

# READER



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2023

Compiled by Zach Hagadone, Soncirey Mitchell and Ben Olson

1. Why are you running for mayor?

2. What would be your top three priorities if elected?

3. What do you see as the No. 1 challenge facing Sandpoint, and how do you propose to address it?

4. It's no secret that many people in the community feel City Hall is disconnected from what actually affects residents and have doubts about the equitable stewardship of their town on a number of fronts. If elected, how will you speak to these concerns and chart a path forward that a majority of citizens feel is in their best interests?

### Sandpoint Mayor

#### Jeremy Grimm



**Age:** 50  
**Birthplace and residence:** Northampton, Mass./Sandpoint  
**How many years lived in Bonner Co.:** 16.5  
**Past/current government service (if applicable):** vice chairman, Idaho Economic Advisory Council (August 2021-present); member, Idaho Governor's Workforce Development Task Force (February 2017-June 2017); commissioner, Sandpoint Urban Renewal Agency (June 2012-May 2017); Bonner County Airport Advisory Board member (2014-2015); Planners Legislative Technical Analysis Team, Association of Idaho Cities (August 2008-January 2015); Planning and Community Development director, city of Sandpoint (April 2007-January 2015); planning director, city of Buffalo, Wyo. (June 2004-April 2007)  
**Profession:** Land Use Planner, Owner Whiskey Rock Planning + Consulting  
**Education:** M.A., community planning

and development, Muskie School of Public Service, Portland, Maine; B.A., geomorphology, University of Denver, Denver; The Wiliston Northampton School, Easthampton, Mass.; Eaglebrook School, Deerfield, Mass.  
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1. The truth is I don't "want" to be mayor in the sense of desiring a status or position. I am running for this position because I am concerned about the direction of the city, and I deeply care about this community and the residents that make it an amazing place to live and raise our families. I believe that I have the proven skills, leadership qualities and understanding of city workings to be an effective leader to guide our town with financial responsibility to ensure a strong future for our community.

2. a. Get back to basics and ensure that we take care of our existing infrastructure before embarking on new projects. We need to pause nonessential projects and studies and begin funding the backlog of deferred or ignored maintenance.

b. Engage with neighborhoods, listen to concerns, and discuss opportunities and solutions. Prioritize residents over tourists. Focus our resources promoting quality

and sustainable housing for the residents of our community.

c. Review the administrative and organizational structure of City Hall and determine what changes can be made to reduce turnover, enhance levels of service and opportunity for improved public engagement.

3. Lack of attention and prioritization of infrastructure needs. I realize that providing water, sewer, decent roads and related services is not a sexy platform upon which to run for mayor. This sort of "meat-and-potatoes" work certainly is not resume-building for city staff and lacks the promotional fluff that catches headlines. It is however the foundation that our community depends on. I will address our infrastructure needs by cutting "cotton-candy" projects like the Downtown Redesign effort from the budget and redirecting all available revenue toward the backlog of street maintenance and related essential service needs.

4. Residents and business owners should not only be allowed but encouraged to share their desires and concerns with the city. As a father of two teenagers in a busy household, I understand

the importance and challenges of authentic communication and the need for respectful dialogue. On a community level, understanding one another's values, hopes and concerns is the foundation of effective communication and a pillar of excellent leadership. To better engage residents, I would personally meet quarterly with neighborhood groups to hear and understand neighborhood-specific concerns and be a liaison between the residents and those who work for them.