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GI Dems Newsletter

April/ 2023

Grand Island Democrats this week announced their endorsed candidates for Town Council and Town Clerk

Promising to bring new oversight and a stronger vision for the future back to town government, Grand Island Democrats this week announced their endorsed candidates for Town Council and Town Clerk.

Running for Council are Kristen A. Obarka and Wayne West, and they are joined on the ballot by clerk candidate George Hauss.

“Years of Republican monopoly at 2255 Baseline Road have left many residents feeling disconnected from the level of government that should be the closest to them,” said Grand Island Democratic Chair Jim Sharpe. “And it’s clear they have no plan to move our town forward, with little or no public debate about where this community is headed. We hope to change that in 2023.”

Obarka holds a PhD. in psychology from Capella University and earned her master’s and bachelor’s degrees from Medaille and D’Youville universities. She has practiced in the area of social work and industrial organizational psychology and is an adjunct professor of psychology at D’Youville.

In addition to her professional credentials, Obarka has an extensive record of community leadership and volunteer efforts, including as current president of Veronica Connor Middle School and past vice president of Kaegebein and

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of a disabled individual through her long-time former employer, People Inc.

“Service to others, particularly those facing difficult life choices and serious health challenges, has been my career and my calling,” Obarka said. “I hope to take that calling to the next level for the people and taxpayers of Grand Island, and I am excited about this opportunity.”

After more than 12 years as a National Guard commander whose missions including providing critical support to the New York City area on September 11, 2001, West has worked in the real estate industry, including with Century 21, and played a leadership role in bringing EZ Pass technology to the New York State Thruway and in bringing about a \$2 million cost savings through centralized fleet operations in New York.

West was also a zone manager for the AARP with a focus on safe driving education as a means of reducing insurance premiums for seniors.

“I have a record of setting goals and accomplishing missions, and an understanding of what it takes to achieve the kind of economic growth that balances progress with the high quality of life Grand Islanders deserve and work hard to maintain,” West said. “I am looking forward to the opportunity to take the issues directly to the voters and be a strong voice on their behalf beginning next January.”

Hauss, a long-time attorney and certified public accountant with a Master’s of Law degree in Taxation, is formerly an Attorney Advisor of the US Small Business Administration. He also holds a Master’s of Business Administration from Canisius College and currently works as a Supervisory Accountant with Erie County Real Property Services. He also consults as an Accountant and Estate Planning Specialist with the Steven A. Carmina firm in Amherst.

“Our clerk’s office is lagging technologically and in terms of operational expertise and professionalism,” Hauss said. “My background in finance, law, and information management makes me the right candidate to raise the bar on efficiency and service and bring about the transformation of that office we have needed for many, many years.”

For more information about Obarka, West, Hauss, and the Grand Island Democratic Party, visit... [FB Grand Island Democratic Party](#) and [www.Grand Island Democratic Party](#)

Election Day 2023 is Tuesday, Nov. 7th, with polls open 6 am-9 pm.

Presidential Campaign

My best guess is that we see a formal campaign announcement from President Biden sooner rather than later, given fundraising considerations and the political timetable. And the fact that the DNC feels to be very organized!

You will see a significant amount of the campaign through next year being run out of the DNC. This is consistent with:

The President's and Vice President's well-established support for the DNC.

The early campaign fundraising dynamics of being able to raise significantly larger amounts at the DNC than through the candidate's campaign.

The political and national imperative of President Biden continuing to be the President and not get drawn into the mud of a campaign.

The level of talent that has been built up at the DNC, as was demonstrated in the mid-terms, with which the White House has been intimately involved.

Convention

As you know, the President and the DNC have selected Chicago as the city for the convention next year from 19 August 2024 to 22 August 2024.

The prime venues at the Convention will be the United Center and the McCormick Place Convention Center. The New York hotel(s) have not yet been determined but the DNC has locked down all of the hotel accommodation in the city for that period of time.

There will be an NFC Meeting in Chicago later this year as a Convention "preview." Timing TBD and I will be sure to share with you my additional thoughts.

Organizing / Communications / Research

DNC Communications are diligently tracking the Republican candidates and expected candidates. We have experienced communications embeds in each of the first four GOP primary states (IA, NH, NV, SC) as well as Florida. Every announcement is met with a DNC Cheat Sheet seeking to define the candidate early. And we are taking care to "archive" a lot of their online extreme MAGA pronouncements before they would try and "clean the slate" after their primary (P.S. First GOP debate in Milwaukee on 8/25 and 8/26).

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Democratic campaign materials in 2022 which will be expanded this cycle.

Additionally, the national Research team has been preparing opposition research packages on all the announced and expected candidates.

The national organizing team is taking on board the work done in 2022 and will be testing various relational organizing techniques during the races in 2023 (for example, through group text chains and apps to allow very targeted distribution of information in core communities).

Fundraising Efficiency

One thing to note is that, of the \$275mm raised last year, only 20% was spent of fundraising - one of the best ratios in the industry. This compares with 23c on the dollar in the 2020 Joint Fundraising Committee, 40c on the dollar in the Trump Campaign and (apparently) 73c on the dollar for Trump now.

50% of the Biden fundraising in 2020 came in the last 3 months of the campaign; the next year will be spent on raising and investing early dollars before we get to that flood of late money. Time is the most important asset the DNC can inject into the Democratic ecosystem and when we do, we win.

Other

There was some discussion of the challenge of “No Labels” as a third party candidate and the impact that could have on a Presidential Race.

DNC is nearly back to 2022 staffing levels - an unprecedented turn round after an election year and consistent with being a year round organization.

Grand Island Police Survey

The Town of Grand Island is inviting residents to take a brief survey that asks them about their experiences with the Grand Island Police Department and their perceptions of crime in the community. The survey covers five key areas: community involvement, performance, safety, contact and satisfaction, and procedural justice.

All residents are encouraged to take this confidential survey and offer their honest and genuine feedback about how the department is doing. The responses will be analyzed by Niagara University, and the results will be made available to the public and presented in a town hall meeting in fall, 2023. The results of the confidential survey will help the department more effectively

between the police department and the community.

The survey should take no more than ten minutes to complete. Surveys can be accessed and completed electronically at this link https://niagara.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJ6HxNVQdMkydaS or by using the QR Code found below. The survey can also be found via the Grand Island Town Web Site <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100069019936033/search/?q=Police%20Survey> and various social media sites including isledegrande.com and Grand Ideas for Grand Island. In addition, paper copies of the survey will be available at various locations around Grand Island including the Grand Island Police station, Grand Island Library and the Grand Island Town Hall, Clerk's office. Completed paper surveys can be dropped off at the Clerk's Office or drop-box at Town Hall.



Guest Editorial – Deregulation

The Republican lobbyists' latest attempt to deregulate the airline industry reducing the training time for pilots is just another dangerous threat to the American public. If successful it won't be long before there is another air crash similar to the one in Clarence. This "laissez-faire" philosophy of deregulation or no regulation at all under Herbert Hoover led to the "Great Depression". Upton Sinclair's book "The Jungle" vividly describes a meat packing industry left totally unchecked leading to illness and death and the creation of modern agencies like the Food and Drug Administration. George W. Bush's deregulation of Wall Street pushed us into the "Great Recession" which ended in middle class investors who lost their entire retirement investments and in institutions that were "too big to fail".

The Trump administration set "Climate Change" policies back 4 years the results of which are seen every night on national news in the form of super-energetic tornadoes, floods, blizzards and a myriad of other extreme weather Phenomenon. Their deregulation of the railroads have led to tragedies in Palestine, Ohio and derailments all over the country. And the latest bank

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dangerous and disastrous outcomes.

Since the Supreme Court deemed that “Corporations are People” then just as ‘real’ people need to be regulated by signal lights, warning labels, gun laws (at least in blue states) speed limits and hundreds of other legal rules, then so do corporations!

John W. Kowalski

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