

Our City

In a “more perfect” union or community as it were elections are about ideas and ideals. In a plurality election for three seats with six candidates the votes were as close as anyone associated with the City can remember. To Blanca Mendez, who I appointed to the City Council, and Terrell Sorensen, I say thank you for your contribution of ideas and ideals in making American Falls a more perfect place to live. Next January Clerk Terri Miller will swear in three new Council members. To Rebekah Sorensen, Lillie Ruiz Wright and Jason Todd Povey I say welcome. I look forward to working with each of you as we marry your ideas and ideals with those of Councilpersons Jensen, Hammond and Hofmeister. In my tenure as a councilperson and mayor this will be the most diverse group I have had the privilege to work with. In a more perfect community diversity has traditionally proven to better meet the needs of the whole. I am excited to continue my part in that effort.

Before that new union of ideas and ideals takes place; however, there is still work to be done by the present Council. Next week I will be hosting a meeting to set up an Apprentice and Internship Committee so that as a school district and community we can better meet the needs of our business and industry partners. Growing our own has long been an initiative of our local Agricultural Advisory Committee at the high school. It is time we broaden those efforts.

A few weeks ago Tiffany Johnson, an attorney at Racine Olsen in Pocatello, spoke to the Council about new immigration laws and policies. Last week Johnson and I met with Councilwoman Mendez to setup a Hispanic Liaison network so that we as a community can better meet the needs of all of our residents and neighbors. In the weeks and months to come I will be able to bring you all on board and request your support for another initiative that began last summer. It is something that could have not only a huge local but statewide impact in regard to our Hispanic residents, neighbors and friends. If successful it could enhance here in Idaho current federal legislation regarding the agricultural workforce being sponsored by our Representative Mike Simpson.

Next week the Water Working Group will begin the process of determining the best long-term solutions to our dated and out of compliance water infrastructure. Know up front that I am committed to finding solutions that work best for the community as a whole. I am not tied to predetermined ideas; that is why I have established the Water Working Group. The marriage of diverse ideas into solutions by the Working Group will give our community the best path forward. I look forward to that process. In next week’s column I will publish the names of those serving on the Water Working Group; let them or me serve as your conduit for ideas as we work toward those solutions.

At our next City Council meeting on November 20th we will continue our discussion on the possible formation of an Urban Renewal Agency. While the formation of an Urban Renewal Agency is a Council function and the members of that agency are appointed by the mayor it has no effectual power. That power must be granted by a community wide vote. I wrote more extensively about Urban Renewal Agencies in the September 25th edition of the Power County Press; you can go online at the City of American Falls website to read that explanation under the Our City tab at 9-23-19.

Lastly, and I still don't know if it can be done, but I would like to give myself and you a Christmas present by finalizing and sending our revised and updated City Code to the Council for their vote and confirmation. I said that same thing a year ago. Twelve years ago you could not have convinced me that something could take so long. But, with limited staff and everything that takes place in the course of a normal City day many things that are less pressing find themselves on the back burner. As the current City employees and Council did all the work I would like them to have the opportunity to finish it before January. It is a collaborative work that in my opinion is the best example of the marriage of the ideas and ideals represented in our more perfect community.

Until next week...