

City and Borough of Sitka

Assembly

Sitka, Alaska

Dear Members of the Assembly:

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City & Borough of Sitka-
Clerk's Office

I am applying to take the place of Rebecca Himshoot on the Assembly based on my experience. I served as an elected official in Ashland, Oregon as a member of the City Council for 8 years. Prior to this, I served on the Ashland Housing Commission for four years and for two years sat on the Facilities Task Force. I've been through six budgeting cycles. I feel that I know something about how municipal governments work.

Here is some personal background since I'm almost beginning my second year in Sitka. I have a Bachelor's degree in Social Science, a Master of Divinity with emphasis on systematic theology, and a Doctor of Theology in systematic theology emphasis on the Trinity. My most recent work experience is 16 years teaching critical thinking through a course "Ethical Thinking for the 21st Century" at Southern Oregon University. Previous employment was in academic administration at Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA and Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC. I'm now retired from teaching.

I have chosen to be engaged in the Sitka community. I volunteer twice a week at the White Elephant. The Assembly appointed me to the Sustainability Commission. I'm a Board member of the Sitka Community Land Trust. I participate with the Transition Sitka team. I'm building relationships with Sitkans, just as you have done and are doing as elected officials.

Below are some of the issues that I believe the Assembly will be addressing in the next 12 months. I can be of assistance in addressing these issues based on my experience.

1. Keeping the city budget balanced without increasing taxes on Sitkans. I helped balance budgets in Ashland. It helps to know how a city budget works when you are in a budget process. I can hit the road running with this task that is before the Assembly.
2. Supporting the sustainability commission in its efforts to decarbonize Sitka and to increase electric capacity. Preparing for a carbon free Sitka is essential. I've worked on climate issues with several teams of citizens in Ashland and now in Sitka. Like you, I want to see us find a way to increase our renewable electric energy as expeditiously and inexpensively as we can.
3. Reviewing and changing ordinances to be in alignment with best practices for mitigating carbon reduction in buildings. More than 50% of carbon released into the atmosphere comes from inefficient and carbon heated and cooled buildings. Developers and contractors need city incentives to choose electric over carbon for new and renovated buildings. I'm willing to jump in and do the hard work with you to see this happen with the stake holders in the city and beyond.
4. Discussing and studying the impact of tourism on our quality of life to determine new standards that meet all Sitkans' needs. As an Ashland councilor, I worked with the business

community and citizens to find ways to lessen tourist impacts on quality of life. It is a balancing act as you well know. I'm ready to join you in facing the impact of tourism on Sitka.

5. Reaching out to the underserved and underrepresented Sitkans in order to mainstream these issues. I am building relationships through my volunteerism, by attending community events, and growing my network of neighbors and community partners. This is important to me as I know that it is also for you.

In October, I submitted my letter of intent for Dave Miller's position. From the applicant you selected, there was an extremely brief statement with only an interest in the position. It was followed by no questions from the Assembly. What actually informed your decision eludes me, so I hesitated to apply again. Nevertheless, I feel that I would be a worthy representative of all Sitkans.

Obviously, I'm qualified. This appointment isn't just to fill an Assembly seat; it is much more than that. Demographics show Sitka with 48% women. Shouldn't women have more than one woman representing Sitkans? Don't mistake my words, Chrystal Duncan is a powerhouse. But one woman and five men on the Assembly makes her look like a token and diminishes her position. I'm left asking each of you a question, why are our diverse communities not better represented on the Assembly when you have had two opportunities to make a difference?

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have. I'll be in the audience as usual.

Sincerely,
Carol Voisin