

Watchmen Voter Guide for Sandpoint City Council (3 Seats)

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

	Amelia Boyd	Grant Simmons
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	Amelia Christine Boyd. I am running for Sandpoint City Council because to me, running for city council isn't about one particular issue, it's about all of the issues that impact our city and the daily lives of our residents. It's about the children who walk to school or ride their bikes to City Beach. It's about the moms and dads who drive to work to make ends meet. It's about the employees of the many businesses who work long hard hours to afford their higher rent. It's about the business owners who struggle to keep their businesses thriving all year. It's about our retired community who have earned the right to enjoy their golden years. It's about the native Sandpoint residents who want to retain their small hometown charm. And yes, it's about those who have relocated here for a better life for themselves and their families. It's also about the city that is trying to keep up with the rapid growth and changing demographics. I feel I am in touch with our community and can make a difference.	I'm Grant Simmons, seeking a seat on the Sandpoint City Council. I'm running to amplify the essence of Sandpoint, a place my family calls home. I think I'm the only candidate with three kids in the school system (i.e. under 18, living at home), so I think that gives me the right perspective. I have a deeply personal stake in Sandpoint's trajectory. I want to preserve its charm and strengthen its foundation for the generations to come.
2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	1. The city needs to improve our failing infrastructure by making it the top priority above any new projects. I will always push for and keep the city in line with that goal. 2. The city needs to take into account what the resident's want to see in their town as they look at future development especially in the downtown corridor. The incoming development concerns are a hot topic right now and I will make sure the city will be sensitive to what the people want. 3. The city has failed in making the residents of our town feel like their concerns on issues have been listened to. I will work hard to rebuild communication with our resident's by always providing an open line of communication with me. I will also conduct monthly chats to listen to resident's concerns on issues that are important to them and their families. I will always encourage more community input opportunities through true open forums for the public.	Housing Affordability: Our town's essence resonates with diverse individuals, yet soaring housing prices hinder many from settling here. I propose engaging developers and stakeholders to introduce varied housing solutions. Infrastructure and Growth Management: Infrastructure determines a town's life quality. We must methodically assess and upgrade our city's infrastructure, ensuring it aligns with our growth.
3. What are your views on the rapid growth of North Idaho?	The Covid era, as I like to call it, brought in an influx of newcomers to the area whether we like it or not. I don't think anyone could have predicted such an increase of population and especially the rise in costs of the housing and rental markets. With that being said, we need to adjust to our changing demographics and remember to treat every citizen with respect and kindness despite where they are from. We are experiencing the growing pains with this rapid growth and need to deal with it accordingly.	The allure of North Idaho is its pristine charm and community spirit. As a father and family man, I visualize our growth with optimism but also caution. While growth brings opportunities, it's paramount that we strategically manage it, ensuring we retain our distinct identity.

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4. In your opinion what best serves the public, elected officials, or appointed officials?	Elected officials, hands down, as they are the ones chosen by the people deemed fit to serve the community.	Both elected and appointed officials serve distinct yet interwoven roles in governance. Elected officials act as the direct voice of the public, ensuring policies and decisions are representative of our community's desires and needs. On the other hand, appointed officials, like a city administrator, bring consistency, professionalism, and continuity, ensuring that the day-to-day operations of the city run smoothly and effectively. Their expertise ensures policies are implemented with precision and efficiency. For Sandpoint, it's vital that we harness the strengths of both to ensure optimal governance.
5. What improvements should be made to the city councils' role in the design and authorization of new developments?	City council already has the ability to change city codes in regards to developments with recommendations from the Planning & Zoning Commission. By state law, property owners rights come first and foremost, but city code can regulate height limitations, like I would like to see reduced for the downtown corridor.	Every development shapes our town's character. It's crucial for the City Council to have robust oversight, ensuring developments mirror Sandpoint's essence. Engaging the public and ensuring transparency will be my approach to ensure our town's growth remains true to its roots. I hope to have more meetings in public spaces.
6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	No, none that I can think of.	While I value every service our city provides, we should periodically assess them for efficiency and relevance. Decisions on modifications or privatization should prioritize residents' welfare and long-term city benefits.
7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities and why?	If our current infrastructure can sustain it, then yes. If the city can provide water and sewage to those rural areas without impacting tax payers, then yes.	Clean water access is fundamental. While I advocate for expanding access to our rural communities, it's essential we do so sustainably, balancing current resources with future demands.
8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund without increase taxes?	There is already \$3 million in the city's construction reserve. The added monies from the recently passed (Nov '22) resort bed tax is a great way of having out-of-town visitors and not city residents bear the burden.	Financial prudence is paramount. By harnessing efficient fiscal practices, procuring grants, fostering local business growth, and exploring public-private partnerships, we can fortify our reserves without resorting to tax hikes.
9. What is your opinion of the increased push for affordable housing?	With rising costs of housing, more affordable housing is needed for our workforce, young families and our residents on fixed incomes. City government is very limited on what it can enforce (near nothing) for developers to provide affordable housing. Allowing home owner's to build ADU's is a great way in providing affordable housing in the city.	Housing shouldn't be a privilege; it's a right. The push for affordable housing resonates deeply with me. We must actively and innovatively address this, ensuring Sandpoint remains accessible to all.

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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?	Revisiting and changing the current city code in reference to development in the downtown corridor to reflect the wants and desires of the public is one of my priorities. Another priority of mine is to have an open line of communication with constituents by holding true open forums, monthly Councilor's Round Table and just listen. Listening to concerns and the issues that truly matter to people and their families are what elected officials should do. If elected, I will do just that!	Residents are Sandpoint's heartbeat. Their concerns and visions should shape our decisions. I'm committed to prioritizing public interest, ensuring transparency and accessibility, and creating platforms for open dialogues.
11. What is your opinion of "Smart Cities" and how they apply to North Idaho?	I am more interested in investing in infrastructure than smart city investments.	While "Smart Cities" offer modern solutions, any adoption in North Idaho should respect our unique ethos. We can harness technology to improve urban living but must do so in a manner that preserves our distinct character.
12. Should the concept of "equitable outcome" be implemented as a part of the city council's decision-making process? Why or why not?	All decisions from council members need to think of the community at-large as opposed to individual stakeholders. We are a city together and sidewalk, road and waste water treatment repairs benefit everyone and are a necessity for the safety, health and welfare of all residents.	While equitable outcomes are laudable, decisions should be pragmatic and tailored to Sandpoint's unique context. Ensuring fairness is crucial, but it should be harmonized with practicality and long-term vision.
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?	No, none at all.	Throughout my journey, from my role at Foundry to my time with Kochava and my commitment to our healthcare system, my sole interest has been Sandpoint's welfare. There's no personal, business, or career aspect that impedes my service to our community.
14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	I have served on Sandpoint's Planning & Zoning commission for nearly 2 years. In that time I have learned a lot about how city government works (slow) and have an understanding of what people want to see happening in the city. I read and research every agenda item to gain understanding of what is being voted on. I regularly attend City Council meetings and have for many years. I have held many leadership positions throughout my life on education foundations, civic groups and for local charities. I immerse myself in my community by volunteering. I volunteer weekly at the Cancer Center at BGH. I also serve on the board of the Bonner General Health Foundation and am the race director for our family fun run since inception. I participate in just about every local event and support our local businesses. I connect easily with people from all walks of life. I do not have a personal agenda, I am strictly motivated in serving the residents of Sandpoint.	My journey intertwines deeply with Sandpoint. My involvement with the Bonner General Hospital Foundation Board and the Planning and Zoning committee attests to my dedication. Additionally, my experiences at Kochava have honed my entrepreneurial spirit. These, combined with my role as a father of three in our public schools, position me uniquely to serve our community. Sandpoint isn't just a location for me; it's a legacy I hope to pass on to my children. From our initial connection in 2006, through the ups and downs, my dedication to this town has only strengthened. With your support, I aim to translate this passion into actionable policies, ensuring Sandpoint's vibrancy for our current and future generations.

	Pam Duquette	Deb Ruehle	Kyle Schreiber	Elle Susnis
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