote.