

2024 Candidate Forum- Mayor and City Council Ward 2

10/14/2024

Sponsored by:



Schedule of Events

11:30 – 11:50 Lunch

11:50 – Tom Partridge, Noon Rotary President

Introductions – Brad Meier, President/CEO Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM Forum Moderator: John Havelka, Edward Jones - Havelka

Format of Forum

Questions

- No questions provided to the candidates in advance
- Questions from the audience will be reviewed and passed on to the moderator if appropriate and if time allows
- Candidates will alternate responses to each questions and will be allowed one minute for each question-should the candidates go past their allotted time, the moderator will cut them off
- Opening statement (two minutes): yellow card (60 sec.), red card (stop)
- Answer question (one minute): yellow card (30 sec.), red card (stop)
- Closing statement (two minutes): yellow card (60 sec.), red card (stop)

***Candidate bios were submitted by the candidates and were not modified or edited by the hosting organizations.**

***Bios of candidates are on back side of agenda**

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL WARD 2



Jason Bastyr (Mayor Candidate)

- Hello, I'm Jason Bastyr, and I'm seeking your support to become the next mayor of Owatonna.
- I hail from Owatonna, spent my formative years in Faribault, and am a proud graduate of Faribault Senior High School, class of '97. Fourteen years ago, I returned to Owatonna, drawn by its exceptional community and schools, and it's been home ever since. My family here includes my wife Jackie, to whom I've been happily married for 23 years, and our three children: Steven, Drew, and Jen. I have been working at Daikin as a sheet metal fabrication team lead and a member of SMART Union 480 for the past 24 years. In my role, I collaborate daily with safety directors, engineers, and various levels of management. I am the go-to person for troubleshooting, whether it's prototype parts, engineering products, or helping to redesign the workflow of the area.
- I am running for mayor because it's time to give back to the community that has given so much to me and my family. My campaign is focused on being the voice of the people, ensuring their voices are heard, appreciated, and valued. Additionally, I aim to bring affordable housing to Owatonna, which will benefit businesses by providing homes for workers. I also plan to encourage more small businesses to help revitalize the downtown area.
- To quote one of my favorite movies Our masters have not heard the people's voice for generations and it is much, much louder than they care to remember. Your vote is your voice, and if elected, I promise to represent you fully and tirelessly working towards a future that generations to come will be proud of. Thank you.



Matt Jessop (Mayor Candidate)

- Matt Jessop is, first and foremost, the proud dad of two sons; Henry, age 20 and Benjamin, age 15, who is a sophomore at OHS. Matt is a 1990 graduate of OHS, attended MSU-Mankato from 1992-1995 before graduating in 1997 from St. John's University where he graduated with a BA in History. Since returning to Owatonna in 2000 Matt has worked in public facing work doing youth ministry for St. Joseph/Sacred Heart, bartending at Torey's for nearly 14 years, enrollment and matching at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern MN and has spent the past 10 years at Owatonna Shoe where he works as store manager.
- Working in, and living near, downtown Owatonna, Matt has regular interaction with Owatonna residents of all demographics. Over the past decade Matt has been active with the Owatonna Business Partnership, serving as Chair for the past 2 ½ years, helping others to see what makes Owatonna such a special place. Other activities he participates in are acting as tour guide for the Farmer's National Bank since fall of 2000 (a position he took over from his dad), morning bus zone monitor at St. Mary's School, Little Theater of Owatonna productions since 2018, as a member of the Owatonna Foundation Advisory Board, and most recently as a member of the Oak Hill Community Connections Steering Committee.
- Matt inherited his passion for, and desire to serve the people of, Owatonna from his parents who have actively volunteered their time for many years.
- Matt's goal is to make Owatonna the kind of place that people want to come to and stay in and why it is a great place to live in, work in, and do business in.



Donald Kramer (Mayor Candidate)

- I was born in Austin, Minnesota and moved to Owatonna at a young age, where I have spent most of my adult life. I have been married for 21 years, and I have five children.
- I am an alumni of McKinley Elementary School, the Owatonna Junior High, and Owatonna Senior High. I went to college at Mankato State, where I pursued degrees in general education and criminal sciences.
- I have spent a majority of my life as a professional musician, traveling around the country, but the quality of life in Owatonna consistently brings me back.
- This town has been my home for many years, and I feel it's time to start giving something back. I've seen negativity, less than welcoming attitudes, and rising taxes that are overextending our citizens and their ability to budget their household.
- I think it's time for that to change. This is why I'm running for Mayor of Owatonna. I feel I can bring a fresh perspective and a more current attitude to the office.





Don Rooks (Mayor Candidate)

- Don Rooks has proudly called Owatonna home for over 23 years. He and his wife, Kelly—an employee at Federated Insurance—met here and are raising their two children, Abigail, a student at Owatonna High School, and Donald, who attends Owatonna Middle School. Owatonna has been the perfect place for Don to raise a family, and over the years, he has built deep connections within the community.
- Don has actively contributed to Owatonna through various leadership roles, including serving as Board Treasurer for the Owatonna Basketball Association, past Board Chair for Kids Korner Educare, and past Board Secretary of the Owatonna Business Incubator. He also volunteers with organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Feed My Starving Children and participates in charity 5K events such as the Daikin Dash.
- Professionally, Don is the Corporate Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Daikin, where he oversees safety and environmental programs across multiple North American facilities, ensuring regulatory compliance and driving sustainability initiatives. His career has been marked by a blend of hands-on experience and leadership. He began working in auto mechanics and later as a Maintenance Mechanic at USG (US Gypsum Company), before advancing to Facilities Engineer and later becoming the Facilities Maintenance Environmental Health and Safety Manager at Bosch (SPX / OTC), eventually taking on his current leadership role at Daikin.
- Don holds a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering Technology from Purdue University West Lafayette, a Bachelor's in Organizational Leadership and Supervision from Purdue University Calumet, and an MBA from Minnesota State University, Mankato. He is currently

	<p><u>Don Rooks (Continued)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studying Architecture at Anoka Technical College to deepen his understanding of sustainable development and energy-efficient building design. • Outside of work, Don enjoys woodworking, automotive repair, cheering on his son in sports, and admiring his daughter’s artwork. He is passionate about ensuring Owatonna continues to grow in a sustainable way, with a focus on responsible development, improving infrastructure, enhancing public safety, and preserving the charm of the community.
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City Council Ward 2

 <p><u>Andi Arnold (Ward 2 Candidate)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was born and raised in Owatonna. I graduated from Owatonna schools, belong to Trinity Lutheran Church, and have years of experience working in the community. I find joy in traveling, gardening, the arts, nature and collecting Pez dispensers. I love to learn, observe, write, and explore. Most of all, I enjoy spending time with my husband Jon, family, friends & community. • As a business and non-profit leader, I’ve worked with many local organizations, including Engage Owatonna, the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Community Pathways, and the Steele County Safe & Drug Free Coalition. I've also run small businesses and know what it’s like to be an entrepreneur in Minnesota. • I have also been a frequent volunteer, whether for Owatonna Tourism & Marketing, Owatonna Parks & Recreation, Rotary, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Owatonna Business Women, Citizen’s Police Academy, Owatonna Leadership Academy, 	 <p><u>Dave Gerhartz (Ward 2 Candidate)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hello, I am Dave Gerhartz, Dave’s Tree Care (Arborist) • I Graduate of OHS, continuing education at the University of Minnesota (annual). Worked for the City of Owatonna for 38 years as a Heavy Equipment Operator – Arborist • Served on Safety Committee and recognition Committee and planned several Arbor Day Celebrations or plantings. Union Steward for 20 plus years negotiating contracts and engaged with public daily. • Started own business at age 19 until present. Former member of the Steele County Sheriff’s Posse, a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Eagles, Legion and VFW. Married with grown children & grandchildren.
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Andi Arnold (Continued)

Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council, Owatonna Arts Center, and the Little Theatre of Owatonna.

- I love Owatonna and I see its incredible potential. We can become a stronger community and build a better future by working together. I am a leader who listens and strives to hear all sides of an issue. I am non-partisan, independent, and I take a common-sense approach to solving problems.



Don McCann (Ward 2 Candidate)

- My name is Don McCann. I have lived and worked in Owatonna for over 30 years. I graduated from Owatonna High School as has my son, daughters and my wife.
- **My work experience:** Worked for Viracon as the Director of International Sales for over 25 years. Currently working part time with Owatonna Park and Recreation as a Recreational Facilities Assistant.
- **My community service experience:** Owatonna Park and Recreational Board for 9 years – appointed position Owatonna School Board for 7 years – appointed and elected – served as Treasurer, Vice Chair and Chair
- **My volunteer experience:** Coached various youth sports with Park and Rec Referred High School sports – 30-year referee for High School Basketball in Minnesota, Steele County Free Fair volunteer for the past 7 years. Reserve Officer for the Owatonna Police Department 2+ years, Owatonna High School Athletic Hall of Fame volunteer, DECA official
- **My educational background:** Concordia College Moorhead MN – BS in Accounting and Finance University of St. Thomas - MBA

