

City of Spirit Lake Mayor

	Jeremy Cowperthwaite	Jack Edmenson	Charlene Phipps	Allen Tesky
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	<p>Hello my name is Jeremy Cowperthwaite, I am currently holding and running for the position of Mayor for Spirit Lake.</p> <p>When I first stepped into this role, I promised to listen, to lead with integrity, and to make sure every decision was grounded in facts—not opinions. Together, we accomplished so much:</p> <p>We brought every major plan up to date, setting the stage for continued progress.</p> <p>None of this happened because of one person—it happened because we worked as a team. I've been blessed to lead 18 outstanding employees who dedicate themselves every day to making Spirit Lake better. Nearly all of them, if not all, have encouraged me to return for another term, which speaks volumes about the spirit of cooperation we've built. My goal has always been to empower employees to be their best, do their best, and take leadership in their roles, because when our team thrives, Spirit Lake thrives.</p> <p>As I look ahead, my commitment is focusing on what's true and what's best for our town—not opinions or politics, but facts and solutions.</p>	<p>No Response Received</p>	<p>My name is Charlene Phipps. I am a candidate for Mayor of Spirit Lake. I currently am on City Council and in this role, have seen how the city operates. My desire to run for Mayor comes from the relationships I have with the community and its residents. I love this city and the many remarkable individuals with whom I collaborate. I want this city to succeed and thrive; and I believe I can make a difference.</p>	<p>My name is Allen Tesky . I'm running for Mayor of Spirit Lake. I'm running because I believe I can help the town be more prosperous.</p>

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2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	<p>We need to continue to allow business to come into Spirit Lake and have a more balanced growth.</p> <p>We also need to continue moving forward with sewer plant expansion, in order to allow for services to be available for all proper owners in the city limits.</p> <p>That goes for residential and commercial properties.</p>	No Response Received	<p>First, I will open the City Council meetings to Public Comment. Currently, residents of Spirit Lake are unable to voice their concerns to our City Council. I feel this is an important part of listening to your constituents. It is necessary to have an open-door policy wherein residents can speak directly with the Mayor. Second, an open and transparent government. I will ensure Spirit Lake's yearly audit is added to our city website. Individuals should have the opportunity to review this document at their leisure. My intent is to hold quarterly townhalls to provide opportunity for residents to ask questions of their government officials. Third, I plan to create a Business Consortium where all business owners within Spirit Lake have the opportunity to voice their concerns or complaints. They should have an input into solutions and recommendations that would improve their businesses.</p>	<p>I would try to get more businesses to invest in our town. I would hold like to hold more events in the town to generate much needed revenue. Right now we don't have open city council meetings. People are not allowed to speak. I would change that. Everyone needs a voice.</p>
3. In your opinion, is growth in North Idaho being handled appropriately?	<p>I believe growth in North Idaho is not being handled appropriately.</p> <p>I feel we are always playing catch up, it seems as a whole we are being reactive not proactive.</p>	No Response Received	<p>Unfortunately, no. The uncontrolled growth in North Idaho has created a situation wherein our infrastructure is bearing the burden. Insufficient considerations for schools, parks, EMS/Fire, police, and public works create situations that do not allow adequate support for incoming residents. Developers should have an increased responsibility to fund these services.</p>	<p>As a native of the area, it kind of saddens me, but the word is out. We have to face the fact of the situation. I do believe valid efforts are being made to handle the growth.</p>

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<p>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?</p>	<p>This is why I brought all plans current.</p> <p>One such plan is our impact fees, this is one way the growth pays for increased needs and services.</p> <p>I feel perhaps the school districts might also be charging impact fees according to the needs created by the growth. It appears systems and programs like these are always reacting, again, instead of being proactive.</p>	<p>No Response Received</p>	<p>As stated previously, I believe that developers, not current residents, should hold a greater responsibility to support and fund these services. Developers are profiting from these large and substantial developments. The expansion of both residential and mixed use should not be placed on current residents. Their tax dollars are already supporting services, increasing that burden causes undue hardship.</p>	<p>Impact fees for developers. Invite more businesses to the area to provide jobs and a stronger tax base</p>

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<p>5. What improvements should be made to the mayor's role in the planning and authorization of new developments?</p>	<p>In my experience as Mayor, it appears no amount of training and guidance for the legislative branch of the city (city council), will ever move them to accomplish anything.</p> <p>In just the past two years of serving Spirit Lake as Mayor, the council has been directly or indirectly responsible for more than \$80,000.00 in legal fees and lawsuits and has not accomplished fixing, changing, or updating anything within their powers.</p> <p>The only way we could ever move forward, is to continue to have a balance of powers and people doing the work that needs to be done, and not drive personal agendas and neglect the responsibilities they swore oaths to uphold.</p> <p>If the process to get development through was more of an administrative duty, and not a legislative role, it might help speed things up, as the council has a responsibility to make policy, procedures and ordinances, and shouldn't be part of the day to day administrative roles.</p>	<p>No Response Received</p>	<p>In the city of Spirit Lake, our planning and zoning are responsible for planning and authorization of new developments. The Mayor and City Council has final approval of plans brought forth at Council meetings. Our process involves several reviews, public hearings, and careful deliberation of plans presented. I do not believe the Mayor should have a more involved role in this process. Currently, several individuals have an opportunity to present and provide input instead of limiting it to one individual.</p>	<p>Work together with the city council and planning and zoning to all be on the same page, and do what needs to be done.</p>

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6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	Simple answer to this question is, Absolutely not!...	No Response Received	The City of Spirit Lake has a unique, small-town atmosphere. It is supported by individuals that have a vested interest in our community. Our services are sustained and function within a limited budget. Due to the support these services provide to the city, I do not foresee any reductions, eliminations, or privatization. We have a fully involved Police Department with officers that have involvement in the community and its residents. Our Parks & Recreation Department serves a large number of youth and adult sports. The Public Works is responsible for water, sewer, parks, and cemetery. All of these departments provide vital resources to our residents.	No
7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities, why or why not?	If the infrastructure in place has the capacity to service it's own properties, I feel there should be no reason not to share safe clean water and sewer services to rural communities.	No Response Received	As this applies to Spirt Lake, no, I do not believe that this would be a feasible alternative to our moratorium. The initial cost and maintenance cost of requiring city managed water and sewer would be out of our ability to achieve. In general, rural communities may benefit from this alternative if finances did not allow for a community-run water or sewer.	No. In our area we don't have the sewer capacity or the water storage capacity.
8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund without increasing taxes?	With council spending unplanned money in legal fees, and sucking every little penny that might be kept in a reserve, there really is no way to keep healthy reserves. This past year is a great example of that. As we had a great reserve that was drastically reduced because the council simply threw away a fee study that would increase our services to a more reasonable amount, as we are one the cheapest water charges with a12,000 gal base. We might be able to pay bills and add to our small reserve accounts.	No Response Received	Approximately three years ago, our water and sewer departments began a reserve account to serve for maintenance and catastrophic events. This year, the general fund will have a reserve account to accommodate unexpected expenditures. We expect these accounts to increase over the years.	Budgeting. Set some money away for the purpose.

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9. What is your opinion on affordable housing? Is it something that the city should be pursuing?	<p>I feel a city should have a well balanced housing opportunity for every class of person, to be able to enjoy any great little city, like Spirit Lake.</p> <p>These little slices of heaven, should be affordable to anybody who might want to live a small town way.</p>	<p>No Response Received</p>	<p>We have a limited city boundary. Housing is at a standstill due to our sewer moratorium. Once lifted, we already have pending permits for builds. Affordable housing is not an option within our city limits as it stands at this moment.</p>	<p>We live in a free market. The city can't do anything about housing costs!</p> <p>With our sewer situation we cannot support high density housing.</p>

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<p>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>	<p>I will continue to make myself available, walk into the office, by appointment, by phone, (office and cell), and email.</p> <p>Also, if the the general public attended council meeting, I would bring back public comment. It has been four years now, and it seems the only same 6 people that want to abuse my staff are the only citizens showing up at meeting that want to speak.</p> <p>Four years ago, as I came into office of Mayor, I brought back public comment and for a year, all that happened was a terrible barrage of attacks on my city staff.</p> <p>After a year of that and nobody addressing council with actual concerns of a city nature, I removed public speaking from city council meetings.</p> <p>With that being said, I did make myself the most available a person possible can, and when people reached out to me, their issues have always been resolved, punctually, properly, and all with respect.</p> <p>My plan would be to continue to feel the temperature of citizen needs, and adjust as needed.</p> <p>No plan is a perfect one or permanent. We all should be willing to listen to each other and work through all matters, as respectful adults.</p>	<p>No Response Received</p>	<p>I will encourage an increase in community involvement in government. Through opening the Public Comment period at City Council meetings, coffee with the Mayor and Police Department, and holding quarterly townhall meetings, I hope to achieve a more open and responsive government that addresses the needs and concerns of residents.</p>	<p>Allow their concerns to be heard at city council meetings.</p>

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11. What is your opinion on "Smart Cities" and how they apply to North Idaho?	Another simple answer is, from what I have knowledge of in regards to smart cities, is they are not smart at all... NO on smart cities.	No Response Received	I do not believe in "Smart Cities". It is my opinion that this is an invasion of privacy. Citizens should not feel that the government has an "eye" upon them each time they step outside.	I don't want smart cities. That's part of agenda 2030, and I believe that's part of the beast system.
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 do like the theory of equitable outcomes, equal and level playing field concept for everybody. I feel the city has and should have a limited role in the lives of people. Meaning, we should ensure safety, fresh water, sewer services and land app issues. Not, really curtain where "equitable outcomes" concept would come into play in our arena.	No Response Received	I do not believe so. We are a constitutional republic, through hard work and perseverance, individuals succeed. We are a nation filled with generosity and giving. Each individual should be provided with the same opportunities and prospects. Providing preferential opportunities and outcomes to specific individuals or groups may in turn deny others.	No! Because equitable outcome isn't fair to people who have worked for it. I believe everyone has the same opportunity. Not all put forth the same effort.
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?	As I have started previously, I am holding the potion now, and there has been no personal, business, career life conflicts of interest that would hamper my ability to serve the people of Spirit Lake.	No Response Received	No, I have only been involved in government for the last 20 months. I am a retired Registered Nurse. I will be able to devote myself to the betterment and success of our community. I currently am involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Senior Center, and the Spirit Lake Community Coalition. I am a founder of the Community Center/Meals on Wheels Silent Auction, raising money to benefit that program. This year, I am a founder of the Inaugural Christmas Gala to benefit non-profits within Spirit Lake.	No.

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14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	<p>Spirit Lake has always been my home. I've lived here my entire life. I know this town, its people, and the values that make it such a special place. For the past four years, I've had the privilege of serving as your mayor, and it has truly been the honor of my life. When I first stepped into this role, I promised to listen, to lead with integrity, and to make sure every decision was grounded in facts—not opinions.</p> <p>Success doesn't happen because of one person—it happened because we work as a team. I've been blessed to lead 18 outstanding employees who dedicate themselves every day to making Spirit Lake better. Nearly all of them, if not all, have encouraged me to return for another term, which speaks volumes about the spirit of cooperation we've built. My goal has always been to empower employees to be their best, do their best, and take leadership in their roles, focusing on what's true and what's best for our town—not opinions or politics, but facts and solutions.</p>	<p>No Response Received</p>	<p>For the last six months, I have attended meetings, seminars, workshops, and conferences to educate and improve my knowledge. Including-Innovia Seminar with Doug Griffiths, author of "13 Ways to Kill Your Community"; the Inland Northwest Partners Meetings-Spring, Summer, Fall sessions; the 2025 Idaho Rural Success Summit-I was able to meet with Lt. Governor, Scott Bedke; Main Street America Workshop; and the Pend Oreille Economic Partnership. I paid for these events to educate myself, obtain resources, and increase networking opportunities. I attended the 2025 Northwest Community Development Institute in Boise, a week-long event; gained valuable skills in leadership, strategic planning and community engagement. The NWCDI is a 3 year program; providing tools for project funding, policy navigation and citizen participation supported by experienced professionals and case studies. The Institute also provided information and solutions for economic growth, and infrastructure improvement.</p>	<p>I'm an Electrical contractor. I'm a businessman, and the city is a business.</p> <p>I have 60 years of life experiences.</p> <p>I have vision and faith.</p> <p>I'm not a man of many words.</p> <p>I'm a doer.</p>