

Q&A with Mandan School Board candidates

To continue to inform readers about important issues in Morton County and its communities, the Morton County News Journal is publishing a question-and-answer segment with each of the candidates running for Mandan School Board. Six residents are running for three seats and include Justin Bailey, Julie Skaret, Ashley Jacobchick, Darren Haugen, Dusty Simmons and Jill Miller. Haugen is the lone incumbent running for reelection. Check back next week for more interviews!

Ashley Jacobchick

Q. Please share a short bio.

A. My name is Ashley Jacobchick - I am a lifelong Mandan resident alongside my husband Josh, a graduate of Mandan High School, and a parent with two children currently in the Mandan Public School system. Professionally I work as a clinic manager where I oversee daily operations, lead a team, and focus on communication, accountability, and organization. I care deeply about our community and believe strong schools are essential to the future success of our students and the Mandan community as a whole.

Q. Why have you decided to run for the Mandan school board?

A. I decided to run for the Mandan School Board because I care deeply about the future of our students, our schools, our educators, and our community. As both a parent and a graduate of the Mandan school system, I understand the important role our schools play in shaping opportunities for students and families. I want to help ensure our schools continue providing strong academics, safe learning environments, and support for both students and

educators. I also believe families deserve transparency and thoughtful leadership in decisions that impact education.

Q. What experience do you have that potentially prepares you for this role?

A. In my role as a clinic manager, I lead a team, manage operations, solve problems, and make decisions that require accountability, organization, and communication. I work closely with people every day and understand the importance of listening, collaboration, and professionalism. In addition to my professional experience, I bring the perspective of a parent with children in our schools, a lifelong community member, and someone who values servant leadership, responsibility, and long-term planning.

Q. If elected, what would be your top three priorities you'd want to address first?

A. My top priorities would be 1. Supporting strong academic outcomes by keeping focus on core learning areas such as reading, writing, math, and critical thinking while preparing students for real-world success. 2. Maintaining safe, structured and supportive learning environments where students can thrive both academically and personally. 3. Supporting and retaining quality teachers and staff while maintaining transparency and responsible decision-making for families and the community.

Q. What do you see as the biggest challenge facing our school district and how would you deal with it?

A. One of the biggest challenges facing school districts today is balancing growth, student needs, staffing, and financial responsibility while continuing to provide high-quality education. I believe addressing these challenges starts with thoughtful planning, open communication, and keeping students at the center

of every decision. I also believe it is important to support and retain great educators, maintain strong relationships with families, and make responsible budget decisions that focus resources where they can make the greatest impact.

Q. How will you make yourself accessible and support parents, the community, teachers and staff?

A. I believe listening and communication are essential to effective leadership. If elected, I will make myself accessible by being present, approachable, and willing to listen to concerns, ideas, and feedback from parents, teachers, staff, and community members. I believe people deserve transparency and respectful communication, even when opinions differ. I want to help foster a positive relationship between the school board, our educators, families and the community while making decisions that are thoughtful, balanced and student-focused.

Justin Bailey

Q. Please share a short bio.

A. I am a follower of Christ, a husband, and a father. I enjoy the outdoors, exercising and learning. My professional career is in communications for North Dakota's Vision Zero initiative where the goal is to eliminate traffic fatalities.

Q. Why have you decided to run for the Mandan school board?

A. I am running to help ensure every student has access to the opportunities I once overlooked in my own education. My goal is to help build a district where students are challenged, supported, and prepared for success.

Q. What experience do you have that potentially prepares you for this role?

A. My professional experience provides a broad perspective on education-from higher education to my work

at the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. Locally, serving on the Mandan Public Schools Student Achievement Committee has strengthened my commitment to measurable outcomes and responsible use of district resources.

In addition, my background in healthcare and my current role at the NDDOT give me an employer's perspective. I understand workforce needs and what it takes to manage complex programs with accountability and integrity.

Q. If elected, what would be your top three priorities you'd want to address first?

A. My top three priorities are measurable student achievement, supporting educators, and ensuring our students graduate Choice Ready for either a career or heading off to college.

Q. What do you see as the biggest challenge facing our school district and how would you deal with it?

A. The biggest issue I see is health care costs. My approach to managing this is to build adequate healthcare reserve funding and prioritize communications within Mandan school district to educate our staff on our healthcare plans. This education would benefit teachers and the district by saving money and ensuring staff members know the best options for where they can receive healthcare.

Q. How will you make yourself accessible and support parents, the community, teachers and staff?

A. I plan to attend many community events and drop in to classrooms when available. I would like to understand the staffs approach and learn how students interact with our educators.

Parents have an important voice that needs to be heard. I plan to listen, and carefully consider issues that affect our learners and their families.

sample ballot page 3

NO-PARTY PRIMARY BALLOT	MEASURES BALLOT	MEASURES BALLOT
<p>Park Board Member Flasher Park Vote for no more than TWO names</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jeannina Fitterer</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Donnell Doll</p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p>Park Board Member Glen Ullin Park Vote for no more than TWO names</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Kenyon Opp</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Adam Schantz</p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p>Park Board Member New Salem Park Vote for no more than TWO names</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Keith Fitzgerald</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Andrea Mathern</p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p>Park Board Member Hebron Park Vote for no more than THREE names</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Todd Edmond</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Sylvester Sletten</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Katie Keith</p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p>Park Board Commissioner Mandan Park Vote for no more than THREE names</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Stan Scott</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Miles Mehlhoff</p> <p><input type="radio"/> JR Carter</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Layn Mudder</p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p>School Board Member Mandan School District Vote for no more than THREE names</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Justin Bailey</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Julie Cronin Skaret</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Ashley Jacobchick</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Darren Haugen</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Dusty Simmons</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jill Miller</p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote by darkening the oval (●) next to the word "YES" or "NO" following the explanation of each measure.</p> <p>Constitutional Measure No. 1 (Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4007, 2025 Session Laws, Ch. 615)</p> <p>This constitutional measure would amend and reenact section 9 of article III and section 16 of article IV of the Constitution of North Dakota, relating to requiring each resolution adopted by the legislative assembly proposing a constitutional amendment and each initiative petition and measure proposing a constitutional amendment be comprised of a single subject. The proposed amendment is summarized as follows: constitutional amendments would be limited to one subject. The Secretary of State shall not approve an initiative petition for circulation if the Secretary determines that the proposed amendment comprises more than one subject. Additionally, the legislative assembly is required to limit proposed amendments to the constitution to one subject.</p> <p>The estimated fiscal impact of this measure is none.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes - Means you approve the measure summarized above.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No - Means you reject the measure summarized above.</p> <p>Glen Ullin City Measure No. 1</p> <p>A ballot measure to allow chickens within the City of Glen Ullin</p> <p>By voting "yes," you indicate that you are in favor of the City of Glen Ullin enacting an ordinance to allow chickens in the City of Glen Ullin. By voting "no," you indicate that you are not in favor of the City of Glen Ullin enacting an ordinance to allow chickens in the City of Glen Ullin</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes - Means you approve the measure summarized above.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No - Means you reject the measure summarized above.</p>	<p>Mandan City Measure No. 1</p> <p>Shall the City of Mandan Board of City Commissioners be authorized to impose a three fourths of a percent (0.75%) tax on gross receipts of retailers from all sales at retail and use tax as permitted by N.D.C.C. Ch. 57-39.2, Ch. 57-39.5, Ch. 57-39.6, Ch. 57-40.2, and related chapters, to be dedicated as follows Fire Department Facility Construction, Equipment, Improvement, and Maintenance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of Fire Station #3, including the initially needed equipment and vehicles to operate the station. • Fire Station #1, including necessary equipment, vehicles, improvement, and maintenance. • Fire Station #2, including necessary equipment, vehicles, improvement, and maintenance. • Land purchase for future Fire Station #4. <p>Such sales and use tax revenues may be pledged to the payment of financing loans and bonds issued for such purposes in anticipation of the collection and receipt of such sales and use tax, and if so pledged, the sales and use tax may not be repealed so long as any such financing loans, bonds, or bonds refunding the bonds are outstanding.</p> <p>The sales and use tax shall replace the three fourths of a percent (0.75%) sales and use tax approved by voters on June 9, 2015, to finance Mandan Park District facilities. The park district sales tax is expected to end on or about June 30, 2028. The projects funded by this measure are part of the Fire Department's long-range 10-year strategic planning process. Based on current estimates, the total cost of these planned expenditures is not anticipated to exceed \$14 million.</p> <p>The sales and use tax described above shall be for a period of twenty (20) years commencing July 1, 2028, or until any bonds issued to finance such purposes are paid.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes - Means you approve the measure summarized above.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No - Means you reject the measure summarized above.</p>



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