

## **Bandon Mayoral Candidate**

### **Mary Schamehorn:**

*1. What in your background, education, and experience makes you a good candidate for office, and what do you consider important skills and qualities for a mayor to possess?*

As far as my background is concerned, I have over 30 years of service in local government, including nine years on the Bandon City Council (1977-1986), many years as chair of the Bandon Planning Commission and I am now in my 18th year as Mayor. I am running unopposed for another two-year term as mayor. I am also the secretary of the board of directors of the Southern Coos Health District, and this is the third time I have been elected to the hospital board, beginning back in 1962 when I was the youngest person ever to be elected to the board at age 23. I served again in the early 2000s and was last elected in July of 2021.

To be a good public servant, you need to be willing to listen to the concerns of the people in your city, and not just to your friends. People from all walks of life contact me, mostly through email, and I never hesitate to answer them or at least find the answer to the information they are seeking.

Being educated about the issues is also very important.

*2. What do you see as top priorities and challenges for the city that you hope to address?*

Over 20 years ago, a disgruntled citizen started an initiative petition, which was approved by the voters, that requires the city of Bandon to go to the voters to raise utility rates and most other fees, including the recent increase in the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) , which was approved by a large margin. Bandon is one of only 11 or 12 cities in the state that operates its own electric utility (as a direct customer of Bonneville Power Administration), and that coupled with water and sewer, comprise our utility department. Because we cannot raise our rates without a vote of the people, we often are not eligible for state and federal grant money as we cannot guarantee that we can repay it. It is a top

priority of mine that we convince the voters how important it is that the rate-setting authority be returned to the city council.

I also understand the urgency of approving Ballot Measure 6-204, the five-year levy to increase jail funding and capacity for the Coos County Jail. Crime is the number one problem facing Coos County, and the lack of jail beds, coupled with laws like Senate Bill 49 (the no-bail law) and BM110, which decriminalized user grade amounts of heroin, meth and cocaine, have made our residents much less safe.

*3. What steps if any can the city take to be resilient in the face of climate changes?*

One of our primary responsibilities is to provide potable water to our citizens, and because of the ever present threat of a drought which could impact our two sources of water (Geiger and Ferry creeks) we are actively seeking other sources of water, including the possibility of ground water wells or an expensive off-channel reservoir.