

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

In Grant, the seat of mayor, plus two council member seats, will be filled during the Nov. 2 General Election.

Incumbent Mike Wyatt was the only candidate filing for mayor.

Two new candidates will appear on the ballot for city council. Incumbents Darrell Pierce and Dennis Hansen did not refile.

The two new candidates for the two empty seats are Kirk York and Bob Tatum.

Although unchallenged for the seats, the council member candidates have answered a few questions so Grant residents can become familiar with them.

1. Why are you interested in serving on Grant City Council?

Kirk York: I am interested in serving on the Grant City Council because I have seen a trend of the young people leaving town. I would like to help the city and its residents find ways to retain our young adults and to help Grant thrive again.

Bob Tatum: For the past two years we've had good people and we're losing two of them. They are two of the most experienced and I hate to see the progress they've made not be followed up on.

2. When did you become interested?

Kirk York: I became interested a couple of years ago but now I have the ability to put forth the effort to serve on the council.

Bob Tatum: When I found out we were going to be losing two very experienced council members.

3. What background or qualifications do you have that you feel makes you a good candidate to be a council member?

Kirk York: Being the manager of Town and Country Service center has taught me to plan and follow budgets, manage expenses, employees, and just take care of the general public. It has also taught me to look at the whole situation, learn to look at everything before making a decision.

Bob Tatum: I've been on the City Planning Commission, the City Economic Development Committee and in the past on the Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation.

4. What do you think you can contribute as a councilman?

Kirk York: I think my biggest contributions would be: I have a strong work ethic and a desire to make Grant a better place to live for both young and old.

Bob Tatum: I pay attention to what has been going on and want to see a continuance of infrastructure upgrades, including sewer, water and streets. I want to see that those improvements are adequately planned for and funded so that the money is budgeted ahead of time to prevent the last minute dramatic increase in rates you get when you haven't set back the

money to do these projects.

5. What important or immediate goals will you address?

Kirk York: Goal 1: To maintain the budget and limit unneeded expense and waste.

Goal 2: Help local business expand and flourish and to bring new business to the city and county.

Goal 3: Find ways to get young people to stay in Grant and find ways to bring new people to Grant.

Bob Tatum: Immediate goals are primarily related to upgrading the infrastructure. Obviously, everyone wants to see retention of current businesses and expansion where possible.

6. Are there other issues you wish to share?

Kirk York: One issue I would like to work on is to find or create a new youth or community center for Grant. I know the youth of Grant were disappointed when the youth center closed.

Bob Tatum: No.

7. What is your current occupation and how long have you been there?

Kirk York: Currently I am the manager at Town and Country Service center in Ogallala. I have been employed there since July of 2003.

Bob Tatum: Barber and real estate broker for 18 years.

8. Personal: Wife/children:

Kirk York: My wife, Lisa York, is a cook at the hospital. Children: James 25, William 21, Michael 17, Hailey 14, Carson 11, Emma 9, Abby 8. I also have a granddaughter, Addison, nine months old.

Bob Tatum: My wife DeeAnn works in the clerk's office at the Perkins County Courthouse.

Since Last Election

Some interesting shifts have taken place on Grant City Council since the last general election.

In 2006, Spencer Neely and Renae Bottom were elected.

Bottom was sworn in and quickly resigned because of an unforeseen move with her family.

Mayor Adam Uehling then appointed Jeff Dilsaver who accepted and was sworn in to take Bottom's place in late January 2007.

Dilsaver then resigned immediately for personal reasons, leaving the same seat open again.

Spencer Neely resigned toward the end of March 2007, leaving a second council seat open.

A special election was set for May 15, 2007 to fill the vacancies.

Four filed for the two open seats—Darrell Pierce, Tim Pofahl, Michael Wyatt and Don Johnson.

Pierce and Wyatt were elected to city council in May 2007 to complete the terms originally up for election back in November 2006.

In July 2008, Mayor Uehling resigned.

Council President Mike Wyatt then took the mayoral seat and Dennis Hansen was appointed in August 2008 to complete Wyatt's term on council.

Which is where it stands today—Wyatt is mayor and his term ends. He has filed for re-election. Neither Pierce nor Hansen refiled for another term.

The other two members of council include Tim Pofahl and Wayne Pick.