

BOZEMAN

2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

VOTER GUIDE

YOUR SECRET BALLOT MEANS IT'S YOURS TO DECIDE.
We hope that this independent, local, nonprofit-prepared info helps.



FORWARD MONTANA

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WHO IS FORWARD MONTANA?

Forward Montana is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization dedicated to training, mobilizing, and electing a new generation of progressive leaders in Montana. Since our establishment in 2004, we've grown into the largest youth civic engagement organization in Montana, with year-round staff in Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, and the Flathead Valley.

We build political power with and for young Montanans by driving a culture of civic engagement and by electing leaders and passing policies that are representative of the needs and vision of our generation. We envision a Montana where young people's voices lead and serve our communities, where both politics and policies reflect our generation's values, and where all people have equal opportunities for just and sustainable futures.

To create this guide, we sent each candidate a questionnaire. N/R indicates an unanswered question or lack of sufficient evidence to confidently assess the candidate's position.



ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 2ND.

★ OCTOBER 13: BALLOTS ARE MAILED OUT.

This is an all mail-in election. If you don't receive your ballot by October 20, check in with the Gallatin County Elections Office at **(406) 582-3060**.

★ NOVEMBER 1 @ 12 PM: VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE.

Not sure if you're registered to vote?

Check your registration status at app.mt.gov/voterinfo/.

You must be registered to vote by 12 PM on November 1 to cast a ballot in the municipal election. Voter registration forms can only be submitted in-person at the county elections office during the late registration period: October 5–November 1.

★ NOVEMBER 2 @ 8 PM: BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED.

Completed ballots may be returned by mail or in person and must be received by the **Gallatin County Elections Office on 311 W. Main St., Room 210** by November 2 at 8 PM. If you're mailing your ballot, make sure to put a stamp on your envelope and mail it by October 26, i.e., seven days before the election.

Remember, ballots received late won't count!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO LOCAL CONTROL IN MONTANA?

#DYK: During the 2021 legislative session, multiple bills were passed that stripped local governments of their authority to address the most pressing issues facing our communities.

The legislature and Governor's office passed bills that take away our local government's ability to address the affordable housing crisis by removing inclusionary zoning. The legislature also voted to limit local health departments' abilities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic by outsourcing public health decisions to state-level elected officials and the legislature.

Read on to find out if your candidates for office support these efforts.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

In Bozeman city government, the Mayor serves as a voting member of the City Commission and is the figurehead of Bozeman. In addition to driving policy for the city that determines what our community looks and feels like, they also run city commission meetings.



CHRISTOPHER BRIZZOLARA

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



TERRY CUNNINGHAM

Endorsed by: Montana Conservation Voters; Jan Strout; Christopher Coburn, City Commissioner



BRIAN LAMERES

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WHAT DO THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES SUPPORT?



Brizzolara



Cunningham



LaMeris

Identify what you think the minimum wage in Bozeman should be.

\$22

\$17

\$0

Do you support the current non-discrimination ordinance in Bozeman, and are you willing to advocate for this policy at the state level?

N/R

YES

YES

Will you “strongly encourage NorthWestern Energy to meet Bozeman’s goal of 100% net clean electricity by 2030” as directed by the Bozeman Climate Plan?

YES

YES

YES

***N/R = NO RESPONSE**

MAYORAL CANDIDATES: Q&A

What policy changes, if any, would you make to Bozeman's public safety system?

CHRISTOPHER BRIZZOLARA:

\$100K salaries for police officers... and of course, for nurses, firefighters, and sanitation/sewage department Bozeman city workers. They deserve raises, which will only attract the best and most talented Americans to our city. \$22 hourly minimum wage for everyone else.

TERRY CUNNINGHAM:

Institute a model similar to the Eugene, OR CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) model of crisis response, where trained mental health professionals respond to crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction. Not only does the CAHOOTS model ensure that highly trained responders deal with those in crisis, it relieves 5–8% of calls from the Eugene Police Department's responsibilities and provides resource counseling for those in need.

BRIAN LAMERES:

I oppose the majority of the City Commission on their "journey in the direction" of "reallocating" police budget to mental health response. With an increasing population, violent crime in Bozeman will only increase — including the recent unsolved shooting at our Bozeman Ponds. Other levels of government are responsible for our important mental health, and we first need to hold them accountable to do their job before we double-dip Bozeman's taxpayers.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES: Q&A

What is the single most impactful policy or action our municipality could take to support more affordable renting opportunities for low- and middle-income folks?

CHRISTOPHER BRIZZOLARA:

Instead of making a generation of forever renters, develop cheap land to build homes on. My Build Bozeman by Bozeman 2.0 plan lays out how the city could make a billion dollars from the \$13 million coming from the American Rescue Plan fund. I also love the idea of tax-free accessory dwelling unit upgrades/remodels, as well as banning Airbnb. Finally, reset "grandfather" property tax rates to be way lower.

TERRY CUNNINGHAM:

Pass the community housing mill levy that would provide a reliable, sustainable funding source, then use the funds to: 1) incentivize low-income housing tax credit projects that target <60% AMI for long-term rental affordability, 2) incentivize institutional landowners such as the school district, MSU, Bozeman Health, Gallatin County, and Billings Clinic to provide affordable rental units for our workforce, and 3) incentivize developers to offer <50% AMI rental units to qualified renters.

BRIAN LAMERES:

Let's be more realistic and move away from the "single-family detached home for everybody" philosophy and instead include four- and five-story rental apartment buildings in our housing efforts — especially within the opportunity zone to continue the South University District model to attract even more of the 10,000 MSU students living elsewhere in Bozeman and freeing up that housing, in addition to supporting more non-student apartments within our opportunity zone.

CITY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

City commissioners craft and vote on city policies and budgets to represent Bozeman residents' interest. They drive policy for the city that determines what our community looks & feels like.

FOUR-YEAR TERM



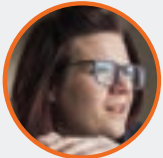
CHRISTOPHER COBURN*

Endorsed by: Sunrise Gallatin Valley; LGBTQ Victory Fund; Run for Something



I-HO POMEROY*

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



EMILY TALAGO

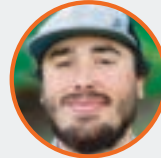
No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

TWO-YEAR TERM



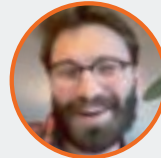
JENNIFER MADGIC*

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



JOSEPH MORRISON

Endorsed by: Bozeman United for Racial Justice



EVAN RAINEY

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

*INCUMBENT

WHAT DO THE CITY COMMISSIONERS SUPPORT?

Identify what you think the minimum wage in Bozeman should be.

Do you support the current non-discrimination ordinance in Bozeman, and are you willing to advocate for this policy at the state level?

Will you “strongly encourage NorthWestern Energy to meet Bozeman’s goal of 100% net clean electricity by 2030” as directed by the Bozeman Climate Plan?

	FOUR-YEAR TERM			TWO-YEAR TERM		
	Coburn	Pomeroy	Talago	Madgic	Morrison	Rainey
Minimum Wage	\$20	\$20	\$10	\$15	\$22	N/R
Non-discrimination ordinance	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
NorthWestern Energy goal	YES	YES	N/R	YES	YES	YES

*N/R = NO RESPONSE

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES: Q&A

What is the single most impactful policy or action our municipality could take to support more affordable renting opportunities for low- and middle-income folks?

CHRISTOPHER COBURN:

The truth is, there isn't a single solution to our affordable housing crisis. We can't do much about the availability of land or the cost of construction, but we should make changes to our development code — including increasing density minimums for most zoning designations, reducing lot size minimums and parking requirements, and incentivizing the transition of current single-family dwellings into multi-family (think adding a basement apartment).

I-HO POMEROY:

Our city has been working very hard for affordable housing. Time is money. We are working on streamlining the process for obtaining development permits. We are trying to simplify the building code (UDC and PUD). We try to give incentives to builders for creating affordable housing.

EMILY TALAGO:

We need to repeal top-down affordable housing initiatives and instead support community housing security from the bottom up. Currently, we use public dollars to bridge financial gaps for new development by private enterprise. If we want results, we must target meaningful support to current community members at risk of being displaced. A community can only be as strong and resilient as its most vulnerable parts.

JENNIFER MADGIC:

A comprehensive strategy is needed to successfully address our housing crisis. An overhaul of Bozeman's land use regulations can make a huge difference and is one of my priorities. Regulations have produced a variety of unintended (and perhaps intended) consequences over the years, in many situations adding great expense, segregating housing types, and limiting variety of housing types. All of this has impacted our housing rental and home ownership options.

JOSEPH MORRISON:

Bozeman routinely boasts one of the healthiest small city economies in the country. We should be ensuring that the workers who make this city thrive, like service industry workers, teachers, and social workers, have the housing they need. The city can make it harder to develop expensive, unaffordable housing and provide incentives, like relaxations, for developers to build affordable housing.

EVAN RAINEY:

Firstly: there's very little we can do. We can't impact the demand side of the equation: people want to move here. House Bill 259 eliminated our (mostly ineffective) inclusionary housing options. The way to increase supply (our only shot) is complete overhaul of the Unified Development Code. Zoning must be reformed to allow more flexible development options to meet needs. My number one campaign point — would love to talk more!

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES: Q&A

What policy changes, if any, would you make to Bozeman's public safety system?

CHRISTOPHER COBURN:

I will continue to advocate for the addition of a crisis response team, independent of the police department, to better meet the needs of and support folks experiencing a mental health crisis and folks experiencing homelessness. I also view things like affordable childcare, access to healthcare, and attainable housing as public safety issues and will ensure that our view of safety is broad.

I-HO POMEROY:

Our law enforcement is very kind in my experience most of the time. However, they can be encouraged to be politer, especially toward homeless people!

EMILY TALAGO:

Our community has a demonstrated need for a subset of emergency services and personnel focused on mental health and crisis de-escalation. We also have data that adding these functions may lower the overall cost of emergency services to taxpayers. We don't need to defund police, we need to better equip them with tools to serve the needs of all walks of life in our community.

JENNIFER MADGIC:

Bozeman could benefit from considering a community policing model. Community policing emphasizes “positive interactions, partnerships, and problem solving,” all of which could help lessen discriminatory actions and provide better local response to mental health and homelessness issues. I support increasing reliable feedback methods like appropriate metrics, improving overall transparency, and ensuring diversity within Bozeman’s systems (staffing, advisory boards, and overall leadership).

JOSEPH MORRISON:

Our community deserves trauma-informed responders to crises related to mental health, substance use, and suicidality. Our city can and should prioritize the creation and funding of robust crisis response teams that support our community and keep it safe, rather than leaving these crises to our overburdened law enforcement.

EVAN RAINEY:

Policing changes in communication with the police department and the wider community. Demilitarizing the police (no BearCat), changing appearance of police vehicles (British-style clear fluorescent colors/letters), more fuel-efficient and less intimidating vehicles (e.g., Prius), more emphasis on officers patrolling on foot/bike and engaging in community, more de-escalation training, specified unarmed crisis intervention workers, outreach program to inspire the next generation to be different, not abolish PD altogether.

MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES

Municipal judges decide just resolutions to municipal disputes, citations, and infractions — including determining the extent and type of sentence or fee. You or someone you know has likely interacted or will interact with a municipal judge. Because the law requires interpretation, municipal judges have an enormous responsibility with the potential to drastically impact your life or the lives of those you care about!



MAGDALENA BOWEN

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



J. COLLEEN HERRINGTON

Bozeman Municipal Court Judge Karl P. Seel;
Belgrade City Court Judge Andrew Breuner;
Lincoln County Justice of the Peace Jay Sheffield



SHERYL WAMBSGANS

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WHAT DO THE MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES SUPPORT?

Do you support a sliding scale for assessing fines based on individuals' ability to pay?



Bowen

YES



Herrington Wambsgans

YES



N/R

***N/R = NO RESPONSE**

MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES: Q&A

In your opinion, why do people commit crime?

MAGDALENA BOWEN:

Individuals commit crimes for a myriad of reasons, from a person exceeding the speed limit because they're late to an appointment, to generational cycles of violence, to dealing with powerlessness, to ignorance. Each case has a unique set of circumstances. As a judge, it's important to listen impartially to all sides of a story and then thoughtfully apply the law according to the particular situation.

J. COLLEEN HERRINGTON:

In almost 10 years as Bozeman's Municipal Court Judge, I have heard a multitude of reasons why people commit crime. Montana's sentencing policy is broad and covers four main areas: punishment, protection, reparation, and rehabilitation. This policy allows me to consider an individual's social and mental health, understanding of the wrong, and/or economic factors when deciding on an appropriate sentence relative to the factual circumstances and nature of the crime.

SHERYL WAMBSGANS:

Individuals have various motivations and reasons for criminal behavior, including but not limited to mental health issues, addiction, or desperation. Often it can be all of the above.

MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES: Q&A

What impact do you feel implicit bias and privilege have in a courtroom? What solution, if any, do you support?

MAGDALENA BOWEN:

Implicit bias is very real in our justice system; it affects judges, attorneys, officers, witnesses, and jurors alike. Because making assumptions about people based on social categories can have particularly detrimental effects in the courtroom, I support evidence-based strategies to reduce the impacts of privilege and implicit bias, such as directly acknowledging them, providing guidance to jurors on them, creating a respectful environment, and reviewing data for patterns of bias.

J. COLLEEN HERRINGTON:

Because the criminal justice system is a human system, courtrooms have implicit bias and privilege. My judicial experience provides me with foundational knowledge to overcome unconscious bias by consistency, educating myself and learning to work past stereotypes, and being accountable to the people appearing before me. I strive to keep the playing field level for all individuals, especially those who may be experiencing bias, represent themselves, or cannot afford counsel.

SHERYL WAMBSGANS:

Bozeman Municipal Court, like all courtrooms, experiences a justice gap, which is the gap between legal needs and the services available. I have experienced this in my own practice in representing litigants from all backgrounds, and find it is important to communicate clearly and offer reasonable, practical solutions for all individuals entering the courtroom, including the most vulnerable populations.

If you were given all the necessary personnel and resources, what program would make the greatest positive impact on our municipal courts?

MAGDALENA BOWEN:

The greatest program need with the potential for the greatest impact is for mental health and drug treatment support services. Creating a mental health/drug treatment court that implements 24-hour wraparound services with immediate access to committed and qualified professionals would address emerging issues quickly and increase safety for individuals, families and our community. This structure – with court oversight— can result in positive, life-changing outcomes.

J. COLLEEN HERRINGTON:

Building on the past three years of success in the VETS Treatment Court, I believe a DUI Treatment Court will provide Bozeman the greatest positive impact. It will allow me to hold DUI offenders accountable while providing services for positive change in participants. Additionally, cost savings will be provided to Bozeman by keeping people out of jail and empowering them to take responsibility and corrective action for their crime.

SHERYL WAMBSGANS:

As a non-partisan candidate for a judicial position, I cannot speak to promises for the future; however, I will say that I support early intervention and education in order to reduce crime and recidivism rates in the community.

WHAT ELSE IS ON THE BALLOT?

Community Housing Levy

The Community Housing Levy will create a consistent, sustainable, dedicated funding stream to invest in the development and preservation of homes that people who live and work in Bozeman can afford.

A VOTE YES MEANS:



Voting YES will cost property owners \$33 per year, generating almost \$1 million annually to put toward creating new and preserving existing community housing at all price points.

A VOTE NO MEANS:



This will maintain the status quo — any investments in housing will continue to be drawn from the City of Bozeman's General Fund and will compete annually with all other departmental and community priorities. This will continue to result in limited and inconsistent investment.

Recreation Facilities Renovation Bond

The Recreation Facilities Renovation Bond will bring needed funding to maintain much-loved community assets like the Lindley Center, Bogert Pool, and the Bozeman Swim Center.

A VOTE YES MEANS:



Voting YES will cost property owners \$6.38 a year (based on current median home value) until the improvements are paid in full and support needed improvements for recreational facilities.

A VOTE NO MEANS:



This will maintain the status quo, and there will be no immediate improvements to Bozeman recreational facilities which could necessitate facility closures in the future.

Fire Station 2 Bond

The Fire Station 2 Bond will grow the station's facilities to meet current and projected future needs and will give it the ability to accommodate more staff.

A VOTE YES MEANS:



Voting YES will cost property owners \$18.83 a year (based off of current median home value) until the improvements are paid in full and allow our fire station to accommodate the growing needs of our community.

A VOTE NO MEANS:



Voting NO will maintain the status quo, and there will be no immediate improvements to the facilities of Fire Station 2.

New Courts Facility Bond

The New Courts Facility Bond will generate funding to replace the current law and justice center with a new 57,000-square-foot building to house District Courts, Youth Courts, Justice Court, Standing Master, Clerk of District Court, Self of Help Law Center, and a Public Community Room.

A VOTE YES MEANS:



Voting YES will cost property owners \$33.50 a year (based on a home value of \$500,000) until the new building is paid in full and provide much needed funding for a new courts facility.

A VOTE NO MEANS:



Voting NO will maintain the status quo, and there will be no new Courts Facility built.



 **FORWARD MONTANA**