

# READER

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April 14, 2022 | **FREE** | Vol. 19, Issue 15



**Bonner  
County  
Assessor  
Candidates**



**CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

*2022 PRIMARY ELECTION*

## Bonner County assessor — Republican

1. What motivated you to join the race for Bonner County Assessor?
2. What, in your opinion, are the most important responsibilities of a county assessor?
3. In the face of increased growth in our region, what should be the priorities of the job moving forward?
4. What specific message would you like to send to your potential voters?

### Grant W. Dorman



Age: 51

*Birthplace and residence:*

Born in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Currently reside in Selle Valley, Bonner County.

*How many years lived in Bonner County:* We bought our home in 2015 and moved here in 2016.

*Government service:* Air traffic controller, active duty in the U.S. Navy. Transportation surveyor and consultant for California Department of Transportation. Consultant to U.S. Navy.

*Profession:* Professional land surveyor, business owner for 20 years, 30 employees, focusing on residential, commercial, public utilities, transportation and timber industries.

*Education:* B.S., Geomatics Engineering (land surveying) from CSU Fresno, M.A. in Business Administration from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

*Family:* Married 28 years, four Children (two married), one grandchild.

1. As a recently retired land surveyor having had my own business for 20 years, I will bring my leadership, administrative and technical experience to the Assessor's Office. As a surveyor, I have advocated for land owners to advocate for their rights. I will bring that same customer-centric perspective to the office. The Assessor's Office has a history of private property and privacy violations, as well as leaving Bonner

County citizens disenfranchised through the assessment process.

2. The primary duties of the assessor are: 1. to estimate the market value of real property, personal property and operating property for fair and equitable distribution of property taxes; 2. manage property exemptions, deferrals and reductions; 3. managing current land records (platting); and 4. manage the Department of Motor Vehicle Licensing as an agent/vendor of the Idaho Transportation Department.

3. The top three priorities are: 1. implement a zero trespass policy that assures the public that the Assessor's Office will not be violating their privacy or property rights when conducting their property appraisals; 2. reduce employee turnover. The office is suffering from continual employee turnover, leading to wasted money in retraining new staff and losing institutional knowledge and talent; 3. update the valuation models, including the costing tables, so appraisals will be done accurately. The office presently is relying on antiquated valuation tables (costs per square foot, per acre, etc.) and yielding unreliable results (see number of state appeals below).

4. Last year, 46% of the residential assessment appeals heard in the state came from Bonner County alone. There are 44 counties in Idaho and we had almost twice as many as Ada County (Boise). In fact, over the last three years, Bonner County had 28 residential appeals compared to Kootenai County's four and Boundary County's one. Clearly, our landowners are not satisfied with the job being done, nor are they satisfied with the relief sought with the County Board of Equalization (BOE is our commissioners). We need an assessor who understands real estate, understands property rights and knows how to manage an organization. I will bring my business and professional experience as well as my knowledge of the real estate

industry to the office and will run it responsibly while maintaining a healthy, respectful independence of the BOE.

### Donna Gow (incumbent)



Age: 70

*Birthplace and residence:* Redlands, Calif., and Hope, Idaho.

*How many years lived in Bonner County:* 42.

*Government service:* Assessor's Office, 30 years.

*Profession:* Bonner County assessor.

*Education:* High school graduate, some college and over 500 hours of appraisal classes.

*Family:* Married 48 years; two sons, youngest is a captain for the Selkirk Fire Department, oldest is a command chief in OSI in the Air Force, won two bronze stars for his service in Iraq and Afghanistan; and five grandsons.

1. I first decided to join the race in 2018, because I didn't agree with some of the procedures that created inequity and the attitude that the property owners were the enemy. We have corrected those things, but we are still working to change some things done in the past that are not correct.

2. Making sure things are correct. This includes values, property owner names, exemptions and mapping. I do work with our mapping dept continually.

3. Communication. I put letters in the newspapers, letters with the assessed values and an explana-

tion of how taxes work regarding assessed values on the assessor's web page.

4. Experience matters. My opponents bring up things in the past that have been corrected, such as property rights and exemptions. I will not spend taxpayer dollars on technology for things that do not work or are a waste of money.

### Jessi Webster



Age: 45

*Birthplace and residence:* San Bernardino, Calif.; Bonner County.

*How many years lived in Bonner County:* Moved to Bonner County when I was 9 years old, grew up on Upper Pack River Road, left in 1997, moved back in 2010.

*Government service:* Currently work for Bonner County, 6.5 years, including Commissioner's Office, operations manager; Bonner County public information officer; and deputy clerk.

*Education:* B.A. in English/Secondary Education and Educational Technology Certificate from Boise State University.

*Family:* Engaged to my better half, Patrick. We have been together for 12 years. Two Daughters, Baylee and Evelyn. Baylee and her husband Caiden live and work in Bonner County and Evelyn is a junior at San Diego State University.

1. My motivation stems from first-hand knowledge of the issues

that the Assessor's Office has. Everything from customer service to larger issues, such as commercial assessments and exemptions, need to be addressed. Technology is lacking, which leads to inefficiency and process issues. There are multiple DMV issues on the horizon that are going to be dealt with swiftly and with an element of critical thinking. Overall, I am highly motivated to make impactful and positive changes to both the Assessor's Office and DMV.

2. The main, and most important duty, is the accurate assessment of property. If property is not assessed accurately it has a domino effect on multiple levels. It is the assessor's most important obligation to ensure accuracy for all of the taxpayers in Bonner County.

3. Growth means more workload in the case of the Assessor's Office. We need to develop or adopt processes that promote efficiency and accuracy, there should be no duplication of work. Staff will need to be cross trained to ensure that the best customer service is provided. Technology enhancements are a must. Another priority will be the development of a public outreach program. We need to ensure that all those that qualify for exemptions, which will assist them financially, are aware and assisted.

4. It is time for a change. We need to move away from the "that's how we have always done it" motto and start to improve in every aspect. The Assessor's Office needs a critical eye turned toward it, we need to correct the problems and implement positive change.

