

Watchmen Voter Guide for Rathdrum City Council Seat #2

** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire **

	Steven Adams	Molly Bauer	Larry Sanders
<p>1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?</p>	<p>Steven L. Adams, Rathdrum City Council, seat #2. My whole adult life has been funded by the taxpayer. From world travel as part of the U.S. Navy, earning my academic degrees through the G.I. Bill, a lengthy career at NASA, and teaching at a community college. I have lived a good life and now in retirement, I feel a debt to society and seek opportunities to serve my fellow citizen and give back. Serving on the Council these past four years is one way I can do this. Earlier this year, I had decided to not seek re-election. But, about six weeks ago, during Sunday School, I was called upon to read the first few verses of Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 13. Verse 1b states, "For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God". That convicted me as I truly believe that God placed me on the Council four years ago. Am I to be like Jonah who when called by God to perform a task, instead went and tried to hide? I think not, so I must run again. If the voters of Rathdrum wish for me to continue to serve them and the city as their representative on the Council, I will faithfully do so. If I am not re-elected, I'm "okay" with that also, and will continue to discover other ways to give back to society.</p>		<p>My name is Larry Sanders. I'm a candidate for Rathdrum City Council seat number 2. I feel called to serve my community in some capacity so that is why I chose to run for this office.</p>
<p>2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.</p>	<p>Personally, I would like to see more trees and a better interconnected pathway system for pedestrians and cyclists to safely travel throughout the city. When I get to the point in my life where I shouldn't be driving on the roads, I would like to have access to some type of public transportation. Practically, I would continue to support our police department with the funds and tools they need to keep Rathdrum the safest city in Idaho, (with a population greater than 1,600 – based on 2020 statistics, the latest available; Source: city-data.com). Finding a solution for the need of affordable workforce housing that is in harmony with the stated goal of current residents for low-density housing and minimizing high-density housing. More parks, (with lots of trees, of course).</p>		<p>Rathdrum is a great place to live. Although we're going through some growing pains, I think some areas that could stand Improvement would be stabilizing infrastructure, low density housing, limited growth.</p>

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3. What are your views on the rapid growth of North Idaho?	It is abhorrent! And, needs to stop . . . which I fear will not happen. At the minimum, it needs to slow down. This is the main reason I was elected four years ago to the Council, and the reason the entire Council has been replaced in the last two election cycles. Existing residents are unhappy with the rate of growth, and they want it to slow down. In my four years on the Council, I have had mixed results. In each of the years I have been on the council, (this current year is not complete, so stats are unavailable), housing permits for single-family houses has decreased in each year. Partial victory. However, the same cannot be said for multi-family housing. Partial fail. The “battle” continues, and will do so as long as Kootenai County remains a desirable area for relocation from other parts of the Union.		At the present time the growth is a shock to our system. I think we need to slow down take a deeper look at it and find sensible ways to stabilize it.
4. In your opinion what best serves the public, elected officials, or appointed officials?	Elected officials, because they are accountable to and answer to their constituency. They either do the job for which they were elected, or are removed from office at the next election. Appointed officials conduct business without being accountable to voters.		I feel that elected officials are best for serving the community because they're elected by the people.
5. What improvements should be made to the city councils' role in the design and authorization of new developments?	The council must work with city staff to change the city code and zoning map to reflect the desires and wishes of current Rathdrum citizens. What is done is done and cannot be changed, else the city will be trampling on existing property rights, which could lead to lawsuits which the city would surely lose, resulting in increased property taxes to pay for settlements. New annexations is where the Council has the greatest role in determining its development, but must compromise on a common vision, based on the will of the people, and have that reflected in the code.		City council should work more closely with the planning and zoning commission. Need to work together while trying to stabilize our infrastructure and minimize growth
6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	No. There is nothing that I see that needs to be cut, eliminated, or privatized. However, there are a few things I would like to see happen, or increased. One example is more timely and efficient snow plowing.		
7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities and why?	No. Rural communities are by definition, spread out and low-density. It is not an incorporated city's responsibility or financial obligation to provide water, sewer, or other infrastructure to areas outside its city limits. It would be next to impossible to convince a city resident to pay for services to someone who lives in the country and outside the city. It may not even be legal.		

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8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund without increase taxes?	We have a well-running city that is managed by an efficient and conscientious City Administrator. He presents proposed budgets to the council for modification, revision, and approval. In the past four years while I have been a council member, he has presented reasonable budgets that have met the needs of our city and its residents while maintaining a healthy reserve, all without having to increase city property taxes. This year, Rathdrum is the only city on the Prairie that has not taken their legally allowed 3% property tax increase. And has not raised city property taxes since I have been a council member.		Government waste is rampant in our country. I think fiscal responsibility is very important and we should scrutinize every dollar we spend on our city budget. Prioritize spending and cut where we can and add to where we need to.
9. What is your opinion of the increased push for affordable housing?	It is critical to discover a solution to the affordable housing crisis. Our sons and daughters, upon reaching majority, cannot afford to purchase their own home in Rathdrum. They are leaving! Low-wage employees cannot afford to purchase their own home in Rathdrum. They are doomed to a perpetual life as a renter, lining the financial pockets of their landlords. I will never forget that when I started out in life as an adult, after leaving my parent's home, I had to rent an apartment until such time that I could afford to purchase my own home. Rathdrum now has enough apartments, either recently constructed, almost completed, or just starting the construction process. We need to discover low-cost options for our children and low-wage earners that allow them to purchase their own abode and start building equity.		Of course affordable housing is important in any community but when our federal government has interest rates at over 7%, even an affordable house becomes very expensive
10. All too often local residents feel that their public comment is not taken into consideration when decisions are made that directly affect their daily lives and their property value. What would you suggest so that the public's best interests become a priority over builders and developers?	As a member of the Council these past four years, I can assure you that we do hear the comments and concerns of residents who come before us. However, on most items before the Council, there is little that can legally be done to affect a decision one way or the other. Specifically, I am referring to growth. Once a property is annexed into the city limit, the next item on the agenda is assigning a zoning code. After that point, there is nothing that can be done to stop its development, as long as proposed development adhere to the city code. To deny a property owner the ability to develop their property invites a lawsuit against the city, which it would surely lose, resulting in increased property taxes to pay for the settlement. Property rights are strong in Idaho and the Idaho Way-of-Life. The development residents have witnessed the past few years have been decades in the works. Property annexed 10, 15, 20 years or more ago are just now being developed. It cannot legally be stopped.		As an elected official our priority should always be the best interest of our constituents. There are laws that not only protect our citizens but they also protect our builders and developers. We need a fine line to this problem and work more closely with our planning and zoning so as not to overburden our communities and our citizens.

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11. What is your opinion of “Smart Cities” and how they apply to North Idaho?	I am unfamiliar with the term, so had to do a quick Google search. It defines a Smart City as one “in which a suite of sensors, (typically hundreds or thousands), is deployed to collect electronic data from and about people and infrastructure...”. Such a system has no place in North Idaho! If it were ever to come to pass, and I could not destroy or remove it, I would sell my house and move to where such an intrusion on personal privacy does not exist.		I'm still studying this smart city concept not sure that North Idaho is at that point yet
12. Should the concept of “equitable outcome” be implemented as a part of the city council’s decision-making process? Why or why not?	Again, I had to do a quick internet search to discover what this term means. “Equitable outcomes are when all people have fair access, opportunity, resources, and power to thrive, with consideration for and elimination of historical and systemic barriers and privileges.” The only part of this with which I agree is that all people should have an equal opportunity and fair access. The results, or outcome, is up to the individual, his or her God-given talent, the hard work they are willing to put in, and the sacrifices they are willing to make in obtaining a specific result. Not everyone has the aptitude to be a nuclear scientist or a brain surgeon. It is not a city council's job or responsibility to make it possible for everyone to become whatever they want to be. That is up to the persons themselves. There exists federal laws that address historical and systemic barriers and privileges. A city council decision cannot be in conflict with these laws.		No. We as American citizens are given fundamental unalienable rights all men are created equal
13. Is there anything in your personal, business, or career life that would be a conflict of interest in your ability to serve the people of this city?	Since I am retired, there are no business or career relationships that would create a conflict of interest in making a decision as a member of the Council. If there were a personal conflict of interest, I am compelled to recuse myself from the decision making process. In my four years on the Council, I have had to do this once when the item before the Council concerned the retirement 55+ community in which I live. I removed myself from the “bench” and took a seat in the audience. Upon completion of a vote on that item, I rejoined the Council to proceed with other items on that evening's agenda.		No. There are no incumbrances and I'm eager to serve the people of my community

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<p>14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?</p>	<p>After living 72 years on this planet, I have learned a few things and have a wealth of varied experiences. Foremost among these is that I have been a City Council member for the past four years. I have not missed a single regularly scheduled council meeting these past four years.</p> <p>Add to that, experience gained through military service as a combat veteran in Vietnam where I conducted surveillance and intelligence duties. I worked in the national space program for thirty-four years where I conducted basic science research and managed two earth-orbiting satellite instruments that monitored the atmosphere. During the last thirteen years of my NASA career, I also taught at a community college in the geography department. I earned an Associate, Bachelor, and Masters academic degrees, many of the graduate credits in the urban studies department. I have also qualified for and been a member in Mensa.</p> <p>All of this experience has served as training which allows me to analyze data quickly, cut through the fat and get to the 'bottom line' easily, determine what is most important, and to 'think for myself' allowing me to make a reasoned, logical decision. I do not answer to any established, recognized political party. I answer only to God and the Rathdrum constituency, both those who voted for me and those who did not.</p>		<p>Through many years of management and sales background I have learned to be a very good listener. The 17 years that I've lived in Rathdrum I've watched and learned and listened to the people and I understand their feelings and I want to be a deciding factor in helping them. Problems exist, and I don't have all the answers, but with the other fellow council members and myself I want to help come up with solutions to those problems without overburdening the citizens.</p>