

ELECTION COVERAGE

Letter to Wishek residents from Brenda Dohn

My decision to resign from my position as Mayor was not made lightly, nor was it based on one meeting or a single disagreement regarding a proposed data center project. In my resignation letter, I cited irreconcilable differences with the council, and I believe the community deserves clarification on what led me to that conclusion.

Over time, a pattern developed where my recommendations, financial concerns, and long-term planning efforts were consistently unsupported by the council majority. The most significant turning point began during last year's discussions regarding employee pay raises. At that time, I presented detailed financial information showing the projected impact that 2%, 3%, and 4% wage increases would have on the city's budget and future utility costs. I strongly recommended at most a 2% increase with a maximum pay ceiling to remain fis-

cally responsible and operate within our means.

That recommendation was not followed, and a 4% increase was approved. Today, our residents are experiencing the effects of those decisions through increased utility costs and growing public frustration.

Unfortunately, the past several months of meetings have become increasingly difficult as council discussions are now influenced by the personal impact those increases have created, rather than what may be in the long-term best interest of the community.

As Mayor, I had upcoming meetings and planning efforts scheduled that were intended to position our city for future success. However, effective leadership requires a governing body that works together with trust, shared direction, and support. I no longer felt confident that my time, research, and recommendations would be given practical consideration or

carried forward in a productive manner.

For that reason, I believe it is in both my personal best interest and the city's best interest for the current council to move forward without my leadership.

I continue to believe that the individuals elected to serve our communities must understand municipal finances, operate within realistic budgets, and remain neutral until all information and public discussion have been fully presented. In a small community especially, good governance requires leadership that considers both the positive and negative impacts of every decision, including the long-term consequences those choices may create for future generations.

Serving this community has been an honor, and I remain grateful for the residents who supported me throughout my time in office.

Sincerely,
Brenda Soelberg Dohn



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Election from front: State's attorney, sheriff, and official county paper among county-wide elections to decide at primary

Clerk of Court and a lifelong member of the community. She previously served as Deputy Recorder.

State's Attorney

Three candidates—Alisha Ankers, Gordon A. Dexheimer, and Elise Fischer—are seeking the office of McIntosh County State's Attorney. The office prosecutes criminal cases and provides legal counsel to county officials.

Alisha Ankers

Ankers currently serves as the part-time Assistant State's Attorney for McIntosh County, appointed in December 2024. She has been a licensed attorney in North Dakota and Minnesota since 1992, practicing statewide in family law. Her experience includes serving as an assistant public defender in Cass County, handling cases from small claims to appeals before the North Dakota Supreme Court, and serving as City Attorney for Lehr. She opened a Wishek satellite office in 2014 and has worked extensively in the Southeast Judicial District.

Her stated priorities include ensuring fair and

efficient delivery of justice, maintaining transparency with law enforcement and county officials, modernizing the office, and preparing it for future leadership. She emphasizes a commitment to public safety and community engagement.

Gordon A. Dexheimer

Dexheimer is a solo attorney in Wishek and has lived in the community for just over a year. He reports nearly 40 years of legal experience, including service as a federal attorney with SBA Disaster Services assisting victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. His background includes roles as State's Attorney for McHenry County, Assistant State's Attorney in Williams County, prosecutor for the City of Fargo, and public defender in Grand Forks and Fargo. He also held leadership positions with Legal Assistance of North Dakota and Legal Services of North Dakota.

Dexheimer states that the State's Attorney should reside in the county full-time and emphasizes community awareness, public

outreach, and availability to law enforcement and county agencies.

Elise Fischer

Fischer is an attorney practicing family law and civil litigation, with experience in criminal defense and prosecution. Although newer to the community, she notes that she has served Ashley and Wishek since 2020 through her family's business, Fischer Fireworks, which has allowed her to meet local families and become invested in the community. Her prior public service includes work as an Assistant State's Attorney for Morton County from 2022–2024.

Her stated priorities include ensuring criminal cases are handled fairly, efficiently, and consistently; promoting accountability through proper enforcement of North Dakota law; and providing reliable guidance to county officials. She emphasizes timely case review, clear communication with law enforcement and victims, and responsible use of county resources.

County Sheriff

Two candidates—Steven C. Delzer and Andrew Tunheim—are seeking the office of McIntosh County Sheriff, which oversees law enforcement, emergency response, and countywide public safety.

Steven C. Delzer

Delzer is the current elected McIntosh County Sheriff and has lived in the community for 57 years, aside from seven years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1979 to 1986. His public service includes multiple terms as Sheriff, service as Deputy Sheriff, and a term as County Commissioner. Delzer states that he is committed to helping people, treating everyone with respect, and serving with fairness and transparency.

Andrew Tunheim

Tunheim is the Chief of Police in Wishek and has lived and worked in the community since 2008. He

has served with the Wishek Police Department since that time and became Chief of Police in 2014. His stated priorities include enforcing state and local laws, supporting and retaining law enforcement personnel, ensuring public safety throughout the county, and maintaining a fiscally responsible department.

Official County Newspaper

Voters will also decide whether to designate the McIntosh County Star & Tribune as the official county newspaper for publishing legal notices and public information. In recent years, the Ashley Tribune served as the county newspaper. Following the merger of the Ashley Tribune and the Wishek Star to form the McIntosh County Star & Tribune, the designation must now be reaffirmed by voters.

The primary election will be held Tuesday, June 9.

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