



Assessing Yourself As A Candidate For Public Office

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CANDIDATE SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE:

Our founders challenged us by envisioning a society where people take responsibility for their own governance. By stepping up and seeking elected or appointed office, you honor them (and yourself) by showing that you accept their challenge. This training is intended to help you decide the kind of position you will run for and how to go about winning your race.

Unless you are running unopposed (which you should do if you can), you will increase your chances of winning if you observe the tips outlined in this training. Honestly answer the questions asked on the back of this sheet. Your answers can be the foundation of a basic campaign plan that will help you win your election or appointment. Consider these following issues:

1 WHAT POSITION SHOULD YOU RUN FOR

Unless you are wealthy or already have high status in your community, consider running for the smallest position you believe you are in the position to win. Your passion may motivate you to run for a high position, but do not underestimate the good you can do serving in a local non-partisan office. **Too many good people run for high office their first time out without necessary resources and networks behind them.** Don't do that – if you do well in local office, it can be a springboard for you later!

2 QUALIFICATIONS

While not always true, the most important things you can bring to the table when seeking public office is your common sense, your ability to absorb and respond to good information, and to your ability to listen. Trust yourself. It isn't usually necessary for you to be an expert in the water industry, the fire and rescue industry, parks, or any other industry associated with the position you might be running for. You can learn what you need to fast enough. **People need your leadership, intelligence, and good judgment most of all!**

3 FAMILY SUPPORT

If you have a family, it is important that you have their support. While it is possible to serve in local elected office without their support, it WILL negatively affect your home life. Life balance is important. If you do not have the support of your spouse or significant other, your life may be better served if you wait for a better time.

4 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Successful campaigns for many local non-partisan positions are not expensive, but some can be. **Either way, the candidate should be financially sound and be aware of the potential drain an active campaign can take on family resources.** An ideal candidate will have a steady income and resources to invest in his/her own campaign.

5 SKELETONS IN YOUR CLOSET

The candidate should take for granted that anything in his or her past probably will become public knowledge. That the public's "right to know" includes the candidate's personal and financial life. Have there been problems? It's okay – most everyone has skeletons these days and the Internet makes them easier to find. **Be honest about your past.** Have explanations prepared so you don't get blindsided. Most people are very forgiving.

6 YOU ARE QUALIFIED

Don't be Intimidated. There are over 7,000 local, non-partisan elected positions in Oregon. **Almost all of them are occupied by regular people like you and me who serve as volunteers.** A few have specific requirements, most only require that you be a citizen in the requisite district for the board or council you are running to serve on.

CANDIDATE SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

1. My three best personal assets **as a candidate** are:
2. My three (3) greatest personal weakness **as a candidate** are:
3. These things in my background will be **campaign assets**:
4. These things in my background will be **campaign liabilities**:
5. **Beyond what I can personally control**, these two (2) factors will work in my favor:
6. **Beyond what I can personally control**, these two (2) factors will work against me:
7. Here are five (5) people **who will help me get elected**:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
8. Here are five (5) people **who will work to defeat me**:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
9. Here are **three (3) issues I will run on**:
 - a. Here is **one (1) basic strength** of each of the three issues listed above:
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - b. Here is **one (1) basic weakness** of each of the three issues listed above:
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
10. **I will NOT do the following things**, even if not doing them will cost me the election: