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Hometown Focus

Candidates for Dixon School Board Election April 2, 2019

The Dixon Pilot is featuring the candidates seeking office in the April 2nd Dixon school board election this week.

Five local residents are running for the two seats for three-year terms on the Dixon R-1 School Board up for election Tuesday, April 2nd. Running are incumbent Doug Roam as well as David Day, Tommy Nichols, Johnny Fuller, and Stillman Buck Guisinger.

Voters will vote for two candidates on the ballot to fill the seats for a three-year term. The two candidates out of the five running receiving the most total votes throughout the school district will each be elected to a three-year term.

The candidates school board made the following comments in answer to questions submitted by the Pilot.

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

David Day - Candidate

David Day is seeking one of the seats up for election for the School Board.

Day stated that he has lived in Dixon for 55 years, all his life, and is currently a Legislative Chief of Staff, and a former Missouri State Representative.

When asked what his reasons were for running for the school board, Day replied, "There are several reasons, but the biggest is because as a kid growing up in Dixon, our school district offered me a great education that allowed me to accomplish much more than I ever thought I could. I want to make sure that same education opportunity is available to the kids in our district today. I also feel a school should be run in large part like a private business. Have enough money in the bank for the unexpected, live within our means, take care of the people working for you, and produce a good product, in this case the education of students."

On goals he would like to see accomplished, if elected, Day said, "I feel the number one job of any school district is to make sure the young men and women graduating have the education they need to enter the workforce to continue on to higher education. The emphasis must be on the classroom. I feel a school board's number one job is to hire the best administrators and teachers possible and give them the tools they need to accomplish that goal. A school board should spend as much time and thought in hiring a math or science teacher as they do a coach or band director."

Day stated that the useful experience, knowledge, or perspective he would bring to the office is, "Eight years in the Missouri Legis-



David Day



Doug Roam



Tommy Nichols



Stillman Buck Guisinger

Photo not available for candidate Johnny Fuller.

lature, over 25 years of public service, working on large budgets like the state budget, a unique understanding of state laws and regulations, insight on future laws being debated in the Capitol, a long history of being responsive to voters, and a tremendous amount of experience in working with other elected officials."

Doug Roam - Candidate

Dixon School Board incumbent Doug Roam is seeking another three-year term on the R-1 Board. He has lived in Dixon for 32 years and has served on the board for the last six years. His occupation in farming and construction.

Roam stated that the reason he is seeking another term to the Dixon R-1 School Board is, "I feel the past six years our district has moved in a positive direction and would like to continue this. I have no one set purpose, just would like to continue to provide a good education for all students of the district."

When asked about some goals he would like to see accomplished, Day commented, "Over the past six years our APR scores have grown from 69.6% to 89.6% - I would like to see that number over 90% within the next two years. I would like to see all the construction from our recent bond completed, maintain our cash reserves while still promoting progress, and see an across the board raise for all staff members."

Roam concluded with the useful experience, knowledge, or perspective he brings to the office. "I bring six years of board experience, with five years served as vice president. I have attained 52 hours of board member training through MSBA. I feel I have a good knowledge of our school budget. I believe I have a good feel for the district in general to help provide a good education for our students. I will always bring common sense values to the board."

Tommy Nichols - Candidate

Tommy Nichols is one of the candidates seeking a seat on the Dixon R-1 Board of Education. He is a life-long Dixon resident, retired educator from Dixon R-1 Schools,

and is currently teaching at Drury University at St. Robert and Fort Leonard Wood.

When asked why he was seeking office, Nichols stated, "I was born and raised here and my entire public school life was in the Dixon R-1 School system. I thought so highly of our schools that I went to college to obtain a degree in education so that I could come back here and teach/coach here. I coached high school baseball for 13 years and taught middle school social studies and science for 22 years. My wife, Luann, also taught here in our schools for 31 years. She too retired here. Like me, she never taught anywhere else. Now three of our grandchildren are attending school here. So, yes, I have a vested interest in the betterment of our schools. Not so that they can obtain special privileges but to help all the students. I was (and still am) always very proud to tell others that I taught in Dixon because of our reputation for having such a fine educational system. I truly do love our schools and want them to be a very positive light in students' lives when they leave here. I want our schools to be the very best we can possibly make them. Our young people are our future. It is our responsibility to educate them to the very best of our capabilities."

Some goals that Nichols would like to see accomplished are, "I want our students to be successful in the world when they leave our school system. Wherever they go in life, their education will most likely determine the kinds of vocations they go into. I want to be in a position to hire the best teachers we can possibly find to make certain they get the best education there is to offer. We need to continue to get better every year. Part of the way to do that we must stay on top of STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. This is very important in today's society, regardless of what field a person enters in life. It would be my goal to always offer a well-

rounded education as well. That means our extra-curricular activities. I want to make sure we offer our students not only sports activities but other activities as well. I love sports. But I also love the other activities too. They should be offered. Again, though, above all, we must maintain the highest of challenging educational opportunities for our children."

Nichols was asked what useful experience, knowledge or perspective he would bring to the office. He commented, "As a former educator in this district that spent so many years here, I have the experience as that former educator to know what our teachers need. If our teachers need something, all they should have to do is ask. As a former board member, I understand it is a big responsibility and one that I am not taking lightly. I have served on different boards for more than 25 years. So I understand too the importance of listening to people; of talking to people. I have learned that you only make a decision after researching all the facts. Then, be honest with people. Explain yourself. That is important to being a good board member. Again, I love this school district. I was born and raised here in Dixon and came back to teach here. That is how much I thought of it and the people of the area."

Johnny Fuller - Candidate

Johnny L. Fuller is a candidate for the Dixon School Board and has lived in Dixon since 1986. He states that his current occupation is handyman.

Fuller said that the reason he is seeking a seat on the board is for improvement in the school system and special ed program.

When asked about some of his goals he would like to see accomplished, Fuller commented, "Better education and new sports and improving the administration of the schools."

The experience, knowledge, or perspective that Fuller would bring to the office is, "Listen to all

parents and staff and work to build a better school, and with the experience with working with Waynesville school."

Stillman Buck Guisinger - Candidate

School Board candidate Stillman Buck Guisinger has lived in Dixon for 21 years. He is retired military and is a substitute school bus driver.

When asked why he was seeking office, Guisinger stated, "I have faithfully served by country for 23+ years and now I would like to serve my community by being actively involved in the education and future of our children who will grow up to be the leaders of tomorrow. Whether it's in our town, state, or even federal government, these young people will be involved in our country's future and I want to help ensure it is a positive experience for them and our country."

Commenting on goals to see accomplished, he continued, "Would like to see that ALL our children and schools are safe and well taken care of. I believe if you have been hired for a job you should perform that job with ALL your might! ALL the students should be represented equally and given the same fair chance in all activities. I would like to see the fine arts programs be raised to a higher level, (art, band, choir, marching band, drama, etc.). Ultimately to see that all students are properly prepared for their next step in life; college, trade school, internship, etc."

Guisinger concluded with what useful experience, knowledge, or perspective he would bring to the office. "I have been told I am very approachable and friendly. I like working with others to achieve a common goal. Over the years in the military I've had to look at the "Big Picture" and be able to work with others and start somewhere for everyone to get on the same page. I will be the voice of reason and hopefully keep us heading in the right direction and help make our schools and community Great Again."

Polling Places

The polls for the April 2nd city election will open at 6:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m.

The polling places for the school board election are the Dixon Senior Center for Pulaski County residents, while Maries County residents will vote at designated polling places in the county including Santee Church, Kenner Church or at the Brinktown Parish Hall, and Phelps County residents will vote at the Jerome Baptist Church on Hwy. D.

City candidates discuss issues, answer questions at forum March 22

By Robert C. Baker

A candidate's forum for those seeking election in the City of Dixon municipal election was held on March 22, 2019 at the Dixon Elementary School. In attendance were the three candidates for Mayor: Allan Kuehl, previously an alderman, Heath Mentzer and Shawn Stevens. Only one candidate for Municipal Judge was in attendance, Brett Swanson currently a Ward 2 Alderman. The current Judge, John Ward, was not in attendance due to illness. In attendance for the Ward 1 Alderman seat was Betty Thilges, incumbent, and Anthony Campbell. For the one-year term for Ward 2 alderman were Dawna Fleming, incumbent, and Mary Wiles. For the two-year term for Ward 2 Mike Null and Les Hansmann were in attendance. One candidate for the Ward 3 two-year term was in attendance and that was Robert Leonard a write in candidate, Diane Shultz, the incumbent was absent.

Serving as moderators were La'Shundra Conner and Orlando Ochoa from A Mustard Seed CDC. Ms. Conner welcomed the candidates and the public in attendance then explained why everyone was there and how the forum was to be conducted. She explained that the candidates should think of the forum as a job interview, not a debate, and think of how to best improve Dixon. This can cover policy, growth and development and infrastructure to name a few. Ms. Conner thanked those in attendance for their desire to be better informed for the upcoming election. She explained that if those in the audience had a question for a candidate, or all the candidates, they should fill out a card at the moderator's desk. The moderators would then sort the cards and ask the question to the candidates giving the candidates two minutes to answer. For those questions asked of one candidate, after that candidate answered the question, it would then be opened up to other candidates.

The candidates, starting with those for Mayor, were given a two minute time period to introduce themselves, state what position they were running for and tell the audience why they felt they were the best qualified candidate for the office. This in-

roduction included their name and some background information on themselves.

The first candidate to address the audience was Allan Kuehl running for Mayor. As background he stated that he was raised in Iowa and came to Fort Leonard Wood while in the Army. He bought a house in Dixon in 1986 and recently turned 65. Mr. Kuehl stated that he had been on the city council in 1997 and other times after that. Important to Mr. Kuehl, as mayor, would be to know where the money is as far as income and expenses. He stated that he has tried to keep abreast of the proceedings of the city council, what people might want and expect. Mr. Kuehl thinks that it is possible for the city to bounce back from its current situation.

Heath Mentzer was the next candidate for Mayor to address the audience. He was raised in Iowa also and while in the Army moved his family to Dixon in 2011. Mr. Mentzer retired two years ago from the Army as a Criminal Investigation agent. He stated that he is thankful to have a chance to be a part of this democracy. Being active in scouting Mr. Mentzer said he is helping to make the future better for them and helping them make a better future for all. Mr. Mentzer stated the attributes he brings to the office of mayor are leadership, order, organization and discipline. He said it is important to be a team, that no one knows all the answers but by knowing where to look and working together the city can accomplish anything.

Shawn Stevens was the last candidate for Mayor to address the audience. He is a retired Army Warrant Officer that has lived in Dixon since 2006. As an engineer Warrant Officer at Fort Leonard Wood, Mr. Stevens taught both the basic and advanced courses. His experience includes power systems, water and wastewater systems, and waste treatment plants. Mr. Stevens also has been a facility engineer at a combat hospital and brings both engineer and project management experience. He also has experience building teams to complete projects and stated the key is to know where to find answers since no one knows everything. Mr. Stevens also feels that it would be beneficial, if he is elected mayor,

to reach out to other cities finding out what has worked and not worked for them.

The first candidate for seat in Ward 1 was Betty Thilges, the incumbent. Ms. Thilges stated that she moved to Dixon over 30 years ago and was raised in Texas. She stated that she has met about everyone in Dixon and has heard a lot of wonderful stories of how the city was by talking to them. Ms. Thilges would like to bring things back, see the city return to how it was and have a happy good city. She also stressed the importance of working together as a team to solve the city's problems and bring about positive change. Ms. Thilges has been on the council for eight years serving as Mayor Pro Tempe for the last two years.

Anthony Campbell is the second candidate running for alderman for Ward 1. He has lived in Dixon all of his life and graduated from Dixon High School. He currently works on Fort Wood in the Building Maintenance Department covering all of the structure and infrastructure for the buildings on Fort Wood. He feels that things in the city are made to look harder than they are and feels the city should go back to basics. The need to hold people accountable is of major concern for Mr. Campbell and is required to make everything work right. He knows that it is different now than before but that by thinking outside the box the city can work its way out of problems.

First candidate for the one year term for Ward 2 to speak was Dawna Fleming the current alderwoman, who was appointed in June 2018 to fill a vacant seat. Her and her husband retired and moved to Dixon 30 years ago. Ms. Fleming is a para teacher for the Dixon Elementary School and has been there for 17 years working in Iberia for three before that. As part of her job Ms. Fleming works with the families of her students to prepare the student to succeed in school. Ms. Fleming stated that she works hard to find solutions to problems and brings this to the council now. She would like to see the city return to having friendly neighbors as it was when she moved here, to see the city prosper and become a better place for our children and

grandchildren.

Mary Wiles who is also running for the one-year term was next to speak. She is a life long resident of Dixon and graduated from Dixon High School. Ms. Wiles has a bachelor's degree in business and accounting and has worked for the State of Missouri in the payroll department. She currently works in the civilian payroll department on Fort Wood. Ms. Wiles stated she is concerned about the payment of the bills for the City of Dixon and would like to make Dixon a better place to live.

The first candidate on the ballot for the two-year term in Ward 2 to speak was Les Hansmann. He stated that he has lived most of his life in Dixon and graduated from Dixon High School in 1984. He is currently employed at the United States Geological Survey in Rolla and has worked there for 31 years. Mr. Hansmann stated he has

stood by and watched Dixon slowly degrade over the years and got fed up with it. He stated that he thought it was time for him to get in and make some changes.

Mike Null was the last candidate for the two-year term for Ward 2 to address the audience. His family has a farm that was started by his great-grandfather and he used to work summers on it while living in St. Louis. In his junior year he moved to Dixon and met his wife. After graduating from Dixon High School Mr. Null entered the Marine Corp and served until 2005 when he was discharged because of injuries. Mr. Null and his wife own a business in town, and he has a financial background from working with other companies prior to starting their business. With this financial background Mr. Null feels that he could be an asset working to help bring the City of Dixon out of its cur-

Community Calendar

This calendar of club, council and board meeting times and places is provided as a community service by THE DIXON PILOT.

Dixon City Council meets **First Monday** of each month at 6 p.m. at Dixon City Hall at 203 S. Walnut.

Dixon Lions Club meets **First & Third Wednesdays** at 5:30 p.m. at Oak Hills Country Club.

Arlington Lodge #346 meets the **First & Third Tuesdays** of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Lodge Hall on High School Drive.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4238 meets the **First Friday** of each month at 7 p.m. at the Post Hall, corner of Highway 28 and Chestnut Street.

Dixon Ambulance District Board meets on the **Second Monday** of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Ambulance Building on Ellen Street.

Dixon Athletic Booster Club meets each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Dixon High School Library.

American Legion Post 298 meets the **Second Thursday** of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Post Home, corner of Ellen and 5th Streets.

Dixon Firefighters meet **every Thursday evening** at 7 p.m. at the Fire House on High School Drive.

VFW Post 4238 Auxiliary meets at 7 p.m. on the **Second Thursday** of each month at the VFW Post Home, Highway 28 and Chestnut Street.

Dixon R-1 School Board meets on the **Third Thursday** of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Administration Building

Gascosage Electric Cooperative Board meets the **Third Thursday** of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Co-operative Headquarters on Highway 28.

Dixon Area Chamber of Commerce meets the **Third Tuesday** of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Bank of Missouri Community Meeting Room.

Senior Citizen Center Site Council Meeting is on the **Third Wednesday** of each month at 8:30 a.m. at the Senior Citizen Center on Old Y Road.

Dixon Area Caring Center Board meets **Last Tuesday** of each month at 5:30 p.m.

rent problems. He stated that he will give 100% of his time 24/7 to improve the city.

Robert Leonard as a write in candidate for Ward 3 two-year term was the next to address the audience. Mr. Leonard grew up in St. Louis and moved to Dixon in 1999. He served in the Army as an infantryman in the mid 1950's. Mr. Leonard stated that if elected he will do his best for the City of Dixon.

Brett Swanson the candidate for Municipal Judge on the ballot was next to address the audience. He has lived in Dixon for the last six years and served in the Army for eight years. Mr. Swanson attended Missouri State University and has a financial background. He was appointed to a vacant seat on the council in November 2018. He stated that due to a family medical issue he does not have the time to serve as alderman but will be able to serve as the Municipal Judge.

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