

## Voters' Guide for Moorhead City Council Election on November 8, 2011



### Nancy Otto, 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council

#### 1) What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?

We've accomplished much during my 12 years of service on Moorhead City Council:

- 1) Over 2,000 new single family and twin homes built
- 2) 1,300 new apartment units added
- 3) \$115M in new commercial construction
- 4) We've gained over 5,600 new residents and our population is now 38,065

We have some serious issues ahead:

- 1) We must hold the line on spending to remain competitive with neighboring cities and stay within our budget because of the MN funding cutbacks.
- 2) We must continue home buyouts and building permanent levees to decrease our need for sandbag efforts. This gets us only partial protection.
- 3) We also need to continue with efforts to build a diversion which will protect us up to a 46.7 foot flood level. I represent Moorhead on the Diversion Joint Powers Authority.
- 4) We'll complete a RR underpass at 20/21<sup>st</sup> Street when we obtain \$34M in federal funding.
- 5) Long term plans are for an additional rail underpass at 11<sup>th</sup> Street in our downtown.
- 6) We have purchased the Aggregate property on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and will work to redevelop this 5+ acres for commercial and/or apartment building use.
- 7) We need to plan for the Oakport annexation in 2015 when 1,800 residents will need police, fire, street and sanitation services.

#### 2) Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?

I oppose this as it should be done at state level.

#### 3) How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?

We need to publish more information concerning our city's 4 foot higher elevation and the fact that many less properties will need flood insurance than our neighbors to the west.

We need to lobby for and maintain the disparity reduction credit program for border communities so our business property taxes remain low. We need to hold the line on spending to remain competitive with neighboring cities.

We need to stay in touch with business owners through the new Moorhead Business Association group.

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**Torail M. Boxley, 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council  
Did Not Respond**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We are affiliated with the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, North Dakota, and the United States.

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### Heidi Durand, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council

#### 1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?

I have served the people and the city of Moorhead for nearly 7 years on the Park Board working as a team with city and community leaders on numerous successful projects. Some of those projects include the Southside regional park and Soccer complex, the Miracle Field, Sports Center renovation, MB Johnson planning and redesign, as well as many others. The Park Board has a budget and I know what it is like to have to make cutbacks as well as how to find creative solutions to avoid seeing our parks and recreation opportunities suffer.

#### 2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?

Many people consider this issue a state issue and not a city issue. I disagree and would favor a domestic partner registry.

#### 2. How do you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?

Moorhead residents are demanding more choices be made available so their money can stay in Moorhead. I want to see a well-planned retail sector along I-94 that would capture travelers. We need to continually follow up with businesses that consider locating here but don't. We need to find out why and then make necessary changes to avoid potential losses in the future.

**Travis Reimche, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council**

**1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?**

I believe that the number one issue facing Moorhead is balancing the revenues available to the city. I have fifteen plus years of experience forecasting budgets, projecting revenues and managing financials, including non-profit, private and corporate businesses. My professional financial experience will be an asset to the City of Moorhead in the next four years, as the city will inevitably face additional revenue cuts from the State of Minnesota. I have had the wonderful opportunity of being a manager for a large grocery chain, a Regional Manager of multiple stores, a Director for a local college and currently I am serving as the Manager- Patient Financial Service for the largest rural health care provider in the nation. I have managed, hired, trained and developed hundreds of employees across many industries. I am looking forward to the opportunity to serve the City of Moorhead and the citizens.

**2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?**

My stance is the current Moorhead City Council voted correctly on issue of the domestic partnership registry for seniors. This is an important issue that should not be managed at the local level, but directed at the state level for this to be more than a symbolic effort. While this is my opinion, there are still options for supporters of the domestic registry. The first effort would be to start a petition, garnish enough signatures and the voters of Moorhead can decide if this is a city issue by passing this option or voting the option down thus believing that this is a topic that should be managed at the state level.

**3. How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?**

I want to be a part of the discussions with these potentially expanding or new businesses. My professional experience of business development, negotiating leases, marketing plans and knowing what business are using as deciding factors for location, will be an asset to the City of Moorhead. I believe the communication with the potential business is key and remembering that the business is the customer and we must provide stellar customer service. We must remember that customer service to the citizens and businesses of Moorhead will serve as a major factor for future successful growth of Moorhead. As a Director of Community and Career Development, I would always speak of internal pride. Moorhead has a lot to be proud of when it comes to education, the flood protection and the services it provides to the citizens. As members of our community it is up to us to promote the great things happening in Moorhead.

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### Dan Hunt, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council

**1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?**

I was elected to the Council in 2003. I have been serving the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward effectively for the past 7½ years. My police experience and training include budgeting, scheduling, conflict resolution and strategic planning. This training and experience gives me the skills needed to serve as your representative on the City Council.

**2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?**

Oppose.

I believe that City government should be concerned about the basic City issues: Police, Fire, Streets and Parks. Domestic partners is an issue for State Government.

**3. How do you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?**

I believe that a comprehensive flood mitigation would go a long way in solving our recent down turn in building new houses and attracting new businesses. Up until our recent three years of flooding new houses were being built at a record pace. New businesses were being attracted to the areas of these new developments. Once flood mitigation has taken place we will be seen as a flood resistant city and get back in to the business of growing.

**Mike Hulett, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council**

**1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?**

I have lived in Moorhead for 49 years. I have previously served the community in many ways. I am prepared and ready to serve again. My service has included: two years as City Housing Inspector, thirteen years as City Human Resources Officer, active participation in the former Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, seven years on the Moorhead School Board, serving as a volunteer member of the successful All America City competition team, acting as a volunteer “voice” for commercials promoting Moorhead, serving on a Moorhead Housing Task Force, 10 years as a volunteer peace officer with the Clay County Police Reserve and 16 years as a part-time Clay County Deputy Sheriff. With this deep level of community volunteer experience, elected official experience, City staff experience, and 35 years of management experience, I will be at a 100% readiness level to begin my duties on the City Council on the first day.

**2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?**

In order to effectively respond to this question, it would be necessary to fully understand exactly who is eligible to be listed, what the contents of such a registry would include, where the registry would be compiled and maintained, and who would be responsible to keep it up to date. Furthermore, who would dispense information from the registry and under what conditions could the data be released or otherwise be treated as “public” information. Most important, for what purposes would the data therein be used? In discussions on this matter my first question would be: What specific benefits would the seniors entering their names on the registry obtain that they do not currently receive? In other words, what is the intent of the registry for the seniors and what examples are available of current negative consequences taking place due to such a registry not now being in place?

**3. How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?**

We must first identify alternate and more effective ways to demonstrate to business owners all of the competitive advantages of locating in Moorhead. Rather than simply providing businesses with the printed rules and regulations, we need to work closely with them, in an inviting manner, to find ways to not allow the “hard and fast” requirements to stand in the way. I believe we must identify every obstacle in front of businesses that might make them see Moorhead as a second choice, then do everything within reason to remove or lessen those obstacles. It could be ordinances, regulations, building code restrictions or any number of things that need to be thoroughly discussed and addressed. Let’s utilize the systems already in place more effectively. That includes the Economic Development Authority, City staff members and the Moorhead Business Association, as well as any new approaches such as incubators for fledgling new businesses.

**Greg Lemke, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council**

**1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?**

I feel that my 10 years of experience on the Council qualifies me to serve for another term. I have served on several boards and commissions through the Council and as a community member. I have served the city through some difficult times and as we face those difficult times again it is important to have the level of experience and leadership I have demonstrated, on the Council. My work and life history, Moorhead born and raised, 26 years in Law Enforcement to include several as a supervisor, working through crisis situations such as the floods and overseeing budgets and personnel issues. I have used my 10 years on the Council to advocate for Moorhead at the local and federal level and have formed relationships with people who can get projects accomplished for Moorhead.

**2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?**

I voted for the Domestic Partner Registry in Moorhead, I was a strong advocate and would continue that position. A DPR would show people that Moorhead truly is striving to be an inclusive community and welcoming to all people. I think this can be viewed as an economic issue as well as a human rights one. Many businesses look for areas to locate and/or expand based on the amenities that are offered and they try to attract people from all walks of life. Being more inclusive is seen as a positive by most forward thinking businesses, this also would bring some funds into the city with little to not cost to administer the program.

**3. How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?**

I would encourage the city and the EDA to work on better marketing; I would encourage city staff to regularly attend the Moorhead Business Association meetings. We need a better relationship with existing businesses. We are limited as to what we can offer financially but we can make sure we have the best city services in the area as well as amenities, such as parks and the arts. We need to invest in Moorhead if we expect businesses to do so.

**Bert Chamberlain, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council**

**1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?**

I have been a principal and educator for 30 years. Years of working with small and large budgets, renovations, hiring, terminating employees but more important to give and find support for staff. I have been on a variety of committees such as the Human Rights Committee and the Indian Education Program which are partners with the city. I have created programs that are successful. To do that you need to coordinate, inspire, be willing to delegate, trust people to do their job when they are given their parameters, keep timelines, and stay in budget. This city needs someone to have a vision, set goals, and go after them. Reacting to outside forces like floods and loud train noises is not a vision. The city needs me to help create an image worthy of national recognition. We are in fourth place compared to Fargo, West Fargo, and Dilworth and that needs to change now.

**2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?**

As far as I am concerned I believe human beings have the right to live whom they want to. Friends I grew up with from elementary school thru high school can attest to how I always supported and would not tolerate people insulting or pushing weaker people around or if they seemed different from others. So, it was a fit for me to be on the Moorhead School District Human Rights Committee and the Indian Education Committee. To hear one of the candidates say they did not think the city should be involved with the human rights committee I found extremely disappointing. Of course, any couple (including 51% of divorced parents) who choose to live together because of love and would want to register as a domestic partner has my 100% approval. Moorhead does not have such a registry I will make sure that happens.

**3. How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?**

Why do I keep hearing from business people that Moorhead city counsel is not overtly supportive or organized for business and housing? All you need to do is see the number of office buildings left empty. We have housing increases but why is there no student population growth like Fargo and West Fargo? City committee meetings do not know what the left and the right hand are doing. The same applies for the business world. There are business people who are unaware of loans, tax breaks and the great infrastructure Moorhead has. This city needs a strategic plan that unites business, university professors, the public school, council members, and citizens. This group must bring a vision for Moorhead, unite and organize information, be consistent and aggressive in acquiring retail business, light, and large industries. The city has structure but it is dysfunctional and we need a restructuring through strategic planning to reach our business goals.

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### Conrad Larson, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council

#### 1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?

I meet all of the stated qualifications. My campaign theme is based on correcting our current lost vision for growth in Moorhead. We have a road to nowhere with perfect streets, top notch curb and gutter, beautiful street lights, and no business. Plus we have empty buildings in our older industrial parks, and losing retail opportunities to West Fargo (Costco). Without light industrial, heavy industrial, and service industry growth, NEW JOBS we will continue to fall behind Dilworth in % of growth, Fargo and West Fargo in actual growth. Fargo is falling behind West Fargo as well so where does that leave Moorhead.

#### 2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?

My answer {oppose} Why! My position is that these choices are private matters between adults and their maker, not the city councils! I would vote against a measure like this if elected and it came before the council..

#### 3. How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?

I would redirect the economic development office to rethink their model and philosophy. I would change the criteria of what is currently required like minimum size of candidate companies. I would ask for a cost of maintaining our empty lot inventory and leverage those assets. Probable number one project would be to establish an incubator to foster and grow companies. Our neighboring communities have and or are starting incubators. Fargo has a very good viable incubator model on the NDSU campus that with our three great colleges we can do the same. A local business man has indicated a willingness to work with an incubator model offering his building as a possibility for a location for Moorhead's incubator. Moorhead is poised for growth with a different and viable new vision, we have many smart people with new ideas that need assistance that an incubator can bring to fruition. We not only have the brains to help, we have the buildings and the labor. Ask yourself when the last new manufacturing company and not retail moved or expanded in Moorhead.

**Steve Gerhztz, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Candidate, Moorhead City Council**

**1. What makes you feel qualified to run for Moorhead City Council?**

I have been involved in leadership roles in all the different organizations that I have been involved in throughout my career. In my business I have been in charge of making sure large projects stay within the budgets the owners have established and making sure they are delivered on time. I also work with all types and ranges of people from business owners, government leaders, engineers, contractors and the trade people that build the projects that we manage. In my business I have to be able to relate to all types of individuals and personalities to effectively deliver our projects on time and under budget.

What does Steve Gehrtz bring to the City Council? I would say that I have a vested interest in making sure we continue to provide the services that the citizens have come to expect from a great Community of Moorhead. I feel that this would be a great opportunity to use my skills in leadership and business to work with city staff, local builders and community leaders to promote business growth in the City of Moorhead as we weather through this soft economy and rising costs by providing a balance between taxes and fiscal responsibility with the city budget.

I will be able to provide that fresh voice for all residents of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward.

**2. Since more seniors are choosing to live together without marriage, would you favor or oppose a domestic partner registry in Moorhead? Why?**

I am not in favor of a domestic partner registry. I think who one chooses to live with is a personal matter and should not be an issue for the City Council. I do not feel that government should get involved in who one chooses to have for a roommate. This would just be another opportunity for the government to step into our personal lives. I feel that as individuals we should be able to make the choices for ourselves and this would be one more avenue for the government to track our personal choices.

**3. How would you encourage new and expanding businesses to locate in Moorhead?**

The City of Moorhead needs to do a better job of marketing the positive aspects of the community to business and investors.

In my personal business, we have developed projects that are fiscally stable due to various incentive programs. We have utilized federal historic tax credits, downtown storefront improvement CDGB programs, TIF incentives and renaissance zone tax incentives. We need to be able to offer a wide variety of these types of tax incentives to attract businesses and investments to the City of Moorhead. My goal would be to bring a fresh voice to the council as well as a collaborative effort to the Council to work together with city staff to promote the City of Moorhead and all its positive attributes to prospective residents as well as developing a friendly business climate both for the existing businesses and new businesses. I feel that the City of Moorhead needs to work as a team with local builders and developers make it possible to keep construction costs and services at a competitive rate.