



linnbentonnaacp.com

P.O. Box 870 Corvallis OR 97339

info@naacpcorvallisbranch.com

541-829-3023

Local Candidates' Views on Racial Equity

Linn Benton NAACP Candidate Survey Results

October 5, 2022

We believe it is important to hear from candidates for political office about their perspectives and practices related to advancing racial justice in our communities.

The Linn Benton NAACP Political Action Committee sent a short, 3-question survey to 68 local and state-level candidates who are on the ballot this November:

- State legislators, senators and representatives, whose districts include all or part of Linn and/or Benton County
- City councilors for Corvallis, Philomath, Albany, and Lebanon
- County commissioners for Linn and Benton Counties
- Sheriffs for Linn and Benton Counties

We sent the survey on September 7 and gave the candidates one week to respond.

Our questions:

1. Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.
2. As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?
3. From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

We received responses from 24 candidates and have provided their full answers below, grouped by jurisdiction. Incumbents are labeled as such.

Candidates who responded

State Legislature

Senate

- Sara Gelser Blouin, State Senator, District 8 (incumbent)

House

- David Gomberg, State Representative, District 10 (incumbent)
- Ben Watts, State Representative, District 15

County offices

Linn County

- Scott Bruslind, Commissioner, position 1
- Jon Raymond, Sheriff

Benton County

- Pat Malone, Commissioner, position 1 (incumbent)
- Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

City offices

Albany

- Alexander D. Johnson II, Mayor (incumbent)
- Jackie Montague, City Council, Ward 2
- Stephanie Newton, City Council, Ward 1
- Matthew Ellis Prudell, City Council, Ward 1

Corvallis

- Roen Hogg, Mayor
- Andrew Struthers, Mayor
- Charlyn Ellis, City Council, Ward 5 (incumbent)
- Briae Lewis, City Council, Ward 2
- Hyatt Lytle, City Council, Ward 3 (incumbent)

Philomath

- Chas Jones, Mayor (incumbent)
- Catherine Biscoe, City Council - 4 year (incumbent)
- Ruth Causey, City Council - 2 year (incumbent)

- Matthew Lehman, City Council - 4 year (incumbent)
- Christopher McMorran, City Council - 2 year
- Peggy Yoder, City Council - 4 year

Lebanon

- Cassie Cruze, City Council, Ward 2
- Michelle Steinhebel, City Council, Ward 3 (incumbent)

What the Candidates Said

State Legislature

Sara Gelser Blouin, State Senator, District 8 (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

It is difficult to describe a single action or policy, but I will continue to introduce, vote for and champion legislation to address structural racism. This includes needed reforms in criminal justice, child welfare, education and housing. I will also continue to interreupt racist and otherwise discriminatory actions and statements in committee, on the Senate floor and in the community.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

By listening, following up and ensuring my perspectives are centered on the community. Community organizations and leaders must be given space to name their own experience, be believed and amplified-- and then expect appropriate action to be taken.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

My hope is that my constituents hold me accountable to being accessible to all parts of the community and by telling me when my actions or words fall short of meeting justice and equity values. When I am wrong or have done wrong, I expect myself to take accountability for that, apologize and learn from the experience so that I can do better rather than become defensive.

David Gomberg, State Representative, District 10 (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

My commitment to racial justice dates back to the 1980s when I served as chair of the Human Rights Commission of Salem. My legislative record reflects an ongoing commitment to racial justice and equity. I sponsored bills to remove hate symbols from classrooms, police training and reform, and anti-discrimination.

To answer your question, I think a needed step is to increase funding to our schools with an eye toward hiring more teachers. As our student population grows increasingly diverse, we need to attract and support educators who more often look like, speak like, and can be role models for those students.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

By building relationships, listening, talking, and being engaged.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Sadly, we have seen an increase in acts of incivility and racism in the past two years. My district is not immune. In response, I have spoken out at public events, published statements in our papers and in my own newsletter, and also remonstrated on the floor of the Oregon House.

When a black family was harassed on our Lincoln City beach, I challenged our District Attorney publicly for not pressing charges. (https://www.newportnewstimes.com/news/charges-to-be-dismissed-in-july-4-rioting-case/article_92a6d9aa-d62d-11ec-8a7a-578cf36a03d0.html) In the Oregon legislature, I have remonstrated to memorialize Alonzo Tucker, our only lynching victim. I have also supported or co-sponsored legislation to foster better understanding and civility and to prevent the display of hate symbols in schools.

All of us have an obligation to speak out against bullying, harassment, and incivility. That duty begins with elected leaders.

Ben Watts, State Representative, House District 15

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

When we act to create new programs and laws, I will use an equity lens to investigate the impacts of these decisions on our marginalized communities in Oregon. I will favor decisions that acknowledge and respond to our troubled history in Oregon, and will work within any initiative to further these goals. I will oppose and seek remediation for programs that further damage equity within our communities. During all of this, I will work with marginalized groups to identify what these impacts are, where these improvements may be achieved and where harm may be prevented, and will take action in response to these concerns.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

The best way to determine if people of color and other marginalized communities are being treated equitably is to engage with members of these communities and groups that advocate for these communities. The lived experiences of BIPOC community members differs from my own in many significant ways, and I hope to develop partnerships that can help inform when legislation or programs have an inequitable impact. Simply put, I do not feel that I can independently assess this effectively and I will need and seek the input of many others as we work toward a more equitable Oregon.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

For future work, as we work to implement programs that pass through the lenses of equity and justice, we need to develop specific expectations for what we want to accomplish with each program and develop measurable goals that we can evaluate during and after implementation. We need to be accountable to these metrics and be up front with our community partners when these programs do not meet their expected outcomes, and work in these partnerships to evaluate potential solutions to whatever barriers or shortcomings we face.

Similar to my previous answers, we also need to acknowledge our long history of decisions that have damaged the administration of equity and justice within our communities. I will work to follow the lead of many of the excellent advocates and leaders within marginalized communities, and do my best to amplify their voices in the legislative process.

Linn County

Scott Bruslind, Commissioner, position 1

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

Track racial justice as a Key Process Indicator (KPI)- fair, iterative and builds institutional capacity. Start with a baseline survey and set goals and use data to determine progress.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

Communication first – ask folks and make dialogue accessible, transparent to share responses. Secondly, avail ourselves of the US Census Bureau. Robert Santos is a visionary Census Bureau Chief and the reach of the Bureau into race and ethnicity is unparalleled.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

It's a matter of framing questions that can drive policy that deliver results. Lenses can either obscure or focus. We'll find the tools that do the latter.

Jon Raymond, Sheriff

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would review current policies and do a race equity impact assessment. It is unknown to me if these assessments were done with the current policies in place. Once completed I would review and apply the needed changes.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I will monitor the federal statistics and inter-office reporting to ensure people of color are not being contacted disproportionately to any other group.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability is equal fair treatment for all with full transparency. Each person should be responsible for their actions and held to the same standard of law.

Benton County

Pat Malone, Commissioner (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

If re-elected, I will continue to support Benton County's efforts on behalf of our houseless community. Statistics show that people of color are disproportionately represented in this population. Our Home, Opportunity, Planning and Equity (HOPE) Board has been in operation for several years. Recently this effort has picked up momentum as shown by a \$1,000,000.00 grant from the Oregon Legislature to expand these efforts.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I make sure that Benton County law enforcement efforts treat all our community members fairly. This includes our Sheriff Department and our District Attorney's office. I monitor their efforts and make sure that their actions reflect the values that we strive for in the county.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability would be measured by the progress Benton County makes in addressing the needs of our houseless population. A large commitment by the county is to continue to expand our efforts serving the health needs of our most vulnerable populations. This includes keeping our 5 health clinics operating and reaching the underserved population. We are increasing our mental health outreach. We are in the design phase of a respite center that will provide an option besides jail or the emergency room for people in crisis. Accountability can be measured by how soon and how well Benton County achieves and keeps these initiatives going.

Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I will continue to run a transparent and accountable Office, answering to the community directly. I always say: I don't know what I don't know.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

Again, I don't know what I don't know. I am always available for one on one sit downs or presenting to a group, whichever is preferred. My main priority is to provide quality service to members of this Community.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability starts at the top...this is what I tell everyone who is a member of this Office. I set the tone and the direction of the Office and must model the desired behavior. I am accountable to the community, this Office and myself.

City of Albany

Alexander D. Johnson II, Mayor (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

If re-elected, I will continue appointing people of color to Citizens Advisory Groups and, if applicable, any task forces created on behalf of the City of Albany. My primary goal is to ensure equitable representation when City Council is seeking community/stakeholder input on matters with the potential to impact the city.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I will ask them. I introduce myself to every person of color I encounter whenever an opportunity to meet someone new occurs. More importantly, I believe the citizens of Albany know that I am extremely accessible, approachable and responsive.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

If re-elected, I will continue to work towards a more equitable and just Albany. I believe the appointments I have made to Citizens Advisory Groups and Task Forces demonstrate to the broader community that I am a leader unafraid to lead and guide Albany with equity and justice as core values.

Jackie Montague, Councilor, Ward 2

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

The housing crisis has disproportionately impacted the BIPOC community. As City Councilor, I will look for ways to provide more affordable housing opportunities and ways we can help the BIPOC community to build equity. This will require me to build relationships within the community, and different organizations that are combating inequality, to find and implement proven solutions.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

Engage and listen to the people and organizations to find root causes of inequities. Asking commissions, like the Human Relations Commission, to supply impact statements or advise the council on topics that could impact marginalized communities.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Making sure I am doing my due diligence to understand how every vote I take impacts all the citizens of Albany. I should be able to explain how my decisions move us closer to a vision of a more equitable community.

Stephanie Newton, Councilor, Ward 1

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would push to enact a plan to diversify our city workforce so that our staff is reflective of not only our city but also of the communities that they are actually working in. If able to do that I would also like to compile data so that as our communities change and grow we continue to make sure that our hiring practices are reflective of the needs of our communities and the residents who we provide services to.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I think that the most important thing for me to do as a white woman would be to listen to the things that community organizations and leaders who have been leading the fight towards inclusive equity are saying. People who not only have strong ties with the communities most affected by unjust and inequitable systems but who are the most qualified to point out the barriers to access. As a city councilor I would learn from them on what is necessary to connect with these communities but also to reimagine and institute new systems that take into account past barriers while making sure that communities feel safe to participate and rebuild trust.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

I like to approach accountability by first asking a few questions: Who will be better or worse off through this policy? Who is deciding the goals of this policy? What historical norms drive the policy? Who has access, both physically and socially?

Asking these questions not only of myself and colleagues but also asking community members for input is the first step to making sure that we keep justice and equity at the forefront on policy making and access to city services. Making sure that I make and support statements and actions that prioritize equity is a big part of being accountable as well as following through on commitments to our community when it comes to benchmarks for equity. I also believe that being available to community leaders and organizations to discuss progress/concerns to make sure that our actions are actually effective in our communities. Finally I would say that dedicating resources to support equity across all departments is a must.

Matthew Ellis Prudell, Councilor, Ward 1

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

If elected, I would do my best to bring equitable access to healthy clean drinking water with a majority vote of the city council we can end the addition of the toxic chemical fluoride additive that many communities across America have stopped this dangerous practice that affects infants and minority that don't have access to a reverse osmosis water filter and may not understand the possible risk of using fluoridated water to mix infant formula. Thank you.

Here are a few links about fluoride.

<https://fluoridealert.org/issues/moms2b/mother-offspring-studies/>

<https://iaomt.org/top-ten-reasons-oppose-water-fluoridation/>

<https://fluoridealert.org/articles/50-reasons/>

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I believe in equitably for everyone. Thank you

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

I believe in accountability for everyone. Thank you

City of Corvallis

Roan Hogg, Mayor

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I will promote the historic contributions of minorities in Benton County. For instance, the Mt Union Cemetery in Philomath and the Hannah and Eliza Gorman House in Corvallis both have historical significance and can help educate the community about racial injustice. I will also promote and support Black history month, Juneteenth celebrations, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. park, and the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center at OSU.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I will start a “Walk with the Mayor” program where people can meet the mayor and share ideas on a walk around their neighborhood. We could do a walk starting at the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center at OSU to hear about concerns and issues in the community. I will also invite NAACP members to make a presentation to the City Council. Councilors change frequently so this would bring awareness of concerns to the city. And I will attend meetings and events hosted by the NAACP.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

I will be in touch with the Corvallis Police Department to get data to ensure the city is accountable. I will also invite the NAACP to participate in discussions with the city. And I will work with the NAACP to help educate and inform the community about justice and equity issues.

Andrew Struthers, Mayor

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

As Mayor of Corvallis, a specific action I would take is to continue the efforts already started on a regional approach of the Hate and Bias Response Initiative the City of Corvallis began in 2020. While it was Corvallis-started, the Oregon Cascades West

Council of Governments is now the lead agency, but Corvallis is the primary leader. As Mayor, I will work to ensure that the work gets accomplished with all our regional partners. I am fortunate that I have already been working on building relationships with many of our regional partners and understand that every community in our region has different needs. Additionally, I would look again internally at the City and how we need to continue to build our efforts related to Hate and Bias Response within the City of Corvallis. This may mean putting additional resources to a specific position or other resources locally, well working with our regional partners on a coordinated effort; there is a benefit to having something more locally.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

One of the most important things I believe any elected official can do is build relationships with other leaders within our community. Relationships can help develop important trust and understanding. After setting that trust, you can have conversations about how individuals are being treated, what areas need to be fixed, and if there are significant issues that need to be addressed. These relationships will help build other relationships with members of our community. As a City Councilor for Corvallis, I have tried to make myself available to anyone in our community, regardless of whether they live directly in my current city ward. One example of how I have done this is with my public scheduling tool anyone can use to schedule a meeting directly on my calendar. As Mayor, you are elected at-large to represent everyone within the City and not just specific interest groups or areas of our community. One needs to avail themselves to everyone, listen, and try to address their issue.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

If elected Mayor of Corvallis, having that justice and equity lens is crucial to me, even now as a City Councilor. For me, justice and equity mean that we are planning, creating, and evaluating our policy and local laws equally with a primary focus on our institutionally under-served or marginalized communities. We must ensure our policies and programs are available, so everyone has equal access regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or other identities. Additionally, we must provide equal access for reaching and interacting with elected officials, city staff, and other public officials. Focusing on accountability means that where there is injustice or inequity, it needs to be called out for what it is and brought to everyone's attention. We then need to address what is causing that injustice or inequity at its root, whether a local law or policy or how someone is treating others in our community. We need to hold each other accountable, especially our public officials.

Charlyn Ellis, Councilor, Ward 5 (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would like to see the City of Corvallis, as a whole, focus on increasing diversity in our workplaces. For me, this would mean specific and targeted outreach to the BIPOC community, probably starting with some of the student organizations at OSU. Direct invitations to apply for positions, rather than a general non-discrimination policy, would, I hope, lead to a more diverse workplace. Over time, this would improve the diversity of our leadership team

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

Check the data-- are our police officers pulling over more people of color for traffic violations? Whose streets and sidewalks are in better repair? Who is living in poverty? Who is struggling with homelessness? Then ask, how do we change our policies to improve these conditions?

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

I can't promise to catch everything; I am one person who is also working full time. But, I will work to address concerns as soon as I learn off them and I will actively question policy as needed.

Briae Lewis, Councilor, Ward 2

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would promote the idea and practice of appointing those who embody the ideals of the voters but also are examples of the equality, diversity, and equity that are constantly discussed but hardly acted upon.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I have a strong belief of seeing is believing when it comes to the implementation of policies involving equity and equality. Though there is a huge minority of POC in the

entire state of Oregon, it is still possible to build a community that exemplifies the importance of working together to ensure the same opportunities are given to everyone.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Practice what you preach. Many businesses and elected offices will say that they do not discriminate against race, color, nor sexual orientation. However, it has been proven that that is not the case though disguised as "under qualified." It is the duty and responsibility of an elected official to absolutely ensure that appointments are, in fact, unbiased.

Hyatt Lytle, Councilor, Ward 3 (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I am currently the Chair of the City's newly appointed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force. If Elected, I will hope to advocate for the policy recommendations that come out of our work that we are charged by Council to finish by the end of this year. As a Task Force, we did agree that we want to do quality work over meeting deadlines, so if that work is unfinished I will carry it forward. My hope is that the recommendations that come from our work will promote important discussions to take place, leave us with a policy board that will provide a DEI lens when it comes to reviewing important City policies (new and existing), and establish a precedent for more Task Forces of this nature.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I believe the best way I can continue to do this is by reaching out to POC in my Ward and having conversations. My own philosophy is to always go to people and not rely on people coming to you. There are many venues in South Corvallis I can continue to explore to meet new people and build relationships to continue these conversations. Lincoln School being a dual immersion school provides opportunities to meet parents and children; 3rd Street Commons and the Hygiene Center allow connections with Houseless constituents that do have a large contingent of POC; and cultural events at the Tunison Community Room are just a few examples of where I can reach out and have these discussions.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Ward 3 and South Corvallis are considered to provide residency to more minorities in Corvallis due to lower social determinants of health. Geographically, residents in South Corvallis are in a food desert, with two convenience stores and only 1 specialty grocery store in the vicinity. There are few "third places" (restaurants, social gathering spaces, etc.) for the community. Minimal health resources, banking, or retail. Geographic Equity for our area in many ways and as the representative for Ward 3, it is my job to always make our voices heard on these matters, that we are not seen as equal to the rest of the City. Why have we not developed like other areas? Why do tents go up and stay up in Willamette and Crystal Lake Parks, however will be taken down in a matter of hours in any other park in Corvallis? Why are all the houseless services located in South Corvallis? Is it because we are a more diverse population and community? No matter, I will never stop arguing for my constituents.

City of Philomath

Chas Jones, Mayor (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

As Mayor, I will continue to support the NAACP and their initiatives in rural communities in the Willamette Valley. Hosting BIPOC folks in Philomath in an outward facing manner helps to celebrate diversity while building community. I was honored to have the NAACP's Community Day in Philomath's City Park in the fall of 2021. Further, I will continue to promote community discussions around the topic of racial justice through town halls and other learning opportunities. Lastly, I will continue to encourage the participation and hiring of diverse populations in city governance and staffing.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

As Mayor of Philomath, I have built a well established network and communication channels with trusted community leaders in the Willamette Valley, including Black and Indigenous folks that include the NAACP Executive Board and OSU campus leadership. Further, I have made myself very accessible and hope that if people of color experience racial injustice or are not treated equitably, that I will be made aware of the situation either directly or indirectly. If someone does not reach out to me directly, I have no doubt that my network of community leaders would make me aware of any inequities occurring in Philomath that they catch word of. The City of Philomath has also supported the Oregon Cascade West Council of Government's Bias Response Initiative that will help us to identify opportunities for improvement in this realm.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

There are opportunities to enhance justice and equity in every aspect of local governance, including ordinances, funding social services, budgeting, street improvements, locating parks, tree planting programs, zoning, and more. Elected officials should make every decision through a justice and equity lens. We should always ask, "how can we do better?" I know that I will never see a perfect result, but I know that I can always find a way to make a situation more just or more equitable. Accountability is being willing to do the work, no matter how difficult it may be.

Catherine Biscoe, Councilor, 4-year (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

A policy that addresses bias, discrimination and injustice against our neighbors who identify as people of color. We can't even begin to address racial justice if we cannot first call out the practices that lead to injustice and hold each other accountable for unacceptable behaviors. The culture and accountability has to change before policies and actions will meaningfully change.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

Historical practices and current data already reflect the disparity in how people of color are treated...and it is not equitably. From housing and lending practices to barriers in starting businesses, job advancements, career and volunteer opportunities, the scales are tipped against people of color. Add on that the layers of bias, discrimination and microaggressions that create a culture of harm. First step is to acknowledge that harm, and genuinely, not as a matter of performance. Then build trust through shared partners to start the conversation. A safe and authentic space is paramount.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability means taking responsibility for our actions. We each have free will to choose our actions or inactions. The most important influence we hold as community members is how we treat one another.

Ruth Causey, Councilor, 2-year (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would like to re-energize the City of Philomath's Ad Hoc Inclusivity Committee to ensure broad outreach to all minority groups in our community. I want to see the Committee bring our 2020 Proclamation of Inclusivity to life, showing that Philomath truly does "welcome and value all residents".

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I believe outreach is imperative. Multiple communication channels are valuable, but face-to-face communication is key. We cannot truly understand the perspective of people of color without taking the time to speak with them, understand, acknowledge and address their issues.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability is achieved when the makeup of the city government, staff and community leaders reflect the minority membership in our community. When our policies and procedures ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and when deviations from these policies are promptly acknowledged and addressed.

Matthew Lehman, Councilor, 4-year (incumbent)

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I believe that the City of Philomath should participate in subsidized housing for underserved communities.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

The City of Philomath Inclusivity Committee is set up to provide educational opportunities for Staff, Elected Officials and the general community. I am always available to discuss any situation which any community member believes is counter to our DEI policies.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability and transparency go hand in hand. It is difficult to hold a body, agency or individual accountable without transparency. The concept of accountability is pretty ambiguous, but I tend to focus on the INTENT as much or more than the actual actions taken.

Christopher McMorrان, Councilor, 2-year

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would enact a regular periodic review of all city policies to examine their racial justice impacts. In communities like Philomath, there are often policies that the community as a whole doesn't think of as "racist" but are actively and unintentionally harming communities of color and other groups. It's not enough to keep doing something because it's the way we've always done it - we need to be doing things because they're the best thing to do. This includes the sometimes tedious, yet incredibly important, work of reviewing our existing policies and working to strengthen them from the ground up. Once we've ensured that solid foundation, we can begin to build upon it.

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

We need to actively seek out and listen to the lived experiences of people of color in our community, and examine quantitative evidence and outcomes to ensure equity in City policies. The City can and must do more to meet people where they're at. We need to be active, engaged members of our community and work to make a real effort to meet with & listen to community concerns, both in and (especially) outside of Council meetings. The rigid structure of Council meetings doesn't lend itself to open, frank discussions, but we absolutely need to be having those discussions with constituents.

We also need to look at the quantitative evidence - what does census data, city meeting participation, home ownership, business ownership, bus ridership, and other numerical information tell us about our community? Which groups are overrepresented, and which are underrepresented? Data is not the be-all end-all of decision-making, but it can help bring attention to inequities and guide a response.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

In the simplest sense, accountability for an elected official means following through on the promises they've made to their community and enacting the wishes of their community effectively. From a justice and equity lens, this takes on a deeper meaning: it's not enough to enact the will of the simple majority in every case. Truly following through on the will of your community means listening to & responding to all members of your community, and taking those voices into account when making decisions.

It can be difficult, messy, and time-consuming to do so, but that's the standard we need to hold our leaders to, and the standard I'm excited to pursue. We must be leaders for our entire community, not just folks who look or live like us.

Accountability also means always being willing to learn and admitting when you're wrong.

Peggy Yoder, Councilor, 4-year

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

I would advocate that the city of Philomath honor the newest federal holiday, June 19, with a celebration.

As Pres. Joe Biden stated on the June 17, 2022 Proclamation: "Last year, I was proud to sign bipartisan legislation establishing Juneteenth as our newest Federal holiday, so that all Americans can feel the power of this day, learn from our history, celebrate our progress, and recognize and engage in the work that continues." Yet, on the June 20, 2022 Day of Observance, the City of Philomath treated this day as any normal workday; I even attended the scheduled planning commission meeting at 6pm.

Sadly, I was made aware of Juneteenth and its meaning only a few years ago, while watching a TV sitcom. Being born and raised in Oregon, the history of this event was not taught to me in school. It's embarrassing that I didn't educate myself as an older adult, until I watched the program, "black-ish".

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

I believe we can be a community that is citizen-led; where community members are empowered to form committees that are not heavily influenced by city staff or an abundance of city councilors. These involved citizens should be able to work as an advisory committee that can offer workable solutions to the city council.

According to census.gov, race in Philomath is 83.5% white, and my desire for our city is to increase our diversity. That is why the established Philomath Inclusivity Committee should be represented by those that have been historically under-represented.

The mission of this committee, as stated on the City website, states that “The Philomath Inclusivity Committee supports our city leadership in fostering an inclusive, just and equitable community that honors its past while creating a diverse and accessible city for future generations.”

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

I attended the Regional Bias Response Focus Group in August of this year. I felt the listening session led by the Zilo International Group was a good place for open dialog, even if there was tension in the air at times. When the final report is provided in October, 2022, Philomath should act on any suggestions and proposals offered.

I feel a strong and active Inclusivity Committee is what is necessary to hold the city government accountable. Without the help and guidance from the Inclusivity Committee and community members, the goals that have already been established risk being diminished and forgotten.

City of Lebanon

Cassie Cruze, Councilor, Ward 2

Please describe one specific action you would take, or policy you would enact, if elected (or re-elected) to advance racial justice in our community.

To break free from the personal trauma to prison pipeline (supposed to be school to prison but let's be honest, it stems before the school bell rings). We as a whole need to focus and support mental health. Bring in programs like the Yellow Line an early response to individuals with acute or chronic mental or chemical health problems who have become involved with law enforcement and are not a risk to the community. The Yellow Line Project enhances the resources and tools available to law enforcement so that residents get the right services at the right time. The hope is to maintain a high level of personal accountability while, at the same time, encourage healthy choices to reduce future costs and consequences. The underlying systemic goal is to streamline the decision-making between Law Enforcement, Human Services, and Community-Based Care Providers so the most cost-effective services are provided and less incarcerations are needed. (yellowlineproject.com)

As an elected official, how will you determine if people of color in your district are being treated equitably?

Elected or not, making contact with people. After the initial greetings, continuous engagement is essential. Outside of community engagement, working on establishing a Human Rights Commission (picked by more than one person) to deepen discussions, bring items and issues to the Council's attention. Utilizing community partners, like Western University of Health Sciences COMP NW, Samaritan Health Services, and other organizations to also further the discussion.

A Cultural Heritage Center is another opportunity. A space to educate, learn, and grow. Educating Lebanon people on the Kalapuya people (giving a voice to the people of the past and today), and others that are underrepresented, and growing populations to give perspectives and help support changes for Lebanon as the community continues to grow.

From a justice and equity lens, if elected how does accountability look to you?

Accountability is a holistic approach to life. Within government transparency with checks and balances done by a diverse group of people.

Michelle Steinhebel, Councilor, Ward 3 (incumbent)

This candidate, who is running unopposed, apologized for missing the deadline, said how much she values the NAACP's work in communities, and thanked the NAACP for gathering this information.

In Conclusion

Voting is a critical responsibility we all have as citizens of a democracy. Our goal with this survey is to provide more information about the candidates to help you make informed decisions as you complete your ballot. There are many issues to consider but, as the Political Action Committee, our focus with this survey is on the candidates' commitment to furthering racial justice as described by the NAACP Mission Statement:

“Our mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.”

Thank you to the candidates who responded to our survey and thank you to all who have carefully read their responses.

Appendix: all candidates who received the survey

Name	Office
Scott Bruslind	Linn County Commissioner Position 1
William Tucker	Linn County Commissioner Position 1 (incumbent)
Ashley Pelton	State Senate District 6
Cedric Hayden	State Senate District 6
Sara Gelser Blouin	State Senate District 8 (incumbent)
Valerie Draper Woldeit	State Senate District 8
Jamie Cate	State Representative District 11 (incumbent)
Mary Cooke	State Representative District 11
Ben Watts	State Representative District 15
Shelly Boshart-Davis	State Representative District 15 (incumbent)
Ed Diehl	State Representative District 17
Michelle Duncan	Linn County Sheriff (incumbent)
Jon Raymond	Linn County Sheriff
David Gomberg	State Representative District 10 (incumbent)
Celeste McEntee	State Representative District 10
Keith Lembke	State Representative District 16
Dan Rayfield	State Representative District 16 (incumbent)
Pat Malone	Benton County Commissioner (incumbent)
William Kughn	Benton County Commissioner
Jefri Van Arsdall	Benton County Sheriff (incumbent)
Greg Hamann	Albany City Council, Ward 1
Erik Anderson	Albany City Council, Ward 1
Steph Newton	Albany City Council, Ward 1
Matthew E Prudell	Albany City Council, Ward 1
Dick Olsen	Albany City Council, Ward 1 (incumbent)
Josiah Blaisdell	Albany City Council, Ward 2

Jackie Montague	Albany City Council, Ward 2
Ramycia McGhee	Albany City Council, Ward 3
Bryan Munson	Albany City Council, Ward 3
Bessie Johnson	Albany City Council, Ward 3 (incumbent)
William Tally	City of Albany, Mayor
Alex Johnson II	City of Albany, Mayor (incumbent)
Roan Hogg	City of Corvallis, Mayor
Andrew Struthers	City of Corvallis, Mayor
Charles Maughan	City of Corvallis, Mayor
Jan Napack	Corvallis City Council, Ward 1(incumbent)
Christina Jancila	Corvallis City Council, Ward 2 (incumbent)
Briae Lewis	Corvallis City Council, Ward 2
Hyatt Lytle	Corvallis City Council, Ward 3 (incumbent)
Alec Turner	Corvallis City Council, Ward 3
Gabe Shepherd	Corvallis City Council, Ward 4 (incumbent)
Charlyn Ellis	Corvallis City Council, Ward 5 (incumbent)
Laurie Chaplen	Corvallis City Council, Ward 6 (incumbent)
Paul Shaffer	Corvallis City Council, Ward 7 (incumbent)
Tracey Yee	Corvallis City Council, Ward 8 (incumbent)
Tony Cadena	Corvallis City Council, Ward 9
Nyssa Towsley	Corvallis City Council, Ward 9
Cliff Feldman	Corvallis City Council, Ward 9
Lawrance Johnson	City of Philomath, Mayor
Charles (Chas) Jones	City of Philomath, Mayor (incumbent)
Jessica Andrade	Philomath City Council - 4yr (incumbent)
Catherine Biscoe	Philomath City Council - 4 yr (incumbent)
Ruth Causey	Philomath City Council - 2 yr (incumbent)
Diane Crocker	Philomath City Council - 2 yr
Matthew Lehman	Philomath City Council - 4 yr (incumbent)
David Low	Philomath City Council - 4 yr (incumbent)

Christopher McMorran	Philomath City Council - 2 yr
Teresa Nielson	Philomath City Council - 4 yr (incumbent)
Peggy Yoder	Philomath City Council - 4 yr
Gamael Nassar	City of Lebanon, Mayor
Kenneth E. Jackola	City of Lebanon, Mayor
Carl Mann	Lebanon City Council, Ward 1
Tami Cockeram	Lebanon City Council, Ward 1
Wayne Rieskamp	Lebanon City Council, Ward 1 (incumbent)
Cassie Cruze	Lebanon City Council, Ward 2
Dave Workman	Lebanon City Council, Ward 2
Ryan Newby	Lebanon City Council, Ward 2
Michelle A. Steinhebel	Lebanon City Council, Ward 3 (incumbent)