



Saturday, June 6, 2020

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SANFORD CENTER Pioneer & BuyLine

20th Annual Indoor
GARAGE SALE & CRAFT SHOW

HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL 2021

DATES FOR 2021 TO BE ANNOUNCED

Packed primary

Candidates load city, county election slots

By Matthew Liedke
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BEMIDJI — Aug. 11 will be a busy day in Beltrami County as many voters will go to the polls to determine which of the many local candidates running will advance to November's general election.

The race for Bemidji Mayor alone has six candidates running for the seat. Not in this year's race, though, is Bemidji Mayor Rita Albrecht. Instead, Albrecht is running for Minnesota State Senate District 5 on the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party ticket.

The candidates who are running in this year's mayoral contest are:

- ▶ Robert Elliot, a 40-year-old real estate broker.
- ▶ John Henningsgaard, a 63-year-old retired teacher.
- ▶ Michael Meehlhause, the current Ward 1 Council member and Academic Advisor at Trek North School.
- ▶ Jorge Prince, 48, Chief Financial Officer of LaValley Industries.
- ▶ Ivan Smith. Attempts to reach Smith were unsuccessful.
- ▶ Mark Thorson, owner of Mark Sand and Gravel.

For city council, there are several candidates running in Bemidji Ward 1. They include:

- ▶ Ryan Enger, a 33-year-old shuttle driver at the Bemidji DoubleTree hotel and BSU student.
- ▶ Laura Fairbanks, a 39-year-old BSU student studying political science.
- ▶ Joe Gould, a 33-year-old teacher at Voyageurs Expeditionary School.
- ▶ Adam Hellquist, a 40-year-old systems administrator in the information technology field.
- ▶ Audrey Thayer, a 68-year-old Leech Lake Tribal College instructor.

Representation for Bemidji Ward 2 will also be determined on Aug. 11 in a special election. The election was ordered after Mike Beard resigned the position in January, citing health reasons. Ward 2 candidates include:

- ▶ Josh Peterson, the Executive Director of Visit Bemidji.
- ▶ Jaime Thibodeaux, a 38-year-old environmental ecologist.

Bemidji Ward 3 is one of two city elections with an incumbent running for reelection. The

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Jillian Gandsey / Bemidji Pioneer

Windows along the first level of the Law Enforcement Center in Bemidji remained boarded up on Friday morning.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Mastin, Beitel respond to questions following May 30 protest

By Hannah Olson
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Local law enforcement leaders recently responded to community questions regarding actions of last weekend and plans for the next. Clarification was also received from Waste Management regarding accelerants being placed in dumpsters in downtown Bemidji on May 30.

Sheriff answers questions after county board meeting

Beltrami County Sheriff Ernie Beitel addressed constituents who appeared to be upset after they were unable to ask him questions during the County Board meeting Tuesday night.

Outside of the County Administration Building, a circle gathered around Beitel, who attempted to offer transparency regarding the events of last weekend.

Beitel reiterated his earlier statements, and clarified his written press release to the small crowd. Many had questions surrounding the citizens who were reportedly conducting city patrols.



Beitel

Regarding the Off Grid Armory citizen patrol situation, Beitel said an investigation is underway.

"First of all, when we found out they were in the city, they were there without our knowledge, it was past the curfew, and they did ask, 'how can I help?' and I told them to leave the city limits," he said.

They were not cited for being in violation of the curfew, Beitel added.

"An investigation is taking place to see whether there were any crimes committed and that event happening after all the dust settled of this thing," he explained.

According to Beitel, an independent investigation into the action of these citizens is being conducted by the Brainerd Police Department.

"We didn't use any vigilantes, we didn't ask for anything," Beitel said.

A member of the crowd cut him off to define the word vigilante — "a member

of a self-appointed group of citizens who undertake law enforcement in their community without legal authority," she read off of her cellphone.

She argued that the word vigilantes would fit in the situation Beitel was describing.

"Now is there a statute that we could prosecute Sam (Smith) for being a vigilante? That is my question," she asked. Smith is the owner of Off Grid Armory located near Itasca State Park.

Credible threats

Many times throughout the discussion, Beitel was cut-off and interrupted in his attempts to provide answers. "Please, please let me finish, do you want to hear an answer or not?" he said at one point.

Some organizers from last weekend's demonstration were in attendance and asked why if there were credible threats made, they weren't made aware of them.

"Why wasn't that released to the organizers of the event?" a man asked.

"They did know," Beitel replied.

"I am actually the lead organizer of the event and I was not informed," the man said. "If we were to have received that information we would not have marched to the police station, we would have left and gotten more security for our event."

Beitel said he would not have wanted the organizers to have obtained more security as "we were the security," he said.

"Your demonstration was already happening when we found the evidence and we were told there was evidence," he said. "That's why law enforcement took the action they did to make our town safe."

"I don't have any control of the mayor, what she says or what she does," Beitel added.

He explained that their system of communication was overloaded last weekend, and regrets this, saying "The people in charge didn't hear about it until after the fact."

Commissioner Tim Sumner, who stood among the crowd, said he liked having an open discussion with law

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Carve a path

Exploring Bemidji area hiking trails

By Bria Barton
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BEMIDJI — Of all the impressive features that life in the Northwoods has to offer, one of the best is the abundance of hiking destinations right at your fingertips.

With 66 state parks in Minnesota, as well as 25 state trails, 35 water trails, and 62 state forest campgrounds and day-use areas, our backyard is



Bria Barton | Bemidji Pioneer

Now is a great time to get outdoors and explore some of the many trails this area has to offer, including the Ozawindib Trail in Itasca State Park.

brimming with possibility, and our only job is to discover it.

Luckily, there's no need to go far from home to find what you're looking for.

If you prefer a paved

hiking trail, there's sure to be an option just minutes from home. And if you're one who prefers diving into the great,

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Jaycees slate 'Quarnival' to replace Water Carnival

By Bria Barton

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BEMIDJI — After months of uncertainty and countless summer event cancellations due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Bemidji Jaycees are giving the community something to look forward to and celebrate.

On Thursday, June 4, the group announced the 76th annual Water Carnival will go on as planned from July 1-5 — but with a special twist.

Now dubbed Water "Quarnival," the event will feature returning traditions and a variety of new activities, which

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The Bemidji Jaycees float makes its way down Beltrami Avenue during the Grand Parade last summer. Now dubbed the Grand "Unparade" — the parade will still be held, albeit with some changes. Parade floats will now be stationed and parked in the Sanford Center parking lot, allowing folks to drive through the floats while maintaining social distancing.



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