

Three vie for District 5 Manitowoc City Council seat

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MANITOWOC — Three candidates with goals of job creation and economic growth will face off to represent residents of District 5 in the Tuesday primary election.

Incumbent Alderman Eric Sitkiewitz filed non-candidacy papers and said he is not running for a third term because he plans to move to a different part of the city.

Olivia Brey, also nominated, said she is withdrawing from the race because of personal reasons on Tuesday.

The top two vote-getters will advance to the spring election on April 6.

Each candidate was asked the same questions and here are their responses:

August Krieser

Age: 63

Occupation: Licensed social worker and Americans with Disabilities Act consultant.

Education: Lincoln High School; Lakeshore Technical College; A.A.S., University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc; B.A., Silver Lake College; Additional course work with the Independent Living Resource Utilization Center and Washington University, St. Louis.

Residency: Lifelong resident with the exception of time served in the U.S. Army.

Political Experience: My political experience starts in the mid-1970s. I was active in local nonpartisan activities during my tenure with the Manitowoc Fire Department. Further involvement on a regional level brought on partisan activity with the state Legislature. Throughout the 1980s to the present I continue to be involved in all levels of political activity. Currently, I am the government relations' officer for a state veteran's service organization, council member of the state Independent Living Council, chairperson of Manitowoc's Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Commission, and a core member of a committee to enhance the Rahr-West Public Museum. I was a member of the City Hall and Library Building Committee, and worked with ADA issues concerning the City Public Safety Building.

Why I am running: I am running for this post because I feel it is my civic duty. I have resided in this district for more than 30 years. Several years ago, the city voting districts were changed and I was part of District 4; however, neighbors, friends and constituents do not change. My neighbors and friends in District 5 asked if I had considered the challenge and stated that I had already taken out nomination papers. I realize the qualities, as well as problematic issues that exist within District 5, and I am willing to take on the duties of representing the residents of this district in a fair and equitable manner.

What I would hope to accomplish on the City Council: The primary issue that I would hope to accomplish would be to continue to work toward the continuance of safe and secure neighborhoods within our city, as well as the continuing effort of street and pedestrian improvement.

Another issue would be the enhancement of public mass transit. I realize this is a small area of what I wish to accomplish and seemingly expensive venture. However, there is state and federal funding that are our tax dollars available to work toward the accomplishment of these goals, which would keep the city tax levy down.

Striving toward these accomplishments would be of benefit to all citizens, thus making Manitowoc a safer and user-friendlier place to live.

What changes does Manitowoc need to make in order to thrive? If you feel the city is on the right track, what should be done to ensure continued success? Manitowoc is on the right track in order to thrive. The national economic situation is impeding the industry that we already have from operating at full capacity. We have highly qualified department heads who have made great strides in the aforementioned paragraph. Manitowoc has much to offer and our citizens possess a high work ethic. A number of years ago, Manitowoc was heavily dependent on several large industries. Times are changing and we, as citizens, must acclimate to this change. There is a new balance between industry, tourism, retail and healthcare services for employment. The industry that has the potential to move in will be smaller and high tech. To achieve this balance, among the employment opportunities, it is imperative that the Mirro building on Washington Street be demolished and not at city expense.

Tyler Martell

Age: 18

Occupation: Student.

Education: A senior at Lincoln High School. I plan on attending the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc in the fall.

Residency: Lifelong resident.

My political experience: State Senate Scholar Program, junior and senior class president.

Why I am running: Having lived in Manitowoc all my life, I have learned that it is a wonderful place to grow up. However, with all good things come inherent flaws. Manitowoc struggles with an unemployment rate of nearly 10 percent, a number my family knows well. With my father being laid-off for over a year, I understand that Manitowoc needs jobs. I would like to take part in the process of being certain that Manitowoc comes out on top as we navigate our way out of this global recession.

What I would hope to accomplish on the City Council: I think we face many similar problems on all levels of government, and nobody should think that they are all resolvable within two years. One thing I would like to change, however, is how people view government by establishing trust. For too long, we have stood by and watched as our representatives made decisions, whether we agreed with them or not. That will not happen with me. I will strive to be sure that my decisions reflect those of the people. That is one way to improve how people view local government, by being accountable to them. As an alderman, even if I only accomplished one thing, that one thing would be to have a reputation where people feel I am approachable, and above all, trustable.

What changes does Manitowoc need to make in order to thrive? If you feel the city is on the right track, what should be done to ensure continued success? Probably the most disheartening thing I hear about Manitowoc is that people my age want to leave. This is a huge problem, and it needs to be fixed immediately. I've asked many people: "What would convince you to stay in Manitowoc?" I almost always receive the same response: "Jobs, and something to do." Our city needs to take a different perspective on how we go about this. Along with attracting tourists, who are vital to Manitowoc's growth, we need to give them a reason to stay. Whether it is something to do, or career opportunities, the city can work to create an environment that encourages business and industry to do both

Matt Kadow

Age: 27

Occupation: Between positions.

Education: Lincoln High School; A.A.S., University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc; B.A., UW-Milwaukee; Paralegal studies certificate, Boston University.

Residency: Lifelong resident, with the exception of a few years for college and work.

My political experience: Campaign manager for Justin Nickels' mayoral race; Crafted and implemented platform and strategy for Justin Nickels' mayoral bid; Campus organizer for Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group; Directed and oversaw four student-directed campaigns on environmental and consumer protection issues; Taught students grassroots organizing skills including effective communication and how to effectively lobby their elected representatives; Legislative affairs director, UW Colleges Student Governance Council; Crafted and implemented, with student direction, the legislative agenda for the student government of Wisconsin's two-year campuses; Organized a statewide voter registration drive and UW Colleges lobby day, which brought students to Madison to lobby for more affordable and accessible higher education.

Why I am running: I'm running to bring a renewed commitment to the City Council. We have roughly 3,400 people unemployed in the city and the council has not provided any vision or action on this problem.

The council needs to renew the commitment that past generations made to us — the commitment that when times are tough, we are going to responsibly invest in a stronger future. Without proper investment in the infrastructure and technologies that job creators look for, we cannot expect to recover as a community any time soon.

Public investment leads to private investment. Private investment creates jobs and expands the tax base, which leads to more jobs and lower taxes for everyone. It really is that simple, and it is this commitment and vision that is lacking on the council. I will bring this commitment and vision to the council when elected.

What I would hope to accomplish on the City Council: The first accomplishment I hope to achieve is repealing the residency requirement for department heads. Government is in the human capital business and the department heads are the managers of the infrastructure and services that attract job creators. We must be striving to hire the best and brightest candidates for these positions. This requirement only serves as a disservice to taxpayers.

The next accomplishment I hope to achieve is to work with the mayor, other alderpersons, department heads and other community leaders to ensure that we have the necessary foundations in place so we can be ahead of the curve when economic recovery arrives. There is no reason we can't put our citizens back to work and be one of the faces of national recovery when we do it.

I also hope to instill a sense of inclusion in, and ownership of, city government for the residents of District 5.

What changes does Manitowoc need to make in order to thrive? If you feel the city is on the right track, what should be done to ensure continued success?

There is no single change that needs to be made for our community to be able to thrive. The economic and political climates are constantly changing and city government must stay adaptable to those changes and aggressive in our pursuit of maintaining a strong local economy and quality of life.

We must hire the best and brightest individuals to run our departments. We must continually look for new ways of conducting business to become more efficient in terms of both our production and our finances. This means we must invest in the infrastructure and technologies that make us marketable to job creators: quality roads, high quality public safety, pristine parks and beaches and the employees that maintain them.

We need to renew our commitment to our community, our future generations and ourselves. This is the same commitment our grandparents made to us, and we need to honor it once again.