

**Watchmen Voter Guide for City of Rathdrum: City Council - Seat 1**  
*\* Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire \**

→ [Matt Spindler has withdrawn from the race](#) ←

	<a href="#"><u>Darrell Rickard</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Neil G. Oliver</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Yevgeniy Pinchuk</u></a>
<b>1.</b> What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	My name is Darrell Rickard, and I am running for Rathdrum City Council #1, I was originally appointed in 2016 and then voted into the position in 2017. I now seek re-election. As a councilman, it is my goal to offer a balanced vote that is in the best interest for the citizens of Rathdrum, and I take this honorable duty very personally. As a long-term member of this community who has been a parent, business-owner, school district employee, first responder, EMT firefighter and a member of various community-centric groups, I promise I run solely for the good of the community and my vote is dedicated first and foremost to what is best for the city as a whole.	My name is Neil G. Oliver, resident of Rathdrum since June 1990 and I am running for Rathdrum City Council.	My name is Yevgeniy Pinchuk, and I am running for Rathdrum City Council Seat 1. I am running for this position to promote responsible growth and allow the local infrastructure (roads, utilities, schools, fire departments, etc.) a chance to catch up as well as to ensure that the city of Rathdrum enforces current ordinances that mitigate the impact and cost of growth on the current city residents.
<b>2.</b> How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	There are a few different things our city can continue to work on: -1. Communication – Our current communication efforts include inserts to the city water bills, website maintenance, the City Government Facebook page, and placing ads in the Coeur d’Alene Press. Still, I know we can fall short. Providing the city with correct and accurate, up-to-date information is vital! I would like to see, possibly, and increase in digital newsletters or even a physical mailing distribution (There are, of course, cost considerations with physical mail, so not sure if this is the best solve). In general, this is something we should continue to look to improve! -2. Traffic – There needs to be a solution for all the traffic, especially during peak traffic times. This is an issue that we continuously work on. Currently, the state, in conjunction with the city, is working on improving the city highways. We are also improving 3 major intersections	We have services that are failing to be kept at the good quality. The city needs to increase its budget to the public works department for snow plowing and figure out the water pressure decrease that several locations are suffering. The city also has a major traffic issue with the two highways running through the core of it that will just be getting worse, therefore the city needs to start pushing the elected state officials from our area and at the state level and the Idaho Transportation Department to get started with direct input from the elected officials and the city’s workers to determine how these two highways are going to be routed around the city so that we are not a corridor for all the traffic that is not wanting to specifically come through our beautiful town. The current traffic is unsustainable to a quality life in Rathdrum.	The City of Rathdrum could be improved by widening many of our congested roads as well as building of new parks and schools in the area. Something that was unfortunately missing from the recent update to the Comprehensive Growth Plan for the City of Rathdrum.

	<p>(Meyer and Hwy 53, Meyer and Lancaster, Meyer and Boekel). We should (and will) continue to review this problem on an on-going basis to determine future changes that will improve high traffic points.</p> <p>-3. City divide – I know growth is a hot-ticket item that’s causing quite a divide in the city. I am not sure, yet, how to improve this, but communication (see #1) is a place to start to make sure our citizens are informed. There is a lot of misinformation that seems to find itself in posts on social media, but I assure you that, while there are areas of improvement in Rathdrum (as with all cities), I believe our city to be a wonderful and strong town filled with great people! And I hope to find a way to encourage the same pride throughout the community.</p>		
<p><b>3. What are your views on the rapid growth of North Idaho? How should the city council manage growth?</b></p>	<p>The last few years have been exceptionally tough as our city ( and county) have seen an unimaginable growth rate bringing new issues like high-housing costs, increased priorities of road work, new annexations, and a lot of community discussion about the best ways to move forward. On the top of my mind, I’m thinking: how can we handle this growth in the smartest way? I do not agree with a predetermined ‘no’ or ‘yes’ vote on growth issues because this isn’t a black and white issue. There is no easy solve. I believe we need to keep housing affordable. We need a balance of housing and industry. And we need to keep a healthy economic climate.</p> <p>We also need to always be willing to invest in our infrastructure to keep up with any growth. I will always vote to give our police department everything needed to keep our city and citizens safe. Our city is certified as the 5<sup>th</sup> safest city in the state, thanks to our adequately staffed and equipped Rathdrum Police Department. Our Aquifer is tested weekly for volume and our water system is constantly being tested for safe consumption.</p>	<p>The city has limited to no control of growth outside city limits. However, inside city limits there are many things that can be done. The City can and should control the growth of the city to ensure that services remain without impact with all growth, i.e. never sacrifice the current resident’s living experience/quality of life in the city for new growth. If that means not annexing in new land that means so be it. More single family dwellings (R1 zoning) and larger lot sizes should be considered to help keep and make Rathdrum a desirable location for raising a family.</p>	<p>The rapid growth of North Idaho is not an isolated incident and largely influenced by the global pandemic and federal interventions. Attempting to address it through rapid local growth is unsustainable and frankly the wrong approach. The city council should manage growth through limited annexations and slower development approvals to observe impacts of development on the community, as well as updating the zoning ordinances to reflect the residents’ desire for less dense developments.</p>

	Our sewer is contracted with Post Falls, and we still have plenty of capacity <b>(The remainder of Mr. Rickard’s answer can be seen in his questionnaire)</b>		
<b>4.</b> In your opinion what best serves the public, elected officials, or appointed officials?	I believe both are important. However appointed officials should be in an advisory capacity only while elected officials have the final decision.	An elected official is absolutely the best as the public can determine the performance of each elected official and either vote them in or out again on their decisions. An appointed official is out of reach of the electorate and that is just not the best way to run a city.	I believe elected officials are better suited to serve the public but that involves the public staying engaged and informed on the local issues.
<b>5.</b> What role should the city council have in the design and authorization of new developments?	I believe this is a responsibility that should stay with the city council. The current process is that a developer meets with planning and zoning (accompanied with a public hearing where citizens can provide feedback), then when P&Z feels that the developer meets all current city codes and ordinances the committee provides a recommendation to the city council for final review and approval. These types of responsibilities are the reason we go through a vote in November and choose elected officials. We vote based on the understanding that these officials will dedicate their time to learning and understanding all city codes, rules, and laws and will advocate for, and vote with, the citizens best interest at heart.	A direct role. The streets and utilities put in the ground will belong to the city when the project is completed, thus the residents that already live in the town will be assuming a financial responsibility and must have a direct role through their representatives on the City Council.	The city council should have a major role in annexation and approval of new developments, adhering and respecting the wishes of the city residents for a slower, responsible growth approach. This includes defining zoning ordinances with less density, enforcing current ones which require significant impact fees to be collected, and planning for responsible future growth.
<b>6.</b> In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	I am very proud of our city’s services, and in my opinion, Rathdrum maintains services better than any of the surrounding areas. The services that are currently provided by the city are working for the public and should not be cut, eliminated or privatized.	No, at this time I don’t know of any services that I see falling into this.	I think the current city utilities and services should continue to be managed by the city. Additional utilities or expansion of current utilities should be performed by private enterprise. The bigger issue with municipal utilities is that they often allow private providers to function as a cartel or monopoly which impacts quality of service, so my aim would be to promote private free-market competition for any future utilities or expansions.

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<b>7.</b> Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities and why?	<p>There are two immediate concerns that come to mind when thinking about increasing water to rural communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financing the construction and maintenance of sewer and water access is a large undertaking and unless there is someone that can sponsor this it does not appear to be cost efficient for these communities (even if we had them pay for their own usage)</li> <li>2. There is a real possibility that these rural communities could be annexed by other surrounding cities – we would then be providing water and sewer for people who pay taxes to neighboring areas.</li> </ol> <p>Therefore, I believe access to city utilities should remain in the city limits as it is paid for by the city residents.</p>	<p>No. The people outside of the City of Rathdrum are not residents of Rathdrum and as such should not be covered by the services of the city nor under its authority.</p>	<p>Yes, water and sewage connections improve the quality of life for rural residents and insure access to sanitary conditions. If the residents are not opposed, the city should continue to increase availability of its services to neighboring rural communities.</p>
<b>8.</b> How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund but not raising taxes?	<p>I am proud to say we already do this in Rathdrum – we maintain a healthy reserve fund through successful budgeting. The city has not raised taxes in 4 years.</p>	<p>This is a truly difficult concept. A city should always try and keep taxes and service fees (the other unnamed tax) as low as possible at all times for the residents of Rathdrum. A reserve fund source of funding is by taxes or fees (a tax by another name) which means all people will need to pay more.</p>	<p>By monitoring spending, the current city administration has recklessly used COVID relief funds to expand the number of city employees and pet projects. The city council has funds and plans for a new city hall etc. and I would divert those funds to taking care of the city and its residents instead.</p>
<b>9.</b> What is your opinion of the increased push for affordable housing?	<p>First and foremost, let me define my view of affordable housing – regular neighborhoods with modestly priced houses. I do not agree with high-density anything and vow to reflect that in my votes moving forward. That being said, I believe the push for affordable housing (remembering my definition) is extremely important.</p> <p>While I hope that all who are new to Rathdrum are enjoying our beautiful city, it also breaks my heart to hear stories of our children who have become adults and are being priced out of the city they grew up in. Or our older citizens who can no longer afford the town they’ve lived in for decades.</p> <p>Understandably this is a frequent topic of discussion in the community and there is no</p>	<p>Housing should be primarily for single family dwellings (R1) with a limited amount of R2 and possibly some R3. The current push for affordable housing will diminishes the quality of life as a whole for all residents in town.</p>	<p>I think everyone wants more affordable housing in the area to support the growth and provide an opportunity for the younger generation to realize the dream of home ownership. I also witnessed a lot of new affordable developments selling at the higher end of the market, meaning that we are not addressing the affordability issue in Rathdrum with all of the new annexations and developments.</p>

	playbook to determine the right and wrong answers – but it does not feel right to do nothing when so many citizens are being affected.		
<b>10.</b> How should the public’s input be taken into consideration and implemented in the decision-making process?	I believe the public’s input should be taken into consideration 100% of the time. Recently, our citizens provided input through town hall meetings and surveys letting us know that there was strong opposition against high density developments. This public input gave me the insight and opportunity to vote to eliminate R3 zoning from our comprehensive plan earlier this month – this means that moving forward builders can no longer request to build high density developments and large apartment complexes!	Residents of the City of Rathdrum should always be given the opportunity to express their concerns and thoughts at the scheduled meetings. If an event comes up that needs more opportunity to review the city may need to setup a special meeting to work through the event.	The public’s input should be major factor in forming the decision of the city council. One of the main reasons I am running is because this Spring we saw the city council hold multiple events on growth and even with an overwhelming negative public response, continued to push with their smart growth agenda. My goal is to engage with the community in person, online and through other mediums to gauge the community desires on new growth.
<b>11.</b> Is there anything in your personal or business life that would be a conflict of interest in your ability to serve the people of this city?	No, serving the people of this city is both an honor and a priority for me. There is nothing in my personal or business life that would be a conflict of interest.	I have no known conflicts of interest that I know of, although being a resident of the city there is always a chance that during the business of the city is done that a conflict will occur. A person simply steps back from the meeting if a conflict arises.	No. I am a resident of city of Rathdrum, my kids attend local schools, and I am very invested in promoting responsible growth.
<b>12.</b> Should the concept of “equitable outcome” be implemented as a part of the city council’s decision-making process? Why or why not?	Our city’s decision-making process should always be in the best interest of the members of the community!	I only believe in equal protection under the law and government should never make an exception. Equitable outcome is anti-American and anti-individual liberty.	There are very limited times where equitable outcomes should dictate the city council decision making process; most of the times, the decisions relate to survival, sanitation, and/or public welfare. The rest of the time the city council should focus on equality and not equity. As equity often requires major government intervention at the expense of individual liberties.
<b>13.</b> What role should the health board	I believe the health boards policies and recommendations should be valued and considered, however final decisions on behalf of our citizens should remain with the city council.	None, a city’s responsibility is to provide basic services to the residents of within its city limits.	I think the health board should have an important advising capacity to the city council decision making process, but ultimately believe that it is up to the

<p>play in the city council's decision-making process?</p>			<p>council to weigh the health board input as well other relevant input before coming to a decision.</p>
<p><b>14.</b> What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?</p>	<p>My name is Darrell Rickard. I am a native of the Inland Northwest and I have lived in the beautiful city of Rathdrum for nearly 30 years with my wife. I have always been an active member of this community.</p> <p>I was the small business owner of Twin Lakes Printing in Rathdrum for five years; at which time I was heavily involved in the Rathdrum Chamber of Commerce. I was a volunteer firefighter and EMT for Rathdrum Rural Fire District and during that time I was named Firefighter of the Year and Business of the Year. I was a member of the Lions Club. I worked as Transportation Director for Lakeland Joint School District, and I was named State Transportation Director of the Year in 2012. I now run the largest food bank in Kootenai County, based in Coeur d'Alene, supplying food to food banks from Post Falls to Bonners Ferry to St. Maries.</p> <p>Currently I serve on seat 1 of the city council and I am involved with the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO).</p> <p>My political career with the City of Rathdrum began when I was encouraged to join the Traffic Safety Committee due to my involvement with Lakeland Transportation. After serving on the Traffic Safety Committee, I considered running for a seat on City Council but decided it would be beneficial to learn more about how the city operated first. For that reason, I applied for, and was appointed, to Planning and Zoning. The experience proved to be invaluable, and I served for 6 years before joining the City Council. I have been on the council for 6 years.</p> <p>Now I am running for re-election for City Council Seat 1.</p>	<p>I have spent 6 years on the Planning and Zoning for the City of Rathdrum. I have served as the President and Vice President for Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran LCMS church in Rathdrum. I have also served as the Scout Master for Troop 216 in Rathdrum as well as well as being the President of the Rathdrum Citizens Committee that kept the building for the Boy Scouts,</p>	<p>I have long held a passion for politics and serving on the Rathdrum City Council would be an honor. I have been involved with the Responsible North Idaho Growth movement since the early days and have been an active participant at the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. I am very politically active and engaged already, and I feel like my knowledge and experience can help Rathdrum grow responsibly. As for my experience, I have spent the last decade resolving complex issues and coordinating solutions and projects across local and global teams, departments, and companies. Five of those years I worked in the chemical processing industry working with local governments, fire departments and chemical plants on ensuring community safety and welfare. It is there I learned about the importance and impact of a city council.</p>