

January 25, 2017

Traci Darrow, RN BSN
253 Cambridge Street
Ashland OR 97520

Ashland Mayor and City Councilors
% Barbara Christensen, City Recorder
City Hall, 20 E. Main Street, Ashland OR 97520

RE: Vacant City Council Seat Position #6, Letter of Interest

Please accept this as my letter of interest for consideration to the vacant city council seat, position #6. I have been a resident of Ashland since moving here in 1984. I am a graduate of Southern Oregon University (SOU) and Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) School of Nursing. My children have been Helman Dragons, Ashland Middle School Cubs and Ashland Grizzlies. I have seen the changes, both positive and negative, in our community over the years and I feel I have the depth and the experience to serve the community on city council.

I have been working in public policy, health care, advocacy and representative government for over 25 years. I have experience working for a State Representative from Ashland in the Oregon State Legislature and here in the District, as well as for the first openly gay state legislator in Oregon during my tenure as a Legislative Aide in Salem. I worked for U.S. Senator Ron Wyden for many years as a Field Representative and am proud to have opened the first Oregon U.S. Senate office outside of the Willamette Valley in 1996 in Medford. I approach public policy with an open mind; neither party has a monopoly on good ideas, or bad ones. It is the responsibility of an elected or appointed official to look past partisan politics and do what is best for their constituents and their community. I am also Registered Nurse and have worked in nursing and healthcare administration for many years. My time has predominately been focused on caring for the underserved. Working in the public sector on broad-based public policy combined with my work as a nurse and nurse administrator in community health has given me a unique perspective which I believe I can apply well to benefit the citizens of Ashland.

What are the biggest issues facing the City?

As a member of the Ashland Budget Committee I think that the most challenging issue facing the city and the city council is the delicate balance of crafting policy solutions that address current issues, such as affordable housing, while also adhering to a strategic plan that addresses and anticipates future needs. Just as there is no single cause for homelessness, there is no single solution. Economic opportunity, education, living wage, affordable health care, transportation, access to mental health services - all of these issues are connected. For example: the statewide ballot measure to increase some corporate taxes on gross receipts failed in November. Oregon has, and will continue to have, issues funding PERS (Public Employees Retirement) retirees, education, health care and senior services. The PERS issue affects Ashland's city budget directly with ever increasing amounts going to cover PERS costs.

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& registered to vote
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Ashland currently is self-insured in their health insurance pool for employees. There are certainly many unknown factors that may affect that delicate funding balance in the insurance marketplace and in access to health care. As Ashland's largest employer, SOU is faced with possible reduced state funding and increases in tuition. Reductions in state funding for education in turn affect our economy, housing, workforce and K-12 education. We have a community with an aging demographic. The city will have to address issues around services to keep seniors in their homes and as independent as possible for as long as possible. I support the 10x20 climate action plan and the excellent work the climate change organizations and the work the climate and energy committee has been doing. Climate change affects all of us - and again is an issue that is connected to many others. I support the work of the Ashland Fire Resiliency Project. With uncertainty in our climate we must do as much as possible to protect our watershed and municipal water source; a summer of forest fires and a smoke-filled valley and degraded water supply would do damage to our tourist economy. A precipitous drop in tourism then affects Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) and all the local businesses that depend on those visitors. Reductions in tourist visitors would mean a reduction in the revenue collected from the occupancy tax and meals tax. Which would result in reduced municipal revenue at a time we need to be making investments in many of the issues mentioned above. While each of these issues are important in their own right, the council must address the issues in an interconnected manner; thus viewing the most politically urgent problems against the backdrop of the larger system is in my view the most important issue.

What is your primary motivation for seeking a vacant council seat?

I am motivated to seek this seat to continue the work of the existing council in a collaborative and productive manner. I don't seek this council seat with a specific agenda but rather a goal to address the urgent and important issues within the context of the overall strategy, financial abilities and constraints of the city. My experience in policy, social services, health care and an understanding of the operations and issues facing the city from my experience on the city Budget Committee provide me a solid background to apply at the Council level. I love Ashland. I have chosen to live here and to raise my family here. I do feel I can understand the issues facing many who are economically disadvantaged and challenged. My work in Community Health, which serves a majority of Medicaid-covered individuals has given me a much greater insight to those in our community who struggle with the social determinants of health. My work at the Ashland Emergency Food Bank also reminds me each day that there are multitudes of people in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. I welcome those who chose to move here, buy a home, retire here or start a business here. We need to support new community members (many who choose to spend hours in volunteer service, such as the Food Bank) and our local businesses while we also acknowledge the ever-increasing income disparity in our area.

What community and city activities have you been involved in recently?

I am currently the Executive Director of the Ashland Emergency Food Bank. I serve on the Ashland Citizens Budget Committee. I worked recently at Rogue Community Health helping to not only provide quality, affordable healthcare but also to help build the partnerships to connect our patients with other social service supports in the community. I am a local precinct committee person for the Jackson County Democratic Party.

My work for Senator Wyden and other elected officials has given me the opportunity to support city initiatives and local projects (AFRP, SOU, SOREDI, Cascade Siskiyou National Monument among others). I also have worked full time, some of that as a single mother, and have spent much of the last 19 years raising my family. That included volunteering in the classroom, attending sporting events, helping out with Sunday school classes and when I have a rare free block of time enjoying our beautiful Lithia Park, theatres, restaurants and wineries.

What is the role of the city councilor?

The role of the councilor is to participate in the decision-making of the Council and to represent the local community in that decision making; to contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of strategic plans and to amend those plans as needed or required; to listen to the diversity of interests and individuals in the community and respect a wide array of viewpoints; to act with integrity and transparency; to participate in the fair and responsible allocation of municipal resources and to facilitate communication between the council and the community regarding those allocations. Ashland is blessed with a unique population of citizens with a vast amount of experience, education and opinions. A councilor in the city of Ashland should continue to encourage and rely on the exceptionally talented individuals who serve on our many boards and commissions.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and answer additional questions you may have.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Traci Darrow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Traci Darrow RN, BSN

Traci Darrow, RN BSN
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Personal Profile: Mission-driven professional who has worked over 25 years in community and leadership positions. Committed to social change through collaborative process that spans healthcare, natural resources, economic growth, equal rights, environmental protection and education.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing	
Oregon Health Sciences University	June 2007
Bachelor of Science, Political Science	
Southern Oregon University	June 1989

Executive Director, Ashland Emergency Food Bank

I was hired by the Board of AEFB in November of 2016. While this is a new position for me it incorporates many of my skills and abilities of supporting those in need, collaborating with other organizations in the community, addressing and promoting awareness of hunger in our community and managing a diverse group of dedicated volunteers. This position reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the daily management and of the facility, staff, and operations. The Food Bank has been part of the social safety net of Ashland, Talent and surrounding rural areas for over 40 years. I manage a large team of volunteers, am a spokesperson and advocate for the organization and work with many other non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses, individuals and community partners. Strong leadership, organizational, financial and communication skills are required for this position. November 2016 - present

Clinical Network Officer, RN BSN, Rogue Community Health

Rogue Community Health (RCH) is one of Jackson County's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) that provides primary medical/behavioral health/dental and pharmacy services to predominantly Oregon Health Plan recipients. As Clinical Network Officer (CNO) for RCH I represented the organization to community leaders. I was responsible for maintaining and growing the community partnerships that are so vital to an FQHC in the health care reform environment. These partnerships included elected officials at the local, state and federal level, hospitals, non-profits, schools, business leaders, insurers and other FQHCs in the region. As part of the officer-level leadership team I was responsible for not only strategic planning and organizational direction but implementing the programs and clinical services required to serve patients. As CNO I was the Officer leader for our Member Services Department, Nursing program and Patient Centered Medical Home program. RCH has clinics valley-wide from Ashland to Prospect. Since the geographic footprint of the organization is so broad, maintaining many diverse community partnerships and relationships was vital. As part of the RCH Leadership Team I worked directly with our CEO, COO, Medical Director, CFO and Board members. As part of that officer-level team we:

- completed organization re-branding to the community in 2014 from Community Health Center to Rogue Community Health
- pioneered billing for RN visits that created a financially sustainable model to double RN staff

- implemented Oregon Health Authority pilot project changing to Alternative Payment Methodology and Care Model.
- ensured all of our Medical Assistants were certified - at no cost to the employee
- streamlined lab services and implemented CLIA Waived Lab at substantial savings
- increased size and scope of School-Based Health Center services
- expanded Patient Centered Medical Home model to include pharmacy, mental health and Community Health Workers.

November 2013 to May 2016

Field Representative, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden. Established the first U.S. Senate office in Oregon outside of the Willamette Valley in 1996. Opened Senator Wyden's SW Oregon field office in Medford that served Jackson, Curry, Josephine, Klamath, Lake and Douglas counties. Being embedded in the community it was possible to forge new partnerships with local leaders and elected officials that allowed creative bipartisan solutions on policy issues. Created numerous local working groups that addressed issues such as transportation, forestry issues, water rights, environmental protection, education, economic development and housing. This position was often at the intersection of local, state and federal policy and regulations. A base knowledge of the legislative process at multiple levels was essential. Knowledge of the appropriations process at the State and Federal level was required. Also, an understanding public budgeting to the extent funds could be identified from grant or other programmatic funds for priority projects. This position also provided constituent services for individuals and community leaders on a wide range of issues relevant to the SW Oregon constituency. Advised scheduling team on Senator Wyden's frequent visits to SW Oregon, and was personal staff to Senator. Skill in executive level meeting and agenda planning required. This position required the ability to garner community and stakeholder support for initiatives. I also specialized in Housing advocacy for constituents that involved federal agencies and lending and banking institutions as well as natural resource issues pertaining to the Department of Agriculture and Department of the Interior.

1996-2004 2009-2013

Legislative Assistant, State of Oregon House of Representatives. 1989, 1991 and 1993 Legislative Sessions. 1989 and 1991 worked for the State Representative for current District 5. 1993 Legislative Session I worked for State Representative Gail Shibley D-Portland. This position required working knowledge of legislative process and involved securing support for a wide range of initiatives and projects. Excellent communication skills required; planning and implementing proposals; managing legislative office.

Executive Director, Mainstream Oregon. 1995. National Education Association-led voter education project for Oregon US Senate special election. Formed coalition that included unions, environmental organizations, trial lawyers and faith-based organizations to create and distribute issue-based voter education guide.

Consultant, Future PAC. 1994 Oregon House Democratic Caucus political action committee that recruited and trained House candidates and their election committees. Consulting services for candidates statewide.

Campaign Manager – Re-Elect Nancy Peterson D-Ashland. 1990 Managed and led re-election campaign for State Representative Peterson. At that time the legislative district included Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, outer Medford and the Upper Rogue region.

Field Representative, Oregon Trucking Association. 1992 Provided campaign strategy, outreach, and campaign staff training in the 2nd Congressional District for Oregon statewide ballot measure campaign.

Health Care

RN, Rogue Valley Dialysis Services, Davita, Inc. RN serving client population of in-center hemodialysis treatment. RN duties include assessment of patients before, during and post dialysis treatment, administration of medications and prescribed therapies, oversight of Patient Care Technicians, creating and updating comprehensive care plans, documenting and charting using EMR and working with other members of the Davita team to provide holistic patient-centered care including physical, mental and psychosocial patient needs. June 2012 to November 2013

RN, Ashland Community Hospital/Memory Care Center/Neuroscience and Orthopedic Unit Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center.

Worked as RN on the Medical Surgical Unit of Asante Ashland Community Hospital and as the RN Case Manager for the Ashland Memory Care Center – a day program serving patients with Alzheimer’s and other dementia-related illnesses. I also worked as an RN on the Neuroscience-Orthopedics Unit at Asante Medford Medical Center giving acute care nursing services to post-ischemic event and post orthopedic surgical care and recovery. August 2007 – February 2009

RN Internship in Cardiac Critical Care Unit (CCU) at Rogue Valley Medical Center through the OHSU Student Immersion program. This program allowed for an additional 280 hours of specialized intensive care cardiac training. Completion June 2007.

Mental Health Assistant, Behavioral Health Unit, Rogue Valley Medical Center. Assisted providers in direct patient care, assessment and oversight of mental health patients. Conducted group and individual educational sessions focusing on patient needs and behavioral health goals. January 2006 – November 2006.

Service/Awards/Honors

City of Ashland Citizens’ Budget Committee (October 2014 - present)
Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon Board Member (March 2014 – May 2016)
Leadership Development Forum, Centerpoint certificate winter 2016
Jackson Care Connect Clinical Advisory Panel (May 2014-January 2016)
Southern Oregon Healthcare Workforce Advisory Committee (2012-2016)
Sigma Theta Tau, Nursing Honor Society. Induction May 2007.
Asante Excellence in Nursing Award, 2006-2007
Sr. Donna Taylor Scholarship, Providence Medical Center, Medford 2006-2007
Medford Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Forum. Scholarship 1997