

City of Rathdrum Council Member Seat #3

| | John Hodgkins | Reneé Mullen | Destiny Whitehead |
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| 1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position? | My name is John Hodgkins, and I am running for re-election to the Rathdrum City Council, Seat 3. Serving our community is the greatest honor of my life and a true calling, driven by my deep love for Rathdrum and its people. I'm running to continue advocating for our shared conservative values, limited government, individual liberty, and community strength while addressing challenges like growth, affordability, and infrastructure. With four years of experience, I've gained in-depth knowledge of city operations, land use, and fiscal management, enabling me to protect our rural character, promote transparency, and ensure your voices shape Rathdrum's future. Your encouragement inspires me to keep fighting for a thriving, family-friendly community. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas. | Strengthen Transparency and Community Engagement - I'll continue to enhance transparency by expanding online access to council meetings through live-streaming (improving the city's ability to livestream and include content in streams). I'll also establish regular town halls and digital surveys to gather input on key issue. Manage Growth to Preserve Rural Character and Affordability - Rapid growth threatens our small-town charm and housing affordability. I'll advocate for balanced zoning that prioritizes low-density, single-family homes and protects agricultural lands. Enhance Public Safety and Infrastructure Efficiently - To keep our streets safe and infrastructure robust amid growth, I'll support community policing and neighborhood watch programs, respecting rights while deterring crime. For infrastructure, I'll push for public-private partnerships and developer impact fees to upgrade roads, parks, and utilities without burdening taxpayers. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 3. In your opinion, is growth in North Idaho being handled appropriately? | Growth in North Idaho is not being handled appropriately. The pace and lack of coordinated planning have led to significant challenges that threaten the very qualities that make our region special. Unmanaged growth strains infrastructure, inflates housing costs, and erodes community cohesion without adequate safeguards for property rights and fiscal responsibility. The rapid development in areas like Rathdrum has outpaced essential services: roads are congested, utilities are overburdened, and public safety resources are stretched thin. Housing prices have skyrocketed, pricing out young families and longtime residents, while overdevelopment risks turning our pristine landscapes into urban sprawl. This isn't sustainable growth; it's reactive expansion that often favors developers over citizens, sometimes through eminent domain abuses or urban renewal districts that undermine individual liberties (if not carefully monitored and managed) core conservative principles I hold dear. | No Response Received | No Response Received |

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| 4. As cities face increasing costs to pay for city services including law enforcement, fire districts, schools and increased traffic due to increased home developments, what are your suggestions so that growth pays for itself? | I firmly believe that growth must pay for itself to protect our community's fiscal health and preserve the rural North Idaho lifestyle we cherish. Unchecked development shouldn't burden existing residents with higher taxes or diminished services. Impact fees should regularly be reviewed and revised to ensure that growth is paying for itself. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 5. What improvements should be made to the city council's role in the planning and authorization of new developments? | Enhance Public Input and Transparency Strengthen Zoning Oversight and Property Rights Protections Implement Rigorous Impact Fee Structures and Accountability Establish a Growth Monitoring Committee | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized? | My promise is to be a careful steward of your tax dollars. Right now, cutting any of the services we provide would only hurt our community. That's why we won't do it. Instead of blindly swinging the axe, I will focus on prudent management. In the next term, I will lead an initiative to review past financial decisions. We need to stop chasing quick fixes and start asking the hard question: are we really saving money, or are we paying more down the road? We will identify and fix those hidden costs because you deserve efficiency and value from your government. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities, why or why not? | Extending city water and sewer to rural areas can encourage dense development, threatening the open spaces and agricultural heritage that define North Idaho. Uncontrolled expansion risks transforming rural landscapes into suburban sprawl, increasing traffic and straining public services like schools and law enforcement. From a fiscal perspective, the infrastructure costs; pipelines, treatment facilities, and maintenance are substantial and often fall on taxpayers if not fully offset by new users. Many rural residents value their independence, relying on wells and septic systems to avoid city oversight and fees, aligning with principles of self-reliance and property rights. Forcing or incentivizing city utilities could undermine their autonomy and inflate costs for all. | No Response Received | No Response Received |

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| 8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund without increasing taxes? | <p>Optimize Budget Efficiency by scrutinizing non-essential programs we can redirect savings to the reserve fund. For example, consolidating redundant services or renegotiating vendor contracts can free up funds without cutting critical services.</p> <p>Leverage Impact Fees from New Developments growth should pay for itself. I'll continue to push for robust impact fees on new housing and commercial developments to cover their strain on infrastructure and services, such as roads, water, and schools. These fees should be adjusted regularly based on growth projections.</p> <p>Promote Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to fund infrastructure and services without dipping into reserves or raising taxes, I'll champion PPPs where private entities co-invest in projects like road upgrades or utility expansions.</p> <p>Prioritize Revenue-Generating Opportunities I'll explore non-tax revenue streams, such as leasing underutilized city properties or expanding community event sponsorships by local businesses.</p> | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 9. What is your opinion on affordable housing? Is it something that the city should be pursuing? | Yes, the city should pursue affordable housing, but through strategic, market-friendly policies that empower private enterprise and protect property rights, not through subsidies or overregulation. The council's role is to remove barriers to affordability, encourage responsible development, and ensure growth doesn't overwhelm our infrastructure or rural identity. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 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 values. What would you do differently to change the public's perception? | <p>Expand and Simplify Public Engagement Opportunities -To make public input more accessible, I'll advocate for hybrid council meetings (in-person and live-streamed) with extended comment periods, allowing residents with busy schedules to participate.</p> <p>Transparent Feedback Integration Process - I'll propose a formal process where the council publicly acknowledges and responds to public input.</p> <p>Community-Driven Decision-Making - Establish a Resident Advisory Committee, composed of diverse community members, to provide input on high-impact issues like land use or budget priorities.</p> <p>Proactive Communication and Follow-Up - I'll commit to regular updates via social media and the city website.</p> | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 11. What is your opinion on "Smart Cities" and how they apply to North Idaho? | In North Idaho, particularly in Rathdrum, the Smart City model clashes with our rural, independent ethos. Our communities value privacy, self-reliance, and minimal government intrusion. Principles at odds with pervasive monitoring or data-driven governance. For instance, widespread use of surveillance cameras or smart meters could erode personal freedoms, raising concerns about data security and government overreach. The cost of implementing such systems is also prohibitive; Rathdrum's budget, reliant on taxpayer dollars, cannot justify expensive tech projects when basic needs like roads and public safety demand priority. Moreover, North Idaho's growth is already straining infrastructure adding complex, tech-heavy systems risks diverting resources from practical solutions like traffic calming or housing affordability. | No Response Received | No Response Received |

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| 12. Should the concept of "equitable outcome" be implemented as a part of the city council's decision-making process? Why or why not? | I believe "equitable outcomes" Undermine individual merit and responsibility. Focusing on equitable outcomes shifts decision-making away from objective criteria and individual effort toward predetermined results, which conflicts with conservative values of personal accountability. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 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? | There is nothing in my personal, business, or career life that would constitute a conflict of interest in my ability to serve the people of Rathdrum. | No Response Received | No Response Received |
| 14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position? | <p>Council Experience: Four years on the council have given me in-depth understanding of operations, from budgeting to zoning laws. I've successfully advocated for transparent governance, pushing for online access to meetings and ensuring residents' voices shape decisions.</p> <p>Community Connection: As a resident, I understand Rathdrum's unique character and challenges. My community involvement—through volunteering and direct engagement keeps me attuned to your concerns, whether it's growth pressures or public safety.</p> <p>Independent Leadership: I decline campaign donations to remain free from special interests, ensuring my decisions prioritize residents, not special interests.</p> <p>Proven Results: I've championed policies like impact fees on developers to fund infrastructure without tax hikes and supported balanced zoning to preserve our rural heritage. These efforts demonstrate my ability to deliver practical solutions that align with our community's needs.</p> | No Response Received | No Response Received |