

City Council Form  
Name: Grant Walker

Position Sought: Councilor, Ward 4

Web site: [www.roguereporter.net](http://www.roguereporter.net)

1. Please describe why you are seeking the position of City Councilor.

Grants Pass is a beautiful city with a great future, and it deserves a city government it can trust. That trust was tarnished and strained to the breaking point last year, resulting in the recall of several councilors. I am running for city councilor to restore that trust by creating a better dialogue between the city and the citizens, to better-represent their needs and wishes, and to help it continue to grow as a prosperous, beautiful city.

2. If elected, do you have any specific things you would like to accomplish during your term on the City Council?

Develop new, locally-owned, productive, and clean industry through local investment.

Make decisions that will improve the use of land and development of business in the SW Ward.

Improve the use of technology by city government so it may engage in a meaningful conversation with the citizens. Old style communication is one-way, with the Internet, it has become a 2-way conversation, and the people expect to be heard.

Attract new, family-practice physicians to the area.

3. Please provide us with a listing of your prior community and civic involvement in Grants Pass or other communities.

Member of the Rogue Gateway Rotary

Committee member of the Southern Oregon Meth Project

In Southern Illinois, coached in Girls Softball League, was an assistant troop leader in Boy Scouts.

Worked in a family real estate development and construction business

Active in church

High School teacher for over 10 years.

4. Please tell us your understanding of the role of economic development and what you believe should occur with economic development during your term..

Economic development must be driven by an overall vision with a clear master plan in order for a city to grow and prosper in a sustainable way. During my term we must strengthen the cooperation of organizations such as SOREDI and RCC with local investors to grow new businesses that produce products sold outside the area. This will bring in more dollars to the area to help grow local, retail and service-oriented business. We should also look outside the area for about 35 percent of our new business. For example, Prineville recently got a contract for a server data center for Facebook. Over 400 jobs. Grants Pass should develop that same productive, clean industry.

5. What role do you believe tourism promotion and the tourism program should play in Grants Pass over the next four years?

Grants Pass is not a tourist destination, but Josephine County and the Rogue River are. Grants Pass benefits as it provides services and goods when people come to the area for sport and play. We should support the region's tourism industry and promote Grants Pass as a beautiful town with a special downtown to be enjoyed after a great day on the Rogue.

6. Urban Growth Boundary decisions

The Urban Growth Boundary determines the balance between residential and commercial growth. Grants Pass is residential heavy right now, and the inner core of the city is getting dense. We must expand the Urban Growth Boundary in order to provide enough commercial and industrial business to sustain the residential growth. First we must make clear decisions about how we want the residential areas to develop so they are beautiful and desirable neighborhoods.

7. What is your position on signage for local businesses

A key to the desirability of Grants Pass is its beautiful downtown and charming neighborhoods. Grants Pass needs a signage policy that keeps the city beautiful. There must be standards for the size and design of signage so Grants Pass has a unified look that tourists and residents alike will enjoy.

8. The community survey annually asks about how citizens perceive growth and the impacts of growth on the community. What is your position?

As a river town nestled in mountains, growth is a very difficult issue. It's easy to grow a town in the Midwest. Not here. However, we want to improve our economy and make Grants Pass a place people want to move to and raise families. For this reason, we want growth, but it must be well-planned with a master plan that reflects the wishes and desires of the greatest number of residents possible. It will require smart decisions on infrastructure, especially for development of high technology business.

9. The city is actively evaluating parks and recreation plans. What is your position?

Parks are useless if nobody uses them. However, they are vital to making a city attractive and a place where people want to live. The proposed park plan puts too much emphasis on one, large, multi use park which will require tremendous upkeep at great expense and it is situated in a place where we will have to do a lot of road improvements. I favor a multi use park, especially for youth and sports, but we should continue to develop numerous, smaller parks, dotted throughout residential areas. Without strong public support, parks will not be used. Therefore, they should be largely funded by local tax dollars.

10. Please let us know your position on the funding of public safety.

I consider the funding of public safety top priorities for any town.. My wife and her father both worked as volunteer firemen, and I have learned first-hand from them the value of a strong, well-equipped, well-trained and well-funded fire department. In addition, public safety is one of the first things people want to know about when considering opening a business or moving to a city. In addition, I believe strong public cooperation and volunteer participation (as support, not police work) with police is paramount to success. I would work hard to make sure police and the community have a strong, positive relationship. The more the citizens participate in their city, the better that city will be.

11. Do you believe taxes and fees in Grants Pass are too high, too low, or about right? To what extent should they be changed.

Especially because of the recession, I would not consider this a time to increase taxes or fees. I am already cringing from what the outcome of measures 66 and 67 might be. Local businesses will be hard hit, the recession may deepen, and we may see an increase or at least no decrease in unemployment. Keep taxes and fees the same for now. In addition, I am never in favor of any tax or fee increase that will hamper business and commerce in Grants Pass. Stronger economies will always bring in more revenue.

12. In your opinion, what role does the downtown play in the future of Grants Pass?

The Grants Pass downtown is the jewel of the city and it should consider it as one of its strongest selling points. Downtown, in the early 80s after the timber bust, was in shambles. I remember how hard it was in this county at the time as I was often in the area for recreation. Today it is vibrant. I would put a lot of effort and financial commitment into continuing to improve the beauty and charm of downtown and attract business and tourists to downtown. We have the best Growers' Market in southern Oregon, too!

13. Please provide us with any other information you believe makes you the best candidate for city council.

I have many positive qualities. I am a hard-working, honest individual who always works for consensus and cooperation to get the job done. I have professional experience in process and quality improvement in the workplace. I come from a family background of real estate and land development in Portland, Oregon and understand the connection between planning and success. I am highly skilled in modern communications and can help Grants Pass take advantage of 21st Century communication tools and technology. As a public relations professional, I can do a lot to strengthen the image of the city council and rebuild the community's trust.

#### **MY VALUES**

This is America, and I am proud to be a part of it. As Americans we believe that boot-strap, do-it-yourself, hard-working independence and competition is the best way to succeed as individuals. But we have a civic duty as well, and that means fair play and a fair shake for everyone, and reaching out to our fellow citizens to help them succeed through their own hard work.

To ensure we have a fair shake, our government, especially on the local level, must be an open and transparent one that gets as many people involved in the process as possible. The more people you have participating in the process, the better your solutions will ultimately be.

Government should be limited and its function is to serve the people, not any special interests.

For these reasons, I believe our local government must do the following:

1. Be fiscally responsible.
2. Encourage local business and local investment.
3. Keep our city safe, clean, and beautiful.
4. Provide great educational opportunities for children and adults.
5. Attract young families with dreams and ambitions.
6. Be excellent stewards of land and development for the future.