

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE *2022 PRIMARY ELECTION*



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Ahead of the Tuesday, May 17 primary election, the *Reader* is presenting a limited series of election guides featuring questions and answers with candidates for a range of state and local offices.

This week focuses on candidates running in contested races for one Bonner County commissioner seat each in Districts 2 and 3, and for Bonner County assessor. A subsequent guide will focus on candidates seeking state legislative seats for District 1.

Save the date Monday, May 2 at 5:30 p.m. for a forum featuring Bonner County candidates at the Sandpoint High School Auditorium (410 S. Division St.). Virtual attendance will also be offered via Zoom. The forum will be presented by the *Reader*, sandpointonline.com and KRFY 88.5 FM.

Only contested primary races will be featured in the candidate questionnaires. For more information on candidates — including those running unopposed — in the primary election, visit Election Central on sandpointonline.com.

For all other election-related information, visit Bonner County Elections at bonnercountyid.gov.

Bonner County commissioner — Republican

1. Why are you running for Bonner County commissioner?
2. What would be your top three priorities if elected?
3. County planning and land use have become prominent issues over the past couple of years. As Bonner County prepares to update its Comprehensive Plan, how would you like to see development addressed?
4. Despite legal counsel determining in February that spending American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds would not obligate the county to enforce any federal mask or vaccine mandates, some constituents continue to voice their opposition to the money's use. Where do you stand on this issue?

DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATES

Jeff Connolly (incumbent)



Age: 63
Birthplace: Born in Spokane, Wash.; resident of Priest River, Idaho for 63 years.
Government service: 15 years Priest River City Council, five years county commissioner, several other advisory committees throughout the years.
Profession: Logger for 40 years, now commissioner.
Education: High school, life experiences.
Family: Wife Kris married

43 years, son Keith, Daughter Brittany, two granddaughters, two grandsons, dog Jax.

1. I am running for Bonner County commissioner because I am proud of the things I have accomplished over the last five years and wish to continue with projects and collaborations I have been working on.

2. Top three priorities: Dealing with Bonner County's continued growth, revision of the Comprehensive Plan and strategic planning in every sense.

3. Development needs to be addressed with collaboration. We need to stop screaming at each other and sit down and participate in civil discussions. The Comprehensive Plan needs to be developed in such a way that there is no room for misinterpretation. It is time to end the excessive litigation and develop the plan with that in mind.

4. I would like to move forward to come up with a plan to utilize this money in a cautious and fiscally responsible manner.

Randi Flaherty



Age: 57
Birthplace and residence: Birth place: Everett, Wash. Residence: Priest River, Idaho.
How many years lived in Bonner County: 30.
Government service: Bonner County (county government), 18 years.
Profession: Senior deputy recorder, 18 years.
Education: High school grad, NREMT 2004-2010, RN-A Emergency Department 2007-2017.
Family: Kelly Flaherty, husband of 33 years; one son, a daughter-in-law and two grown

grandchildren; one grand-dog, and our own yellow lab Simms.

1. For smart growth for Bonner County; to give back a voice to the people; to listen to the wants, needs and concerns of the people; and to create a plan for the future of the county and generations to come. To limit major development. To keep our county small-town living.

2. No. 1: To have a plan for infrastructure and impact fees to help pay for roads, bridges, water (aquifers), development and schools when allowed. To alleviate taxes for the elderly and fixed income and make development absorb higher taxes. Currently we need to have the Legislature add schools to public facilities, as they are not currently. With over 300 subdivisions processed last year and this coming year, we will have no way to pay for new schools to facilitate incoming families and children without creating more tax levies to the taxpayers. To not have the property owners pay for the profits of big development. No. 2: To have a current Comp Plan that is black-and-white and to have the Planning and Zoning commissioners all follow the same rules as laid out. To send that Comp Plan out to a third party with fresh eyes so we have no gray area or loopholes to fall into. No. 3: To be accountable and transparent in all aspects of county offices. To be a voice for the people of the county for which we serve.

3. To slow the growth and create a plan, and to create impact fees for development and allocate funds to infrastructure plans. To bring P&Z back together as one group. Two people from each side of Planning and Zoning commissions have recently resigned as they can see big issues in the split that will negatively affect the county. This should be a red flag to all.

4. I have concerns about the ARPA situation still being a line item of concern. The ARPA funds were kicked back and placed safely into a trust account with the Treasurer's Office as per the request from the treasurer at a commissioner meeting. No money has been spent out of these

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ARPA funds. Specific to ARPA there could be potential long-term negative attachments if we decide to spend. My opinion would be to send it back as we need to better vet all federal funds that come into the county.

Asia Williams



Age: 41.

Birthplace and residence:

Born Washington state. Reside in Blanchard, Idaho.

How many years lived in Bonner County: Over a decade.

Government service: If you are asking if I have worked for the government, yes.

Profession: Quality risk management and process improvement, health care, communication and leadership.

Education: MBA, B.A., SSBB (Six Sigma Black Belt), LPN.

Family: Yes.

1. To improve the overall function of county government through risk mitigation, management, communication, leadership and representation of Bonner County residents.

2. Restore representation to District 2, address the Comp Plan to include the critical habitat map and zoning map, transparency.

3. We don't increase local government and density to accommodate developers at the expense of current residents. Education on the purpose and use of a Comp Plan (i.e. the description of the zone doesn't mean every piece of land in the zone has to have the characteristics). Review of impact fees to address the impact to the infrastructure.

4. It is disingenuous to indicate that the issue was a mask/vaccine mandate. The legal opinion from the attorney did not address the concerns brought up. The ARPA document contains concerning language along with

reporting requirements that were not addressed. The opinion from the attorney says that we have a case to stand on to sue the federal government. Some of the concerning language that the press continues to ignore is: Respond to scale with respect to vaccinations ... shall not contravene (oppose) ... COVID-19 and the purpose of the American Rescue Plan Act ... that agencies must show they were negatively impacted by COVID and that the expenditures will help the impact, to name a few issues. None of this was addressed and the above is not a comprehensive list. The focus of the attorney's response was on vaccine mandates and masks. When asked about the lack of response regarding the other issues, no answer was or has been given to date. Outside of the language, the compliance requirements are also concerning and were not addressed, such as agreeing to grow government.

**No Democratic candidates have been listed for District 2 Bonner County Commissioner race.*

DISTRICT 3 CANDIDATES

Dave Bowman



Age: 65.

Birthplace and residence:

California/Selle Valley.

How many years lived in Bonner County: 11 years homeowner, permanent resident since summer of 2020.

Government service: None.

Profession: Retired.

Education: 37 years running a successful business that I started from nothing.

Family: Married, two daughters, two stepsons.

1. The People's voice is being ignored. I was recruited by longtime community residents because of my work as chairman of Keep Bonner County Rural, and the work I did in fighting the

flawed ice rink contract. I have the experience, qualifications and temperament to be one of your next county commissioners — for the People.

2. Fairness in land use: Respecting property rights for all, balancing the rights of individual property owners with those of the community.

Your tax dollars: I have 37 years in business solving complex problems. This gives me the experience and know-how to responsibly manage budgets. Every dollar spent by the county comes from the People and must be accounted for with that in mind.

Your county property: Commissioners manage all county-owned property. I will ensure that is done responsibly — no giveaways to private corporations or developers.

3. The Comprehensive Plan is the People's vision of our county's future. Our current Comprehensive Plan expresses that vision. The five Sub-Area Plans completed by the People over the last five years carry that vision forward and the updated Comprehensive Plan must honor the policies put forth in those plans. The People's vision does not include unbridled irresponsible growth, but rather emphasizes maintaining the rural character of Bonner County.

4. Spending ARPA funds would require agreeing to abide by unnamed and unknown future mandates and executive orders. We cannot allow the county to be bound to agreements that are not yet determined. If elected I will vote to return ARPA funds, and will not accept any federal or state funds with strings attached.

Rich Harter



Age: 51

Birthplace and residence:

Gary, Ind.; Clark Fork, Idaho.

How many years lived in Bonner County: 10 years

Government service: three

years U.S. Army, 10 years volunteer firefighter, five years fire chief.

Profession: Retired entrepreneur.

Education: High school.

Family: Wife and two daughters.

1. There is a complete lack of transparency with our current county commissioners. I will make sure that the residents of Bonner County always know about all county business. I will make sure that all county business is posted to the website so that no matter where you live you can easily know what your county commissioners are doing. I will work with state legislators to restore our lands that have been taken over by the feds. I will never over-tax our people, I will make sure that the county operates within a lean budget, always putting the people before the government.

2. A. Planning and Zoning needs to be put back together and required to acknowledge the work the local area sub-committees have already done to protect our land and community.

B. I would immediately have all county business posted to the website for easy access. I would also move the Tuesday business meeting to 5:30 p.m. so that people would not have to miss work to attend. We work for the people and we should respect that.

C. The Board of Equalization needs to act equally for residents. I would make sure that people get a fair hearing when disputing the exceedingly high assessments we have seen lately.

3. I would put P&Z back together and have them work with the local area sub-committees to ensure that our land and culture are preserved. I would work to expand the number of residents that are notified when a proposed zone change is in their area. I would listen to the public instead of doing legal gymnastics to allow development free reign. I would balance all of this with residents' private property rights.

4. ARPA would require Bonner County to sign a contract that would allow the federal government to change and/or alter the terms of the contract in any way they wanted in the future. If the feds wanted to add stipulations, reporting requirements or even vaccine mandates they could, and Bonner County would be required by law to comply. Or, we would

have to give the money back or pay to sue the federal government. With the 22 years of business experience I have, I have never seen a contract that was written where one side gets to change the contract at their own discretion. I would never sign such a contract.

Ron Korn



Age: 57.

Birthplace and residence: California, Bonner County.

How many years lived in Bonner County: 24.

Government service: None.

Profession: Self-employed 30+ years in construction.

Education: High school.

Family: Wife and three children.

1. I'm running for Bonner County commissioner because I want to give government back to the people. Our elected representatives seem to get into office then forget who they work for. Now more than ever it is crucial to elect representatives that will work for the People, and protect the People's best interests, rights and liberties. We must defend ourselves from unconstitutional and unlawful mandates. I want my children's and grandchildren's liberties to be secured.

2. A. To look into our county's property Comprehensive Plan and see where we can modify it to help preserve our rural community without compromising our inalienable rights, with the influx of new people moving here. It is important that we do not grow government, and that we don't infringe on personal rights. B. To dig into the county budget, looking at department line items including the commissioners to find the fat to cut our overall yearly budget. C. To replace the maritime flag in the commissioners' conference room, and others.

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3. I think we need to keep the higher density growth closer to the cities that have the infrastructure to handle it. If infrastructure needs upgrading due to the newer construction, then I believe the developers should have to pay for those upgrades. We need to look at sustainability issues such as water and sewer limitations. But our personal feelings should never trump our personal inalienable rights that are guaranteed to us by our Constitution.

4. Well there are over 1,400 pages of paperwork that comes with the ARPA money. I don't believe the county attorney has read all 1,400 pages, as I haven't. The federal government printed money out of thin air with the purpose of growing local and state government. I am against growing our local government. On the contrary, I want to shrink our local government. It's time for leadership in our government, not just compliance and the same old status quo.

Luke Omodt



Age: 45.

Birthplace and residence: Missoula, Mont.; Sandpoint, Idaho.

How many years lived in Bonner County: 43, minus college and military service.

Government service: 25 years public school teacher and retired military.

Profession: Government/economics teacher.

Education: B.A. Secondary Education Social Studies, minor in Government.

Family: Wife of 15 years Kami, daughters Sienna and Reagan.

1. I teach high school government and economics. I'm tired of watching Idaho kids voting with their feet and moving to areas with greater economic opportunity. Growth is here; if we want to protect the quality of life I experienced growing up here we need to prepare, plan and invest in our future. I recently retired from the Idaho Army National Guard after a 23-year career in the infantry and logistics to focus on local issues. Bonner County needs a plan and leadership that is prepared and capable to faithfully execute it. Bonner County isn't broken, but it needs a tune up.

2. Managing growth — plan, prepare, execute; increase economic opportunity for all of Bonner County; limited and civil government. We are blessed to live in Bonner County. The sky is not falling. We need to work together if we want to protect our rural heritage and character. County government plays an extremely important role in the maintenance of our roads and bridges, the development of a Comprehensive Plan and its subsequent zoning, fire, police, EMS, taxes and much more. We need elected officials who are focused on practical solutions that respect private property rights and individual liberties.

3. Growth is here, change is here, and people are not going to stop moving to Bonner County. There is a whole lot of room in the middle between "pave it all" and

"no growth." The Comprehensive Plan has been amended 33 times in the last two years, leading to pitchforks and torches at planning meetings, setting neighbor against neighbor. Development should occur in the incorporated areas where services are available. Zone changes should only occur if they benefit Bonner County. There should be multiple public workshops prior to public hearings. When the Comprehensive Plan update is complete the county commissioners and public must follow the plan without constant amendment.

4. ARPA funds should be used by Bonner County on one-time projects. An excellent use of these funds would be the construction of a new dispatch/EMS center on county property that would save local taxpayer dollars and improve public safety. Bonner County can use these funds to improve sewer and water systems protecting Lake Pend Oreille and Priest Lake while encouraging development in areas with public services. The national debt is atrocious. I'm not running for United States Congress. I want to serve Bonner County, and our infrastructure needs all the help it can get.

Brian Riley



Age: 48.

Birthplace and residence: Born in Laguna Beach, Calif., spent several summers in Bonner

County and have now lived here for 37 years.

Government service: [No answer.]

Profession: In 1996 I began my career at Riley Creek Lumber/Idaho Forest Group, where I worked my way up from an entry level sawmill position to becoming the Laclede plant superintendent for the last five years prior to retiring from IFG in January 2021. Currently I operate my own small business, Riley Resources, which is a log hauling company.

Education: Sandpoint High School, North Idaho College.

Family: I have been married to Tania (Davis) Riley for 25 years and we have two sons, Thomas and Michael.

1. As a long-time resident with five generations of roots in Bonner County, I feel we need leaders who are experienced in leadership and have conservatively managed budgets and projects in the several-million-dollar range. Proper leadership will be able to collaborate between party lines and the 18 county departments that report to the board. Experience in budgets will allow smart decision making to maintain low property taxes resulting in opportunities for all income levels in Bonner County to have a home and participate in our economy.

2. First, I want to gain trust among county residents, businesses and county employees. There will always be issues that are disagreed upon, but being transparent and having integrity will allow all of the county to understand why decisions are made. Addressing the current status of infrastructure would begin immediately. Many are not aware that there are several hundred construction projects currently permitted that will need to have infrastructure in place. Lastly, all department heads under the BOCC should address their

goals for the next five years as is expected in large business, so all can be made aware.

3. Planning and land use is a very hot topic currently. It is easy to jump on a bandwagon for either side of this, but my thoughts are we need opportunities for sustainable growth in both business and population in order to, at a minimum, match current needs in our county. We need teachers, nurses, mechanics and other middle-income professionals in our communities. From experience in running a local business, these individuals will not relocate to Bonner County if all they can afford for a residence is an apartment or a travel trailer. Limited supply and demand drives costs up — period.

4. I support taking the ARPA funds and using them to improve our infrastructure and community services over the next three years. Several opinions from legal counsel support utilizing these funds without concern of mask and vaccines mandates. If we cannot rely on legal counsel to advise on these issues, we have a greater concern to address, which is also why an experienced leader is needed for our county. We currently listen to our legal counsel in receiving federal funds and grants which are not questioned, so will we now want all federal funds eliminated from our budgets only to force increased property taxes to make up the balance shortfall?

**No Democratic candidates have been listed for District 3 Bonner County Commissioner race.*

*** Candidates in uncontested Bonner County races include: Bonner County Clerk — Republican (Michael Rosedale); Bonner County Coroner — Republican (Robert W. Beers); and Bonner County Treasurer — Republican (Clorissa A. Koster).*

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE MAY 17, 2022

There will be a candidates' forum at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 2 for all those running in contested races for Bonner County Commissioner (District 2 and District 3) as well as the Bonner County Assessor's race. There will be a second forum at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3 for Idaho Legislative candidates running in District 1 (more about this in the April 21 Reader). The forum is presented by the Reader, sandpointonline.com and KRFY 88.5 FM.