

City Council Meeting

October 28, 2009



CITY OF
REXBURG
America's Family Community

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October 28, 2009

Acting Mayor Christopher Mann
Council Members:
Christopher Mann – Council President
Rex Erickson Randy Schwendiman
Bart Stevens Richard Woodland
Adam Stout

City Staff:
Stephen Zollinger – City Attorney
Richard Horner – Finance Officer
John Millar – Public Works Director
Val Christensen – Building Official
Blair Kay – City Clerk

7:00 P.M. City Hall – Pledge to the Flag

Roll Call of Council Members:

Council Member Woodland, Council Member Erickson, Council Member Stevens, Council Member Schwendiman, Council Member Stout, and Council President and Acting Mayor Mann were in attendance.

Items for Consideration:

A. Review mayoral candidates for appointment to the Office of Mayor of Rexburg.

Mayor Mann introduced the topic seeking candidates for mayor. He turned the chair over to Council Member Erickson to conduct the candidates input portion of the meeting. Council Member Stout, Council Member Woodland, and Mayor Mann stepped down from the Dias to participate in the process.

Council Member Erickson explained the process to select the participant from the list by drawing names out of the hat; picking candidates at random to speak to three questions:

1. **Introduce yourselves.**
2. **Explain how you see the job as mayor.**
3. **What do you want to accomplish as mayor?**

Council Member Erickson asked City Attorney Zollinger to explain the process in more detail. Some of the applicants were not residents of Rexburg as defined by Idaho code.

TITLE 50 MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS CHAPTER 6 MAYOR

50-601. Qualifications. Any person shall be eligible to hold the office of mayor who is a "**qualified elector**" of the city at the time his declaration of candidacy or declaration of intent is submitted to the city clerk and remains a qualified elector during his term of office.

The term of office of mayor shall be for a period of four (4) years except as otherwise specifically provided. He shall take office at the time and in the manner provided for installation of councilmen.

A "qualified elector" is one registered on the county election rolls as a resident in a verifiable address. The code requires the elector to be registered 30 days before the candidate files to be a candidate.

Jonathan Garrett Larson (DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS OF STATUTE 50-601)

He spoke explaining he is not from Rexburg and he is not a political person; however, he is a leader and he grew up in Spokane, Washington. He comes to Rexburg every year and he loves this town. Last night he knocked doors doing a survey. He asked the question "What do the citizens want in a mayor?"

Today he talked to leader on campus he learned some good things. He wanted to let the citizens know whoever is chosen needs to represent the people with honesty, vision, and what is most important for the city. He said the most important thing is to bless the lives of the people.

Garth R. Oakey (DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS OF STATUTE 50-601)

Michael Alen Cousin (DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS OF STATUTE 50-601)

Laurene S. Jackson (Withdrawn from consideration)

City Attorney Zollinger noted fourteen of the seventeen applicants were verified as qualified candidates by the Madison County Clerk's office. There were four candidates that did not make the final list. One applicant does not reside in Rexburg; one applicant withdrew; and two applicants were not verified as qualified electors by Madison County.

Council Member Erickson said there would be no questions from the City Council or the Applicants to eliminate the hassles of back and forth conversations. The candidates were invited to speak for about five minutes. He proceeded to draw names to start the process of hearing from the qualified candidates. The first name drawn by Council Member Erickson was Troy E. Rasmussen.

Candidate 1:

Troy E. Rasmussen was honored to be an applicant for the office of mayor. He has many fond memories of growing up in Rexburg. He gave a brief history of his life in Rexburg. He went to Washington school. He graduated from Madison High School in 1994. After two semesters, he dropped out of Ricks College to go to work full time. He worked at Albertsons and Teton lakes Golf Course in Rexburg. He got married at 21 before moving away to Logan, Utah. He worked as a truck driver before enrolling in Utah State University for four and a half years. He earned two degrees (economics and political science) at Utah State University; He went for three years to Southern Illinois University law School. He has a family in Rexburg and he sees a lot of opportunity for Rexburg. He moved back to Rexburg a year and a half ago, and he noticed the new Madison High School being built; also, BYU-I went to a four year University. Rexburg is a safe, friendly, community. It has grown and blossomed into a beautiful Rose. He wants to be a part of the economic team as Rexburg grows. He believes in the Constitution of the United States. He noted citizens voluntarily give up their rights to the local governments who regulate and govern the community. Government officials should not be abusive in their power.

Candidate 2:

Richard S. Woodland enjoyed serving the City of Rexburg for two years on the City Council. He ran his campaign on transparency and fiscal responsibility. Rexburg continues to grow and change. He can add to the progress of the city by working with a strong City Council. Transparency is extremely important. People wonder what city government is up. He loves Rexburg as his town. He and his wife plan on staying in Rexburg; noting even winter wont drive them away. If he becomes mayor he will continue to fight for transparency, accountability and he will help with the good things of Rexburg.

Candidate 3:

Paul Scott Ferguson said Rexburg is a great place to raise a family. It is a great place to see posterity grow up. He has lived in Rexburg his whole life. We are in a tough time right now with trust, etc. He respects the City Council and he believes he can work with them. He worked on Campus for 29 years in various leadership positions including public relations and teaching. It would be a pay cut for him; however, he is responding to an inner sense of a call to duty. He could make a contribution to the city in this two year period. He would put in a hard two year interim mayor position to work with the City Council. He is responding to a great opportunity to do the right thing for Rexburg. He does not know how it will work out with BYU-I. He would do a two year sabbatical and he would be willing to give the mayoral salary back to the city, based on how his financial relationship with BYU-I is resolved. He is confident the City Council will pick the best person for Rexburg.

Candidate 4:

Adam Kevin Stout clarified his feelings; stating it would be a great opportunity to work with the city to get some things done. He is only interested in a two year period; however, he may consider running in the next election. He would shift the City Council's duties away from the committee liaison approach to being more involved with City Hall and other city functions; including watching expenses, budgets, increasing city park capacity as the population grows. He sees the need for more attention to adding city

parks, regardless of how the legal case for the funding of Riverside Park turns out. He said it was frustrating to work on the budget this year; noting the City Council is working on the fringes. He wants to be more involved with the budgets and the bigger issues. He proposed more work on economic development and planning by bringing back a position to do both economic development work and planning work. The position would be funded out of the general fund. This position would work on general planning issues like recent work on the PRO-Zone, PEZ Zone, etc. instead of complaisance issues. He referred to Pocatello as an example to emulate. He would take steps to increase “fund raising” for Westwood Theatre. He agreed with Council Member Woodland on having more accountability. He agreed transparency is a problem because the budget is hard to get a copy to read and to understand. He referred to a recent year’s budget where a transfer of \$35,000 was done from one department’s budget for a secretary to the Mayor/City Council Budget. He has received comments from people stating this transfer looked like the City Council received a \$35,000 raise. “How could you give yourselves a \$35,000 raise?” The transfer was not understood by those reviewing the budget. He would have the City Council focus more on departments and department heads to make sure the departments have what they need.

Candidate 5:

Robert Lloyd Ricks grew up in Lyman and he worked on the family farm while growing up. He went to the Porter Park swimming pool as a youth. He mentioned the Idaho Supreme Court’s upcoming review of the funding mechanism for the proposed Riverside Park Development which includes a Lazy River. He did not feel Rexburg had the climate for a Lazy River complex compared to St. George, Utah because of the short 2 ½ month summer season in Rexburg. He mentioned some of his job history starting with a job moving irrigation sprinkler pipe. His subsequent applications noted he had been a “hydro aluminum transport specialist”. This made him feel more important. He felt under trained and uneducated for some jobs. He started a job as a dish washer which turned into a job managing a restaurant. He is still washing dishes fifteen years later. He has learned by doing hard work. He is a scout master training young men into grown men. Two years ago he did leadership training for a week. He determined from the training he wanted to make a difference. He loves to talk about politics. The position of mayor should be a voice of the people, not your own personal voice. As the Mayor of Rexburg, he will listen to the people.

Candidate 6:

Donna Benfield presented her unique qualifications to be Mayor of America’s Family Community. She read the following statement:

Mr. Mayor, members of the council, good evening. My name is Donna Benfield and I come to you this evening to present what I consider to be my unique qualifications for the position of Mayor of **“America’s Family Community”**, Rexburg, Idaho. Because of my years of experience in administration, I believe I am able to help our City make a transition from one Mayor to another **easier** than any other candidate. Having served as a city councilmember for eight years and having served two mayors, I have an advantage of perspective..... Here is what I will bring to the table as your Mayor of Rexburg.

- I will have well-planned, organized, and efficient council meetings.
- Documents will be distributed in sufficient time for your preparation.
- Proper timing will be anticipated for the necessary “3 readings” of all ordinances.
- Any appointments, committee or otherwise, **will** be made by the City Council and the Mayor working together.

Councilmen, there has never been a time when people are more ready to be included than now. People are interested, people are asking questions, and they should be. They are the customers of our \$47M corporation. Each one of you knows how you treat your customers, or clients, when they come to your business. It should and will be no different here at City Hall. I am ready to be the manager and CEO of this corporation. When people come to city hall they will leave feeling like **they are important and we care**. I love going by the City parks now; they have never looked better. Our golf courses are outstanding. Thank you for the attention and direction to these departments. People that know me know that I will place a high priority on our infrastructure, with Police, Fire, Emergency Services, Water and Sewer and a **big** emphasis on our Roads. I don’t know all the right answers, but I don’t need to. With quality people serving on the City Council, we can work together to make informed and considerate decisions for the betterment of Rexburg. But that only works when the City Council is kept in the loop. I will include all of you in every pertinent decision. A weekly update of all departments and projects is critical and will be distributed to you.

We *will* work together to bring better paying jobs to Rexburg. I am a firm believer in surrounding myself with knowledgeable people. As your Mayor I would not fear going to experts and asking their input. I would like to thank the council for doing a great job. Hopefully, I will be able to call on each of you for help in the future. Each of you has your own expertise and I will need your input.

Our corporation is in the business of providing City services. It is my goal to provide those services at the lowest possible cost. We *must* be good stewards of the people's tax dollars. I intend to be fiscally conservative and focus on our needs. I do not like or want to raise taxes. I believe in cutting costs wherever possible, and when I become your Mayor I will immediately implement an incentive program for cost savings suggestions in every department.

We *will* have a "business friendly" City Hall and although we have good relations with our University, I will work to strengthen those relations for the betterment of Rexburg. Rexburg *needs* BYU Idaho and BYU Idaho *needs* Rexburg. I am ready for the job, I am eager to get to work, and I am uniquely qualified to do it right. I ask for your vote and your support.

I humbly, but firmly, promise you my utmost effort to do a good job and to not disappoint you or the fine residents of my home, Rexburg, Idaho. Thank you for your support.

Candidate 7:

Gary Floyd Leikness presented a synopsis of his history. He was laid off from the Rexburg Planning and Zoning Administrator's job in July, 2009. He is currently looking for a job. This is one of the few jobs in Rexburg that fit his background and expertise. He is from Colorado; however, he did get his higher education in Oregon obtaining a master degree in planning. He spent time in Los Angeles, California before coming to Rexburg to go to Ricks College where he met his beautiful wife. He later graduated with a Geography degree with an emphasis on planning at BYU Provo. After obtaining his Geography degree, he attended graduate school at the University of Oregon. He explained everyone was shocked when he lost the planning job. The last ten years he has been studying communities and how they use "Smart Growth" development.

The City of Rexburg is confronted with these growth issues every day. He was shocked to lose his planning position; referring to Council Member Stout's comments to have less job emphasis on the enforcement side and more emphasis on the planning side. Council Member Stout mentioned the PEZ Zone which was completed when Mr. Leikness was the Planning Administrator. He was always looking forward with planning issues; however, he was unable to do the planning he wanted to do because enforcement was an issue to take up his time. He did not make a lot of friends doing enforcement; however, it is the law. The job of mayor would not be elected position for this interim two year period. As an appointed mayor, Mr. Leikness would work with the City Council as elected officials who are the people's representatives. He is not the voice of the mayor only the voice of an appointed mayor.

This position will give the City Council a taste of city government with a city administrator. He is a city employee that is his background. He would be a good mayor due to his past relationships with staff. He would not take two years to get to know staff. He will help the process be more seamless by working with staff. The city needs more input from staff at the planning meetings. He was solo at most of the time at the planning meetings. He will build on University relationships. He wants to create trust and review urban strategies; not just to grab money. He will push for a local access channel versus minutes to have more accountability. He did not think minutes gave the total story of a meeting. Public access channels allow viewer to watch and re-watch the meetings at their convenience. He would push to have subdivisions reviewed in public hearings.

Candidate 8:

Keith George Ferrin thanked the council for taking their job seriously. He once had a boss he would follow around the world, he was very trust worthy therefore he has tried to emulate his boss. He has lived in Rexburg three years, just opened the fun center. When he moved with his family his teenagers wanted to do more in Rexburg, they built an entertainment center. He has been with UPS for 23 years before opening a new business. His skills are industrial engineering, solving problems, getting to the root of problems, evaluating solutions, and presenting those solutions to others to make the best decision. He gained a security mind set, for two years he was in the Security Department. It is critical to protect people as assets as well as the assets of any organization in Rexburg. There are always two sides to a story, he learned to interview, to set goals, to motivate, evaluate and discipline. The mayor would be dealing with employees, controlling costs, specific services, sewer, water, roads, and protection to families

and property is critical. It is his position to work with the City Council; he would need much input. His views on the city and government are government is formed by the people, for the people, therefore open up the city to the people so their voices may be heard. He would bring love to the people, understanding of government, and providing services to the people.

Candidate 9:

Steven Warren Milius is a newcomer to Rexburg for past two years. He grew up in the southwest end of the Salt Lake Valley working various jobs. He is a hands on type person. He applied to get involved in government and with the people of Rexburg. He has a family, some are in college. He would like to be part of the change you want to see. He believes in government transparency. The changes in government around this country are to let the people know what is going on. He would make sure government is understood by the people.

Candidate 10:

Chris West said he is the youngest applicant. He chose to run for City Council and he has lived in Rexburg for four years. People have asked why he is considering the appointment to be mayor. His reply was, why not. Any position that would allow service to the people he would take. The whole thing is about service. The next two years would be serving as an appointment not an elected official. He would need help from the council elected officials. It's important to serve the community as a whole and make hard decisions that are not always popular decisions. He sees the mayor's position as someone who represents the community as a whole, as a father of the community that lives with the principles of integrity. The position is for the people. He would not make promises until he was there. He understands the trust placed in public servants. He has an open mind. He hopes to serve the people of Rexburg as Mayor or on the City Council. He is fiscally conservative and can use common sense for the future. He will live by these principles.

Candidate 11:

Thomas Herbert graduated from Bonneville High School, in Idaho Falls. He later moved to Rexburg. He has background in environmental engineer for municipalities dealing with infrastructure. He has been a project manager for multi-billion dollar projects dealing with contractors and supervisors. He feels he could work comfortable with the council. He served in the National Guard for 22 years as major; he was major in the Air Force in 2004, and served active duty after September 11, 2001. He knows about service to country. He wants to serve because he likes this community; it is a great place. He moved to Rexburg four years ago and bought the Great Harvest store. He has a great understanding of this position. He has a Masters Degree from Utah State University in engineering technology. He believes he can deal well with technical issues. Being a business man, he feels comfortable dealing with other people, listening to what they have to say and involving others input. Having volunteer service and as scout master for 22 years he feel he can give back to the community that he and his family have come to appreciate. He saw great opportunities, specifically as a pilot and he asked to serve on the Airport Board, because he saw great potential and he wanted to help out. He would like to be more involved with the community.

Candidate 12:

Gregory F. Moffat was born and raised in Teton Valley. He came to Rexburg in 1967. He remembers when the mayor made the best hamburgers in Rexburg and he wants to bring somebody in to make the best hamburgers. He attended Ricks College on a majority of scholarship and later served a mission in the North and Far East, speaking the Japanese language. He returned to Ricks College and he finished an Associate degree and married his wife and raised a family. He has a lot of ties in Rexburg. He later graduated at Boise State University with a Bachelors in Political Science and a Minor emphasis in Economics and Accounting. He and his wife made their home in Rexburg where he did construction to build business buildings and homes after the flood of 1976. He is sorry the community had to go through the disaster, but you learn what kind of people are in the community and their integrity. It was interesting to see how fast the community came together and how people were willing to help one another. As a service orientated person he worked in the sheriff's office as a reserve in 1981 until 1984. Until 1982 he worked as deputy and then ran for sheriff in 1992 where he was successful as the only elected republican. As sheriff he managed multi-billion dollar budgets. He understands the accounting and budgeting process. As mayor he would be concerned with infrastructure, law enforcement, and other emergency services are under paid. He worked to raise wages for deputies. With the support of the City Police, Mayor, City Council and the City of Rexburg; they were able to pass a jail bond serving Madison County, Rexburg and other communities. While as sheriff he served as President in the Tri – County Association, Sheriff Association, he was trained through the State Sheriff Association and FBI. He has dealt with multitudes of people; there are no bad people only those who don't understand the word responsibility. He sees the mayor working hand in hand with the City Council. His concern with the City of Rexburg is fiscal. He is conservative, pro-life, pro-gun and enjoys seeing children in the parks

playing baseball etc. He believes the city needs to pursue projects that are within the budget. He appreciates the opportunity to speak.

Candidate 13:

Christopher James Mann indicated he is not the only qualified person; however, he feels he is the most qualified. He brings a lot of experience from the private and public community. For 27 years he has worked running a business with 222 employees, managing the labor, the cost, and running a business. He was able to do this without any subsidy from the university. He gave his history with proven track record: he served for five years on Traffic and Safety Committee, four years City Council, two years as City Council President, four times chairman of Whoopee Days, board of directors of Chamber of Commerce and The United Way, and one month as Acting Mayor. He is optimistic about Rexburg; if appointed mayor he will continue to maintain quality of life, preserve all that is good about Rexburg, and he is committed to improve where we have fallen short. Rexburg needs good roads, good public service, a good environment and safe environment with good programs and designated areas to contribute to a better quality of life. He is a strong advocate of strong neighborhoods. Council sets policy, mayor enforces policy. He is committed to bring safe funding for roads and infrastructure. To keep and maintain fiscal accountability, bring integrity to City Hall, to lead, teach and work with the City Council. He does not have a wish list, all will be treated the same. He is to help get Rexburg moving again. He believes our best days are ahead. He feels a strong support from the community. The challenge is to pick the best person for mayor. He pledges his support whoever is chosen to be mayor.

Council Member Erickson read a quote from the last week’s newspaper. The quote came from a City Council Member from another city. It stated the mayor’s job is administrative and enforcement, the City Council’s job is law making and authorization. Everyone needs to keep that in mind. He ensured everyone the City Council will put in the time to pick the right person for “Mayor of Rexburg”.

Council Member Stout moved to go into Executive Session per Idaho State Statute 67-2345 (b) To consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student; Council Member Woodland seconded the motion;

Roll call vote:

Those voting aye

- Council Member Stout
- Council Member Schwendiman
- Council Member Stevens
- Council President Mann
- Council Member Erickson
- Council Member Woodland

Those voting nay

None

The motion carried.

Executive Session

Executive Session ended.

Adjournment

Attest:

Christopher Mann
Acting Mayor

Blair D. Kay
City Clerk