



Candidate Responses November 2026 Election

The Greater Eureka Chamber strives to provide information to our Members and the community about those running for office. Our Business and Government Affairs Committee developed questions for candidates about their positions and plans related to business-serving issues.

Our questions for this cycle were:

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?
2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?
3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?
4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area?
 - a. Attracting and retaining businesses
 - b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents
 - c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing
 - d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all
 - e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem
 - f. Streamlining business processes with local government

Requests for responses were sent to candidates for:

City of Eureka Mayor; Eureka City Council Ward 1, Ward 3 and Ward 5; Eureka City Schools Board; Humboldt Community Services District; Humboldt Bay Harbor Commission, Division 4, Division 5, and Division 6; Humboldt Bay Municipal Water Division 6; California State Assembly; California State Senate; Congress District 2.

Their responses were not edited by the Chamber in any way, except to ensure relatively consistent formatting. **Information provided by the Chamber does not constitute endorsement of any of these candidates.** We encourage you to research candidates and vote according to your choices. Should you have any questions about our process, please contact Nancy Olson, Chamber CEO, at nancy@eurekachamber.com.

Kim Bergel

City of Eureka Mayor

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I will continue to shop local and encourage others to shop local through promotion on social media and word of mouth. I will continue to work with our police department and neighbors to continue to look, promote, and work on solutions for the unhoused and the sometimes negative experiences caused by crisis etc. I will continue to support the chamber how I can and am always available to discuss problems no matter how small, and continue to advocate and look for solutions to these issues.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I have a great relationship with Senator McGuire and have worked with him on issues for Eureka including Caltrans mitigation, town hall addressing the state of our City, health care, our issue of catch and release from the jail and folks on the street. I have met with Chris Rogers, primarily in discussions about health care and the catch and release issues at the jail, and have talked briefly with Damon Connolly about similar items. I am looking forward to developing those relationships and our work together to address these and other pressing issues in our community. Our City is currently working to update our Local Coastal Program to allow for more options for businesses in our industrial and visitor serving zoning designations. This will have a significant impact on our ability to fill vacant commercial properties and attract more businesses to our City.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

Communication is critical to a healthy community and working toward solutions and shared goals that benefit the many. The City currently has a 2x2 meeting monthly, 2 council members/2 chamber members to discuss the concerns of our local businesses that are brought back to council. I appreciated the survey that was done by chamber members regarding concerns and continue to work on these items (see question 4). As your Mayor, I continue to make myself available for open dialogue and show up how I can. I am always accessible and available for a conversation, am open minded to new ideas and finding ways to work together

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows:

a. Attracting and retaining businesses.

We are constantly working in the city to streamline permitting, to promote local business through things like Visit Eureka, Eureka Visitor Center, our work with Eureka Main Street, partnership with Humboldt Made, and solutions through Eureka Police Department when necessary. I personally promote local business by listening and working to address concerns, and showing up if possible whenever asked and always promoting our incredible talent here in Humboldt.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents.

I have been advocating and with the Health Care for all (single payer health care) movement since being on council 12 years ago. We continue to press on. I believe health care is a right and will continue to work together to make this a reality. I have met with Providence on many levels including ER issues and treatment for all. I will continue to do so , and have a meeting with the CEO at the end of October. Our City's CARE team is currently moving toward a paramedicine model which is super exciting and will help to mitigate problems currently happening in the emergency room. I have also been in talks with potential opportunities (more to come) with Cal Poly regarding interns and possible incentives.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing.

I would say that we have been doing a great job in expanding affordable housing. We currently have 4 housing projects happening in the city of Eureka. We have also partnered with the Wiyot Tribe to create 3 more housing projects, one specifically supporting elders, another specifically supporting youth. As a local, I don't remember a time that we have had this much construction happening in our City. Truly exciting times!

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all.

I am proud of the innovative programs happening and am proud that I was on the ground floor to bring ideas and support said programming. Regarding housing, after the vacation of PALCO marsh the city worked with Betty Chinn to create Betty's Blue Angel village, a place for transition. Betty's Blue Angel Village has brought people from all over the United States to learn more about the project and its success and use for their own regions. We continue to work with Betty on many levels of support for our unhoused community. The City has created the Bayside Village, a low barrier, managed tiny house village with supportive programming and where people can begin to build a rental history. I personally go there quite a bit and am so impressed with the progress these folks are making. We have another tiny house village going in at second and A near the rescue mission. This will create space for 38 more folks as they transition into a new and different way of living. We have also purchased a home which creates 6 beds for folks transitioning as well. Not an overnight matter, but I am proud of our accomplishments in this area thus far and am excited about the direction we are going in our City. Since I have been on council we have worked together to create the Community Safety Engagement Team (CSET) within the Eureka Police Department. CSET is a program specifically designed to work with the unhoused population. CSET is out daily building relationships, offering services, getting folks into drug rehab and holding people accountable. CSET works daily to build trust

and relationships and offer services, and again hold people accountable for their behavior. We also have two rangers who consistently monitor our trails with the same level of professionalism and mission as our CSET team. The Uplift Eureka program stems from a visit made by myself, then councilmember Heidi Messner, and Homeless Liaison Lynette Mullen. We visited several cities and looked at the models they were using to address these entrenched issues. We invited the very expensive Downtown Street Teams to present to staff. Staff immediately took the information and thus became the beginning of Uplift Eureka. UPLIFT began with outreach and co pilot program and has grown to have outreach workers out in the greenbelts and at free meal, housing assistance, and last year opened a resource center to support all community members to support in securing housing, medical care, food security, getting folks into drug rehab, getting an ID, transporting people to their original place of origin(only with someone at the other end to pick them up), an art program, and so much more. In partnership with Betty Chinn, UPLIFT has created "Pathways to Payday", a program that brings together local businesses, and folks looking for a job in a 4 day intensive training including interviews with local businesses. The City itself has hired folks from this program with great success.. The program itself has above a 90% success rate with 2nd interviews and folks getting hired. UPLIFT has been incredibly successful in housing folks and supporting people into a different way of living. Our Crisis Alternative Response of Eureka was created in 2020 to support our police department on crisis calls. Beginning with limited hours 5 days a week, CARE has grown into a program open 7 days a week and is currently available until 7pm. CARE is now looking at and working toward adding a paramedicine piece to their program which will help alleviate some of the negative impacts we have been experiencing in our emergency room. CSET, UPLIFT, and our CARE team have been recognized by agencies such as the California League of Cities, and the International Crisis Intervention Team(which I have attended both locally and out of the area.) I have created a Mental Health Initiative which has currently hosted 7 town halls regarding many levels of mental health including homelessness, addiction, and most recently brain resilience. As a City, and as your Mayor, we are continuing to find innovative solutions to this very complex issue. I am extremely proud of the progress we are making. Our work is not over and I will continue to work towards "out of the box" solutions that promote quality of life not only for participants, but for our community as a whole.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem.

Our Economic Development Team has made great strides with promoting tourism through the relationship brought forward with Visit California, Visit Eureka, creation of the Eureka Visitor Center, the implementation of the Old Town Stewards, the vigilant efforts in partnership with the Harbor District and Chet Albin to bring in cruise ships, the partnership with the Humboldt Lodging Alliance to create the Redwood Skywalk, and so much more. We continue to promote our city, with help from the Humboldt County Visitor's Bureau we continue to promote local business, and the pristine beauty of our region. Collaboration is key behind the Redwood Curtain, and I am proud of the collaboration here that continues to promote tourism. On a personal note, one of my favorite things as your mayor is taking folks on tours of our City. This year alone, I have had the great pleasure of taking a couple from the M/V Crystal Symphony on a brief tour of Old Town where we looked at the

Mansion, met Mario, who is currently working on the painting of the Pink Lady, talked about Tulawat, the Madaket and so many of the unique local businesses we have in Old Town. One thing that these two appreciated the most was that the businesses were locally owned. I met a couple I met at the Zoo while showing around the Mayor and delegation from Taiwan, who went on Madaket with us, came to the friendship ceremony at City Hall with the Mayor of Taiwan, and was so excited about the tourism package put together by our own Alan Workman from the Visitor Center. I met a lovely couple from Tennessee at the light show at the Carson Mansion, gave them Zoo passes and received a delightful email from them. This I believe is the job of the Mayor, to promote the beautiful City we live in on as many levels as possible.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government.

We at the City of Eureka have been working vigilantly to streamline permitting and processes to create easier pathways moving forward. Currently, Development Services is working on a small business incentive program to help new businesses within certain criteria. I have advocated for folks in the process and worked to find clarification for issues they may be having. I appreciate staff's work to support business needs and appreciate the work of Economic Development and our Chamber to continue the strengths in local business and our community.

Casey Dresser

City of Eureka Mayor

No response received.

Anil Dwivedi

City of Eureka Mayor

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

My first priority will be to listen directly to local business owners and identify the root causes of the financial challenges they face. In my conversations with business owners, one recurring concern has been the impact of homelessness, public drug use, disruptive behavior, cleanliness, and public safety on customers, employees, and visitors.

I will advocate for addressing these issues with urgency while improving street and sidewalk maintenance, strengthening public safety, supporting tourism, and making commercial areas clean, safe, and welcoming.

At the same time, I want City Hall to be a partner not an obstacle to businesses. I will advocate for streamlined permitting and licensing, faster responses to business concerns, stronger support for existing businesses, and active recruitment of new employers and investment.

My goal is to make Eureka one of the most business friendly cities in America, a place where existing businesses can succeed and new businesses want to invest, create jobs, and grow.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy.

I will actively identify and pursue State and Federal programs, grants, and initiatives that can bring investment, infrastructure, workforce development, and economic opportunities to Eureka. Every opportunity should be evaluated based on one simple question: Does it provide a measurable benefit to Eureka's businesses, workers, and taxpayers?

I will work closely with the Chamber and local businesses to make sure they are aware of available grants, incentives, and resources. At the same time, when State or Federal policies create unnecessary burdens for our local businesses, I will advocate strongly for Eureka's interests with our representatives.

My approach will be practical: bring more resources and investment into Eureka, reduce unnecessary barriers, and turn outside opportunities into local jobs and economic growth.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

Communication must be consistent, two way, and followed by action. I will maintain an open door relationship with the Chamber and local businesses and support regular meetings where business owners can bring concerns directly to City leadership.

I also want the City and Chamber to work together to identify upcoming local and State policies that could affect Eureka businesses before decisions are made, not after. Most importantly, businesses deserve follow through. When concerns are raised, there should be clear responsibility, timely responses, and measurable action.

My goal is to make the Chamber and our local businesses true partners with City Hall in building a stronger Eureka economy.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

My first priority will be taking care of the businesses that are already here. I will regularly engage with local business owners to understand what is hurting their ability to succeed and work to address those problems before we lose businesses, jobs, or investment.

We must make Eureka a place where customers, employees, and visitors feel safe and welcome. That means improving public safety, addressing disruptive behavior and public drug activity, keeping our streets and commercial areas clean and well maintained, and responding quickly when businesses need help.

To attract new businesses, I will advocate for competitive and fiscally responsible incentives where appropriate, faster and simpler permitting, assistance identifying available commercial properties, and proactive recruitment of businesses and employers that will create jobs and strengthen our economy.

My goal is to create an environment where existing businesses want to stay and expand and where new businesses look at Eureka and say, "This is where we want to invest."

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

While healthcare is not directly controlled by the Mayor, City leadership can and should be a strong advocate for expanding healthcare access in Eureka.

I will work with healthcare providers, Humboldt County, educational institutions, and State and Federal partners to pursue funding and support the expansion of healthcare infrastructure in our community. I will also advocate for recruitment and retention programs and appropriate incentives to attract more doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, specialists, and other healthcare providers to Eureka.

The City should also make it easier for healthcare providers to expand by helping identify appropriate locations and ensuring that local permitting and development processes are efficient and timely.

Healthcare access affects not only our quality of life, but also our workforce and our economy. My goal will be to make Eureka an increasingly attractive place for healthcare professionals and healthcare investment.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Housing is an issue I understand not only as a candidate, but through my own experience as a local housing provider. I currently provide both affordable and market-rate housing in Eureka, including housing for extremely low income residents and people who have experienced homelessness or housing instability.

I believe Eureka needs both affordable and market rate housing. We should preserve the affordable housing we already have while creating an environment where private developers, property owners, nonprofits, and affordable-housing organizations can build more.

I will advocate for faster and more predictable permitting, fewer unnecessary barriers to housing development, responsible use of available City property, and stronger public-private partnerships to bring additional housing investment to Eureka.

We cannot solve a housing shortage without creating more housing. My goal is to make it easier to preserve, improve, and build homes at every income level while protecting the quality of our neighborhoods.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

Homelessness is one of my highest priorities, and I have already published a detailed 12 month action plan to address it. My approach begins with understanding who is experiencing homelessness and why, because homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction, and economic hardship cannot all be addressed with the same solution.

I will advocate for coordinated case-by-case intervention that connects people with appropriate housing, mental health care, substance-use treatment, job training, and other services, while strengthening partnerships with the County, healthcare providers, nonprofits, law enforcement, and existing City programs.

Compassion must also be accompanied by accountability. We can help people in crisis while maintaining safe, clean, and accessible streets, parks, neighborhoods, and business districts for everyone.

Most importantly, I want measurable results. We should track how many people are moved into housing or treatment, how many remain successfully housed, and whether conditions in our community are actually improving. My 12 month plan is about moving from simply managing homelessness to producing measurable progress toward reducing it.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism is an important part of Eureka's economy, and we have tremendous potential because of our waterfront, historic Old Town, Victorian architecture, arts and culture, and our location at the heart of the Redwood Coast.

My priority will be to make Eureka a place where visitors feel safe, welcome, and want to stay longer. That starts with clean streets and public spaces, improved maintenance, public safety, attractive commercial districts, and addressing disruptive behavior and public drug activity that can negatively affect the visitor experience.

I will also support stronger nationwide promotion of Eureka, more events and year-round activities, and partnerships with hotels, restaurants, retailers, local attractions, the Chamber, and tourism organizations.

Our goal should not simply be to bring people through Eureka, it should be to give them reasons to stay in Eureka, spend in Eureka, and come back to Eureka.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

My goal is to make Eureka one of the most business friendly cities in America. City Hall should be a partner in helping responsible businesses open, operate, expand, and succeed, not an unnecessary obstacle.

I will advocate for a one stop, customer-service approach where businesses receive clear requirements, realistic timelines, and a point of contact to help navigate licensing, planning, building, and permitting. Departments should coordinate with each other so applicants are not repeatedly sent from one office to another, and straightforward applications should have an expedited process whenever legally possible.

I will also support reviewing City fees, regulations, and procedures to eliminate unnecessary duplication, outdated requirements, and avoidable delays while maintaining important health, safety, and building standards. We should establish measurable turnaround goals and hold ourselves accountable for meeting them.

Most importantly, I want City Hall to adopt a simple philosophy: when someone wants to invest in Eureka, create jobs, improve a property, or open a responsible business, our first question should be, "How can we help you succeed?"

Victor E. Garcia Jr.

Eureka City Council Ward 1

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I grew up in a small business. My mother ran a travel agency for 20-plus years. I saw her go through 9/11, the '08 crash, and the competition from online sales. I've had personal experience with the struggles and sacrifices made by small businesses during tough economic times. I plan on supporting businesses in two ways. The City can aid directly by setting aside money for grants or zero-interest loans for improvements/repairs. Some of this money already exists. For example, because of Section 4467 of the California Government Code, the City collects a fee through business licenses to address ADA/accessibility issues. The law only allows that money to be spent in certain ways. One of those ways is by directly helping small businesses with the construction-related costs of ADA/accessibility upgrades. Direct support can also look like having City staff help business owners fill out forms and connect with resources. I also support existing initiatives like Eureka Main Street and our new Cultural Arts District.

The other way I can support local businesses is by staying in touch with them and listening to their specific issues. This can happen through roundtables or even informal conversations. I will also pay attention to national and local events so that I can make the most informed decisions when voting.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I plan to personally stay informed about the various pieces of legislation making their way through the state and federal legislatures while evaluating their potential impacts on our community. That way, I can remain informed and have proactive discussions with the business community. Time and knowledge can make all the difference when margins are tight. As I mentioned in the first question, I believe the city should put more resources towards providing education and information directly to business owners. There are a lot of resources out there, ranging from CalOSBA and the Small Business Administration to one-off programs. Since the Chamber also gathers and shares similar information, there are a lot of opportunities for collaboration.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

The quarterly 2x2s between the City and the Chamber are an important connection that is already happening, and I would like to take part in them if elected to Council. I will advocate for the City to partner up with the Chamber on regular trainings and workshops that are aimed at helping business owners better navigate local and state agencies and our ever-evolving regulatory frameworks. Regular contact creates connections between staff and business owners, which in turn leads to better service and understanding.

However, given the speed at which issues arise and realities change, we need open lines of communication. I plan to make myself available and build a relationship with business owners and Chamber members. I think that attending workshops and events put on by the Chamber is a good start, but I would like to push even further. It's a little more difficult during the election, but after the election I plan on introducing myself to all the business owners within the ward and establishing that initial connection. I am open to working with the Chamber to set up regular "Coffee w/ the Councilmember" or similar roundtables where we regularly discuss issues affecting businesses in the ward and beyond. Similarly, I have a good relationship with Assemblymembers Rogers & Connolly (who have endorsed my campaign) and would be more than happy to facilitate local meetings and Sacramento visits. We are all in this together, and having good communication is crucial for effective cooperation and improving the economic vitality of our City/region.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

We face some structural issues that limit our ability to attract/grow and retain businesses. First and foremost, we are incredibly rural. The airport and harbor are crucial lifelines to the outside world, but for most businesses from outside of the area, this places extra strain on their logistics and limits their market potential. I am focused on nurturing and growing local businesses. Particularly businesses that can bring in dollars from outside of the region. I believe strongly in growing more food and making more goods in Humboldt again. With no end in sight to fuel price instability, we need to enhance local food production. Not just in terms of raw goods but finished shelf-stable products.

We also have a legacy of craftsmanship to tap into. As an example, people repairing/upgrading their wood windows should not have to purchase materials manufactured in the Bay Area. I want to see the city encouraging cottage production of high-quality goods for both local consumption and export.

With a little creativity, the City can tackle some of the barriers to light manufacturing and the production of shelf-stable goods. It can be difficult and expensive to find commercial kitchen space. I envision the City establishing a program that pairs owners of commercial kitchens with groups interested in renting the space in off-hours. When it comes to light manufacturing, equipment costs and space constraints limit prototyping for individuals working on a budget. Ward One actually has a great example of a model aimed at reducing that high up-front cost. The newly opened Lost Coast FabLab, located on Summer St. behind Grocery Outlet, is an excellent example of this kind of innovation. The space functions as a shared workshop where individuals or groups can access specialized tools and equipment for textiles, electronics, and even metalworking. Members can also rent space and buy materials in bulk through the FabLab. This is the kind of thinking I want to bring to the table when talking about supporting entrepreneurs.

The second main structural issue is the difficult healthcare landscape that we face here in Humboldt. For far too many folks, it is too difficult to find providers. We need to take matters into our own hands and create an elected Healthcare District that can operate medical facilities. I go into more detail on my plan for increasing access to healthcare in question B.

We have other untapped potential as well. Our harbor and airport are officially designated U.S. Foreign Trade Zones and ports of entry. Meaning they can serve as places of international trade or travel.

In terms of retaining businesses. The city needs to continue making progress toward reducing houselessness and treating addiction/behavioral health issues. Please see response to question D for more details. The City needs to provide a good quality of life for both business owners and residents. That means having a clean and well-run city that also nourishes the soul through its many artistic, cultural, and outdoor activities.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

Increasing access to healthcare is central to my campaign. When I talk to people, the common issues I hear can range from the long wait times for specialists to individuals with private insurance struggling to find providers. We also have too many folks traveling hours out of the area or forgoing care entirely because of the hassle. If we want to build a healthy community and attract/retain talent, we need to fill in the gaps. I personally have to go to Redding for my care, and I consider myself lucky to get any care at all.

I have been very vocal about the need for Eureka and the wider Humboldt Bay region to create an elected healthcare district like the ones in Southern Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity. A healthcare district would be directly accountable to the population it serves. Healthcare districts are flexible jurisdictions that can run all sorts of facilities in the name of maintaining the physical and mental health of our community. Because they are elected, they are better able to tailor services to the community's needs. The long-term vision for such a district would be to purchase and operate the Mad River Hospital campus. The district could also partner with Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods to create a teaching hospital to train and retain healthcare professionals. We cannot be idle as private providers wind down operations or scale back on staffing; we must take an active role in securing the future of healthcare in our region.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

The City has made tremendous progress in recent years towards building more affordable and market-rate housing. I don't want to interfere with that or any of the other plans in the works. I do think that we can get more creative when it comes to providing more alternative housing solutions. Every bed counts, and reducing pressure on our limited housing stock is a priority. I want to build on the successful work done by Area 1 Agency on Ageing through their Northcoast Homeshare program and work with the city on providing a similar service. Homesharing or even boarding-style housing can be a great alternative for single individuals or seniors who cannot keep up with the rising cost of

living. I would also like to see more tiny homes so that people can build equity and own their home while maximizing our limited space. We also need to push for the redevelopment of dilapidated properties. Some structures are beyond saving, and the land can accommodate more units with a new design. Every bed counts, and reducing pressure on our limited housing stock needs to be front and center.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

The scale of suffering that is occurring on our streets is heartbreaking and continues to grow. Still, we must do more with less and act quickly. Getting people into stable housing is the first step. Permanent supportive housing is key to addressing chronic homelessness, but services can be costly to start and operate. I support all sorts of approaches to housing, but given our financial constraints, we have to get creative. Many people experiencing homelessness work side jobs or gigs. Some, like seniors or vets, have access to a fixed income. This group of folks is prime for boarding-style housing or a home-sharing program paired with supportive resources and counseling. I believe that people have a right to privacy and autonomy and would not seek to make sobriety a precondition to getting people housed. Anyone who has had experience with trauma or people in recovery knows that sobriety is not a straight path. Yet most people are resilient and, given the space to heal and a supportive community, can achieve lasting results. However, severe addiction and behavioral/mental health issues are a different matter.

When it comes to individuals in an acute medical crisis, we need to be able to provide immediate treatment. Easier said than done, given our isolation and impacted healthcare system. That is why I am pushing so strongly for the formation of an elected Healthcare District. While new treatment facilities are in the works, like the one up in Weitchpec or the proposed behavioral health triage clinic in Arcata, we still need more beds. A Healthcare District can also serve as a focal point for coordination and funding to maximize the impact of our tax dollars.

I also support the current work by the City aimed at building trust with and providing aid to the houseless population. The CARE program, CSET, and Uplift Eureka are all doing good work towards creating a safer Eureka. We need to treat others with the dignity and humanity we expect to receive for ourselves. I need to be clear: living on the streets or struggling with addiction does not make someone a criminal. However, that does not mean ignoring violent or organized crime. True predatory and antisocial behavior endangers everyone in the community, housed or unhoused.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

A healthy tourism ecosystem is necessary to expand opportunities for our business community. Despite the national economic climate, we are in a better place than ever to take advantage of the recent progress, from new trail and zoo infrastructure to increased flight routes and availability. I appreciate and support the work done by the Eureka Welcome Center, the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, and others to attract tourists and showcase the amazing bounty that our City/Region has to

offer. I am also very excited to see what work comes out of the County through their newly created Tourism Advisory Board.

Messaging-wise, one thing that I've noticed is the current focus on the outdoors and sporting activities. While I don't disagree with that angle, I think we attract a broader audience by leaning into the fact that we are an oasis of mild weather. As neighboring regions continue to see more extreme weather patterns, we can offer our coastal community as a reprieve. Businesses can go even further by offering packages tailored to suit this kind of climate tourist. My mother was a travel agent for 25 years, and that has taught me that people from all sorts of economic backgrounds travel and holiday. We don't have to limit ourselves to a specific demographic.

We also need to continue addressing the visible blight and humanitarian crisis playing out in our City. I strongly believe a housing-first model is the most direct way of helping people experiencing homelessness. We also need more public bathrooms/showers and trash cans to reduce waste and litter on our streets. I also support the City's efforts to secure vacant properties. Nothing invites trouble like dark corners that lack life and attention. For a more comprehensive look into my plans for addressing our housing and behavioral health/addiction crisis, please see my answers for questions C & D.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

I support the City having a "Pathway to Yes" mentality among staff. My day job is working at the City of Arcata as the Permit Technician, and I regularly interact with business owners trying to make their plans a reality. My experience on the other side of the counter gives me some ideas of where we can improve.

The City may be the local enforcing agency, but a majority of the regulations/requirements come from state and federal law. Local codes do add a layer of complication, but those are more flexible and can be changed by the council or voters. From my personal experience, the biggest challenges are not necessarily the regulations but what feels to the public like a lack of consistent service and the overall complexity of overlapping jurisdictions and agencies. As staff, we also struggle with those challenges. The state adds new laws every year, and cities are tasked with enforcing them through unfunded mandates. Many of these new laws are written by legislators with larger jurisdictions in mind and do not take into consideration the realities of our community.

However, we are all in this together. If we want new small locally owned businesses to flourish, the city needs to provide clear pathways and expectations to prospective businesses. I want to give staff the technology and direction they need to speed up timelines and provide better customer service. The city already provides a Pre-Application Conference service that aims to get people on the right path for construction, but I would like to see that expanded to offer a meeting that is focused on the prospective business operation/model. I think that will go a long way because, instead of coming in with a project for a specific location, the conversation can get started on the overall business model. If there were enough money, I would like to see the city create a position solely dedicated to helping business owners navigate the various agencies and processes.

Jason McCutcheon

Eureka City Council Ward 1

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I want to make it easier and more affordable to start a business in Eureka. One of my goals will be to reduce or, where legally possible, waive city fees for new businesses within Eureka city limits, especially for small and locally owned businesses. Starting a business already comes with significant expenses, and City Hall should not add unnecessary financial barriers.

I will also push for a simpler and more business-friendly process for navigating permits, licenses, inspections, and other city requirements. If a fee is not necessary, I believe we should look at eliminating it. If it is necessary, I will look at ways to reduce or defer that cost for new businesses. My goal is simple: if someone is willing to invest their own money, create jobs, and open a business in Eureka, the city should be doing everything it reasonably can to help them succeed—not making it harder.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I would evaluate State and Federal programs based on one simple question: Will this actually help Eureka's local businesses and residents? I would actively look for grants, tax incentives, small-business programs, infrastructure funding, workforce-development opportunities, and other resources that the city can bring back to our community.

I would also work with local business owners, the Chamber of Commerce, county officials, and state and federal representatives to make sure Eureka is aware of available funding and actually takes advantage of it. Too often, opportunities exist but communities fail to pursue them. As a council member, I will make it a priority to identify those opportunities, determine whether they make financial sense for Eureka, and advocate for our fair share of available resources.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I believe the best way to improve communication is to create a regular, open line of communication between the Chamber of Commerce, local business owners, and city officials. I would support regular meetings or roundtables where business owners can bring their concerns directly to the city, receive clear answers, and help identify problems before they become bigger issues.

I would also work to strengthen communication with our State representatives so that Eureka's business community has a voice when legislation and regulations are being considered that could affect local businesses. The Chamber can help bring businesses together, but City Hall needs to be willing to listen and act on what it hears. I want business owners to know who to contact, where to

get answers, and how their concerns are being addressed. Communication should not be one-way—we need to listen to our local businesses and then take action.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area?

I agree that these six priorities are closely connected. A stronger local economy means supporting the businesses that are already here, making it easier for new businesses to open, creating more housing, improving public safety, and making Eureka a place where people want to live, work, and visit. If elected, I would take the following steps:

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

I want to make Eureka more business-friendly. One of my priorities will be reducing or, where legally possible, waiving city fees for people opening new businesses within Eureka city limits. I would also review existing fees, regulations, and permitting requirements to identify unnecessary costs and red tape. I want to work directly with local business owners to understand what is keeping them from expanding, hiring, or staying in Eureka and address those barriers whenever the city has the ability to do so.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible

The city cannot solve healthcare alone, but we can be a partner. I would work with Humboldt County, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and State representatives to identify opportunities to attract additional healthcare providers and expand access to services. This includes supporting efforts to bring more mental-health, substance-abuse, primary-care, and specialty services to our community. I would also look for State and Federal funding opportunities that could help expand local healthcare infrastructure.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Eureka needs more housing at different price points, but we also need to make sure development makes sense for our community. I would support responsible housing development while looking for ways to reduce unnecessary fees, delays, and bureaucratic barriers that increase the cost of building. At the same time, I want development to account for parking, roads, infrastructure, public safety, and the needs of existing neighborhoods. We need housing that people can actually afford, not simply a higher number of units on paper.

d. Addressing homelessness, mental health, drug treatment, and community safety

We need a comprehensive approach. People experiencing homelessness who need help should have access to housing, mental-health services, and drug and alcohol treatment. At the same time, we have to recognize that public spaces belong to everyone and that businesses, residents, and visitors deserve to feel safe.

I would work with the County, law enforcement, healthcare providers, service organizations, and State agencies to make sure existing programs are actually producing results. I would support expanding treatment and mental-health resources while also holding programs accountable for outcomes. We cannot continue throwing money at problems without measuring whether that money is making a difference.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism is important to Eureka, but our tourism economy needs to benefit local businesses and residents. I would support efforts that bring visitors to Eureka while encouraging them to spend their money at locally owned restaurants, shops, hotels, and other businesses. I would also focus on the basics that make a community attractive to visitors: clean streets, maintained parks, safe public spaces, good roads, and a vibrant downtown and Old Town.

Tourism should complement our local economy—not become an excuse for unnecessary spending. I want to see measurable results from the money the city invests in tourism.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

This is one area where City Hall can make an immediate difference. I want to review the process businesses go through for permits, licenses, inspections, fees, and other city requirements and identify where we can eliminate unnecessary steps and delays. I would push for clearer communication, predictable timelines, and a system where business owners can easily find out what is required of them.

My philosophy is simple: City Hall should be a partner to local businesses, not an obstacle. If someone is willing to invest their own money, create jobs, provide services, and build a business in Eureka, we should be looking for ways to help them succeed while still protecting the interests of our community.

Ultimately, I would measure success by results: more businesses opening and staying open, more jobs, more housing options, better access to healthcare and treatment, safer and cleaner public spaces, and a stronger local economy.

Audra Sisson

Eureka City Council Ward 3

No response received.

G Mario Fernandez

Eureka City Council Ward 3

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

For me, advocacy starts with listening to the concerns of those who want change -- this includes continuing to strengthen our relationship between the City and Chamber (e.g. our 2x2, sponsoring socials, etc). From what I hear, our local businesses are feeling the economic pressures of increased material costs and inflation.

I would continue to advocate for access to alternative capital -- leveraging our city's relationships with regional partners like North Edge or in my role on the Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RREDC) -- and reducing barriers and start-up costs for beginning businesses similar to [Fort Bragg](#).

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

First is to ask the questions -- do the programs serve their intended purpose? Are the rebates for the façade program or the grants for CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) sufficient? Do they function as intended?

Any measure of success from these or newer programs would require input from city staff and local businesses on the metrics to be used.

Over the past four years, the Eureka City Council has successfully secured over \$30 million in grants to fund housing projects and infrastructure improvements without burdening our local businesses or taxpayers.

Moving forward, we will need to aggressively pursue and work with our state and federal state and federal representatives for workforce development grants -- collaborating with businesses, labor unions, and educational institutions to build and grow long-term resilience in our economy.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I currently meet with the Chamber as part of our quarterly 2x2, though, consistent and structured dialogue outside of the 2x2 should be the norm. I feel the only time I hear from businesses directly is when our committee meets or a business owner makes public comment.

Granted, I could improve on my participating/attending workshops and helping to coordinate more regular or semi-annual Chamber community workshops (e.g. CSET, de-escalation, Camara de Comercio Humboldt) with support from city staff and our programs. I welcome feedback and want to foster further dialogue with our business owners.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

We attract and retain businesses by building a stable, prepared workforce, reliable modern infrastructure, and providing the services associated with modern day living. I will advocate for City-led partnerships with local trade unions, the Chamber, and Cal Poly Humboldt to expand local apprenticeships so that our residents are trained to fill these incoming, living-wage jobs.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

We can actively combat the local healthcare crisis and look to establishing a [healthcare district](#). This is a long-term plan that would require years of effort, however, we have had an [11% drop in primary care physicians](#) over the last year and a [regional shortage of 290 nurses expected to grow to 444 by 2030](#) and we need to start planning now and acting as soon as feasible.

In the short-term, we would need to attract and retain specialists. One way to consider this is to continue to build out and support the Chamber's Concierge program.

I would continue my support of expanding our nursing and allied healthcare programs at College of the Redwoods and Cal Poly Humboldt.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Eureka is designated as a [Prohousing](#). As such, developments like the [Mallard](#), [Dishgamu](#), or the [EaRTH Center \(Eureka Regional Transit and Housing Center\)](#) increase our housing stock and offer affordable-housing options.

I would continue to seek the Prohousing designation which makes us eligible to apply for certain grants and incentives for housing developments, and focus on dense-mixed-use planning and development so families and individuals can live and work without commuting long distances.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

We must remove the burden from law enforcement of playing counselor and social worker. The best solution is to house people as soon as feasible and provide wrap-around services to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into our community.

I fully support our integrated approach: Uplift Eureka (helping people secure jobs and transitional housing), CARE (social workers facilitating mental health treatment rather than law enforcement), and CSET (proactive community engagement).

In creating a safer community for all, I will continue my efforts in disaster preparedness -- we must acknowledge and adapt to severe climate change intentionally while mitigating and managing our risk in the event of disaster.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

A healthy tourism ecosystem depends on clean, safe, accessible, and vibrant public spaces. I will continue investing in repairing/maintaining our streets and maintaining our parks, waterfront, and protecting the natural environment and coastal assets that draw visitors to the Redwood Coast.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

We need to be a partner and not a roadblock -- by digitizing permits/licenses, and creating a single point of entry (e.g. a portal) for new and existing businesses we can simplify the bureaucratic side. I can reach out to the chamber and hear from you all to learn what the points of stress/contention are for businesses and work with city staff to streamline and ease the process.

Janelle Jackson

Eureka City Council Ward 3

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I would start by listening to local business owners and understanding the challenges they face. Rising costs, insurance, staffing, regulations, and changing consumer habits are putting pressure on businesses. While City government cannot solve all of those issues, we should make sure we are not adding unnecessary burdens.

I would work with the Chamber, City staff, and local businesses to identify where we can improve permitting, fees, regulations, infrastructure, and communication. I would also make sure businesses are aware of State, Federal, and local resources that may be available to help them.

When a business identifies a barrier, I would want to determine if the City can address that barrier, whether by changing a process, improving communication, connecting the business with the right resource, or bringing an issue forward to the appropriate agency. Not every problem will be within the City's authority, but businesses should know where to turn and what options are available.

Eureka has a significant number of vacant and underutilized commercial spaces. I would like the City to better understand why those spaces remain empty and what practical steps we can take to make it easier for businesses to open, expand, and invest here.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation?

I would be proactive about identifying grants and programs that can benefit Eureka, while also being careful about the long-term costs and obligations that come with them.

I would work with City staff, the Chamber, and our State and Federal representatives to pursue opportunities that support our priorities, particularly economic development, housing, infrastructure, workforce development, and public safety.

Before pursuing a program or funding opportunity, I would want to understand what it requires from the City, how it fits with our priorities, what the long-term financial or administrative commitments may be, and what we can realistically expect it to accomplish. Funding is not necessarily a benefit if the obligations that come with it outweigh the local value.

I would also want to make sure Eureka is prepared to take advantage of opportunities when they become available. That means knowing our priorities, having projects that are ready to move forward, and maintaining relationships with the people at the County, State, and Federal levels who can help us

navigate available resources.

At the same time, I would make sure Eureka's unique needs are represented when State or Federal policies affect our community. Not every program is right for us, and I believe we should focus our limited resources on opportunities with a clear and measurable local benefit.

3. How can we improve two-way communication between the Chamber, businesses, and government?

I believe we should build on the relationships that already exist rather than creating another layer of bureaucracy.

I would make myself available to the Chamber and local businesses and encourage regular, practical conversations with City staff and Councilmembers. Those conversations should include a broad range of local businesses, including smaller businesses and people who may not have the same access to City government or established networks. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to be heard and to understand how City decisions may affect them.

When businesses identify a problem, we should determine whether the City can address it and, when it can, follow through. If the issue falls outside the City's authority, we should help identify who can address it and, when appropriate, work with our County, State, or Federal representatives to move it forward.

I would also look at how businesses currently share concerns and receive updates from the City, what is working well, and where there may be opportunities to improve communication. Good communication should be accessible to all businesses and should not depend on knowing exactly who to call or having an existing relationship with City government.

Not every request will result in a change, but businesses deserve a clear explanation and a response. Good communication means listening, responding, and following through.

4. What specific steps will you take to address the Chamber's six priorities?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

I would listen to our community about what businesses and services people want and need in Eureka, and then work with local entrepreneurs to help bring those ideas to fruition.

I would talk with businesses that have been successful here for many years to understand what has helped them thrive and what keeps people coming back. For businesses that are struggling, I want the City to be a responsive partner by helping them navigate City processes, connecting them with

available resources, and identifying barriers that can be addressed. Retaining the businesses we already have is an important part of a healthy local economy.

For new businesses, that means making the process of opening in Eureka as clear and straightforward as possible, from finding an appropriate location to permitting and opening. We should also look at what makes Eureka an attractive place to invest and what barriers may discourage businesses from choosing to locate or expand here.

My goal is to support the businesses we have, help good new ideas become reality, and create an environment where businesses want to invest, grow, and stay in Eureka.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

Access to healthcare is extremely important to the health and well-being of our community. I would approach this by looking at what healthcare professionals need to stay and practice in Eureka, as well as what residents need to be able to access care locally.

I would maintain direct relationships with local healthcare providers and medical professionals to understand what is working, what challenges they face with recruiting and retaining staff, and where there are opportunities to expand care. I would also listen to residents about their experiences to understand where they are having difficulty accessing care, what services are hardest to access, and where the greatest needs are. It is also important to understand whether members of our community face greater barriers to care and make sure those barriers are part of the conversation when looking for solutions.

As a Councilmember, I would use that information to help bring the appropriate people and resources together and address the areas where the City has influence. That could include supporting housing for healthcare workers, making it easier for providers to locate or expand, improving permitting and zoning processes, supporting workforce development, and advocating with County and State partners when solutions are beyond the City's authority.

I would also look for opportunities to support the providers and organizations already serving our community and help remove local barriers that make it harder to recruit professionals, expand services, or access care. The goal is to help make Eureka a place where healthcare professionals can build a career and residents can find the care they need closer to home.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Eureka is currently updating its Housing Element, and I would use that information as an opportunity to look at what is preventing housing from being built, what is making it too expensive, and where the

City can make the process work better.

I support having different types of housing in Eureka, including affordable, workforce, and market-rate homes. We should also look at opportunities to add housing in existing neighborhoods and make better use of buildings and properties that are already here when that makes sense.

I believe we should reduce unnecessary delays and costs, make the permitting and approval process more predictable, and focus on getting approved projects actually built. I would also want to understand where projects are getting stalled and what the City can realistically do to help move them forward.

At the same time, we should be thoughtful about how and where we grow. Eureka has a unique character and history that we should work to preserve. It is important to me that we expand our housing choices in a way that respects our neighborhoods, our infrastructure, and the qualities that make Eureka a special place to live.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

We need to lead with compassion and accountability. People experiencing homelessness have different needs, and we need to understand what is keeping each person from stability rather than treating everyone the same.

We need to connect people with the resources they actually need, whether that is housing, mental health care, substance-use treatment, medical care, employment support, or other services. But we also need to think beyond the immediate crisis. Programs should be designed with long-term success in mind, with appropriate follow-up and a plan to help people move toward stability rather than providing a temporary solution.

This is not a short-term problem, and it will require sustained effort and long-term solutions. I would want to look closely at the programs and resources we already have: what is working, what isn't, where people are falling through the cracks, and what services or programs are missing. We should set measurable goals, evaluate outcomes over time, and be willing to strengthen, change, or redirect resources when something is not producing the results we need.

The City cannot do this alone. I would support continued and expanded coordination with the County, healthcare providers, nonprofits, law enforcement, and other organizations so that people can move more effectively between services and have consistent support.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to maintain safe and accessible public spaces. Residents,

businesses, and visitors should be able to use our streets, parks, and other shared spaces safely. This also means enforcing our community's rules and laws consistently and fairly when necessary.

I believe we can approach homelessness with compassion while also being realistic about the time and commitment required to create lasting change. The goal should be to help people achieve stability while building a safer, healthier community for everyone.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism is important to Eureka's economy, but it should benefit our residents and local businesses as well as our visitors.

I would support continued coordination between the City, Chamber, tourism organizations, and local businesses to build on what already makes Eureka special. Our downtown, waterfront, historic architecture, arts and culture, restaurants, events, and locally owned businesses all contribute to the experience we offer visitors.

A healthy tourism economy means more than simply bringing people to town. I would like to see visitors stay longer, explore more of Eureka, return to our community, and spend more of their money with local businesses. It also means having clean, safe, welcoming public spaces and a community that both residents and visitors enjoy.

I think we should look at whether our tourism efforts are actually benefiting local businesses and the community. Success should be reflected in stronger local businesses, more activity throughout the year, and visitors who leave with a positive experience and want to come back.

Most importantly, tourism should complement the community we already have and help strengthen the places, businesses, and experiences that make Eureka special.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

This is an area where the City can make a direct difference for local businesses.

I would support continuing to improve the permitting and development process from the perspective of the person actually going through it. The City has already made efforts to make these processes easier to navigate, and I would like to build on that work. Requirements should be clear, timelines should be reasonably predictable, and communication should be consistent. Applicants should know where their project stands and who they need to work with.

I would also want to hear directly from businesses that have recently gone through these processes.

Their experiences can help identify where things are working well, where people are getting stuck, and where improvements can be made.

Streamlining does not mean eliminating legitimate standards or oversight. It means making government easier to understand, more responsive, and as efficient as possible. If there are unnecessary steps, delays, or confusion that can be addressed, we should look at how to improve them.

Our local businesses are investing in Eureka, and I believe City government should do everything it reasonably can to make that process clear, predictable, and workable.

I believe good City government starts with listening and being realistic about what we can actually accomplish. I cannot solve the economy, housing, healthcare, or homelessness by myself. What I will do is listen, ask good questions, make responsible decisions, work with the people and organizations that have expertise, and follow through.

Eureka has real challenges, including vacant businesses and the need for more housing and economic opportunity. But we also have tremendous assets and people who care deeply about this community. I want to help build on those strengths and focus on practical improvements that make Eureka a safer, more secure, and more prosperous community while preserving the character and charm we value. The Chamber has a personal connection for me. My grandfather, Leo Perrone, served as president of the Chamber in 1979, when I was a young girl. I remember how proud he was of that role and of contributing to the City of Eureka. That history makes the work of the Chamber particularly meaningful to me, and I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective on the issues that matter to our community.

Kathy Herrera

Eureka City Council Ward 5

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

The city of Eureka has been able to secure grants for many things--affordable housing, safe streets--why not find grants (instead of loans) to support local businesses and to start-up small to medium sized manufacturers of products to be marketed outside our area thus bringing money in? We have so much empty retail space, maybe some could be rezoned to light industrial. An extra 400 or more full time jobs would boost all our other businesses. Investment could be sought from the sectors most likely to benefit, such as banking and telecommunications. Analyze the effectiveness of the SBDC and maybe get a full-time grant writer on the city team.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

Ballot measures can be confusing, I look for ways to unravel the language and determine the effects on our local economy and then communicate with voters.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

First step as a councilmember I would canvass local business owners in person to gain a deeper understanding of these needs and priorities. Next these findings (with Chamber input) would be presented at Council meetings where any new initiative is brought up if it affects the Private Sector. Then the City Newsletter which comes out monthly could expand coverage of our business community.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

As mentioned in #1, soliciting grants and investment to support some new production as well as existing business.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

It is crucial we recruit and retain more providers especially in primary care. Continue efforts to insure every citizen.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Identify properties eligible for re-zoning and splitting. Promote and simplify the owner-builder permit process. Provide more home-construction classes at the Middle and High Schools and Community Centers.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

Persons who cannot take care of themselves for whatever reasons must be provided adequate housing and for some that will mean long-term care. Expensive? Yes. Paid for with tax dollars? Yes! Why? Because there is no option less costly. In and out of jail? No. In and out of the ER? No. County or City-sanctioned campgrounds? Just the previous two revolving doors rolled into one. Doing Nothing? Certainly not! The health and economic damage to our city and businesses cannot be ignored.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism will benefit immediately from action on the above. Surely we've all read the comments made by disappointed visitors. Our image as a charming Victorian Seaport is at stake. To address the parking issue I would advocate for an Old Town/City Attractions shuttle like the one in Vancouver BC.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

Business licenses could be half-off for new openings or two years for the cost of one. Planning and Building permit fees for new and expanding business could be financed at low or 0% interest.

Jeff Leonard

Eureka City Council Ward 5

Jeff Leonard www.jeffleonardforcouncil.org Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Eureka Chamber of Commerce Questionnaire. I served on the Eureka City Council for two terms from 2002 to 2010. I am ready to serve our City again as the representative for Eureka's 5th Ward. As a council member, I have the skillset needed to get things done. I believe today's council can benefit from my experience as a community leader.

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I have the same question for the Chamber of Commerce: How can I be a better advocate for local businesses? How can I help the local business community overcome the economic challenges we face in Eureka? The first thing I can do for the local business community is keep an open door and listen. Collaborate regularly with business leaders to help develop solutions and adopt ideas that help businesses succeed. Supporting the local economy should be Job #1 for the City Council. That job starts by collecting input and ideas from the business community. The second thing I can do is be positive. We live in a community where new business proposals can come under attack by negative opinion. I can help speak out in support of the positive attributes. I can reassure the public and help them understand the positive contributions a business proposal can have on our community.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

We send our tax dollars to Sacramento. City government should be pro-actively pursuing opportunities to bring tax dollars back to our community. From major housing projects to bike lanes, every dollar counts. City government doesn't drive the economy, that's not our role. City government can help. City projects provide a regular income stream for local consultants, engineers, and contractors. The City should aggressively pursue State and Federal grant dollars to help support our local economy. With regard to legislation, I can help the local business community deliver input and feedback to our elected state and federal representatives.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I was a steadfast supporter and ally of the Eureka Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau when I served on the City Council from 2002 to 2010. I regularly met with Chamber representatives and local businesses. I look forward to being a collaborative ally for the Chamber when I'm re-elected this November.

4. What specific steps will you take to address these top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

I can be a positive, professional representative for the City of Eureka. I will meet with outside business representatives that are considering expanding to Eureka and encourage them to bring their business to our area. For local businesses, I am always available to meet and I can help set up meetings with City staff.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

As I approach retirement, I have the same concern. When I was on the Council, we had a close working relationship with Open Door and helped them find an appropriate site to build the Eureka Community Health Center. I hope to identify similar opportunities to improve local healthcare during my next term.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

I support the downtown housing projects currently under construction. I hope we can identify additional downtown housing opportunities in the future. Downtown residents will create additional foot traffic and expand the customer base for Eureka businesses. We need to remember that parking spaces have been lost as a result of these projects. We need to closely monitor downtown parking to determine whether or not the City's parking plan is successful. We should also consider construction of a parking structure or other ideas to replace parking spaces that we've lost.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

I am concerned about safety issues in our public spaces and public parks. We've invested significant time, effort, and money to build the boardwalk and a waterfront trail. Meeting with Eureka residents during this campaign, I've heard that many community members don't feel welcome or safe using these facilities. We are a very compassionate community and we are doing a great job helping community members struggling to find safe housing and the services they need. In addition to compassion, we also need to hold people accountable. Illegal camping and littering are negatively impacting our community. I will champion an initiative for Safe, Clean Streets and Public Spaces to address littering and illegal camping in our community.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

My father served as director of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau for many years. I am a steadfast ally of our local tourism economy. Partnerships have changed since I last served on the Council. Again, I will be a collaborative ally.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

I am open to input and feedback. We can all do better, and we can expect more. I'd be happy to hear any ideas for improving City government.

Sheerah Alice Moore

Eureka City Schools Board

While running for the school board may not directly impact all of those concerns, my goal is to help guide policies that educate and empower our youth. By doing so, I hope to foster engaged citizens and community members who choose to stay and contribute locally, rather than leaving to enrich other communities.

Jessica Pettitt

Eureka City Schools Board

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

Eureka City Schools, like any business, runs a financially transparent operation and errs on the conservative side of fiduciary responsibilities. Staff works hand in hand with employees, families, learners, and other community stakeholders to support future success and graduation rates. By supporting new hires through the application process, onboarding, ongoing training, and professional development, the workplace culture prioritizes retention over turnover. This allows for long-term relationships to form between the community and schools. All systems and processes are shared openly and rigorously reviewed to make adjustments that meet community needs. This collaborative process allows the district to face any challenge, financial or otherwise, with open eyes, ears, hearts, and hands, and prepare together for a better future for Greater Eureka.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I am impressed by how informed and involved ECS staff are at both the state and federal levels. Legislative agendas are common knowledge and openly discussed with union representatives and all stakeholders in the ECS community. ECS is also used as a positive example across the state (and country) for implementing education-forward programs that increase literacy, writing, physical health, and creativity. These initiatives also center learner-focused curriculum that can adapt to any accommodations needed for learner success.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I find that many entities answer this question with some kind of "open door" policy. What I really admire about ECS leadership is that it isn't just a general invitation for the community to express itself; it actively reaches out to listen. Regular Learner Listening sessions are scheduled every semester for all grade levels, where students can speak freely about their interests, needs, and ideas for how to improve their learning experience. Staff as well as the Board of Directors are out in public talking to our neighbors at sporting events, farmers' markets, festivals, and even the WinCo parking lot. We address any idea, concern, or concept with a quick response, open dialogue, and consideration. An open door is easy when you are waiting for complainers to show up. ECS is actively out listening, asking questions, and engaging with

the community. I would suggest local businesses, government, and the chamber do more of the same.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and

what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

- a. Attracting and retaining businesses
- b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents
- c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing
- d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all
- e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem
- f. Streamlining business processes with local government

Although most of these priorities fall outside a school district's scope, we still consider them in every decision we make as a board because we are local community members, too. For example, the 300+ new living spaces being built in Eureka directly affect school enrollment needs, staffing, meals, transportation, extracurricular programs, etc. Though most of these homes will not be completed this school year, it takes pre-planning to consider how to best positively impact these families' educational experience, as well as traffic movements, access to healthy food, mental health services, medical attention, as well as music, art, theater, debate, math, and other competition-like activities for those who want to participate. A holistic approach to a learner's experience and a family quickly feeling that they belong inside that school's community is imperative to academic success. We are planning for it now. This has not only a fiscal impact, but also a real understanding of the needs of our school district's neighbors. Furthermore, by collaborating with other school districts in the state, country, and world, ECS is a destination for educational tourism, as there is so much to be proud of that can also elevate the education experience elsewhere. Eureka is on the map as a destination, takes care of its neighbors, builds great learners, and is an elevated example to others.

Where ECS doesn't have all of the answers, it is always listening, learning, and growing. Here are two initiatives I am really proud of!

Our Portrait of a Graduate is really our ECS North Star; our community-developed vision for the skills, mindsets, and competencies we want every learner to leave us with. That work naturally connects to preparing young people to contribute to the future workforce and civic life of Greater Eureka.

Our California Community Schools work is another strong example. It intentionally asks schools to leverage the expertise, resources, and involvement of families, businesses, nonprofits, public agencies, and other community partners to serve learners and families better. That feels particularly relevant to the Chamber's emphasis on two-way communication and community collaboration.

Alan Bongio

Humboldt Community Services District Director

I have spent 21 years serving on the Humboldt Community Services District Board of Directors, including multiple terms as board president. I know the District's infrastructure, finances and operations, and I understand the responsibility the Board has to the people who pay the bills.

I also bring the perspective of a builder. I deal with construction costs, permits, financing, appraisals and the practical question that ultimately determines whether a project gets built: can the completed property be sold or financed for what it costs to construct?

HCSD's responsibility is to provide dependable water and wastewater service at a reasonable long-term cost. My answers are based on experience governing the District and working in the construction industry.

1 How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges

Local businesses and residents are being hit from every direction by higher labor, material, energy, insurance, regulatory and financing costs. HCSD cannot control all of those expenses, but it must take responsibility for the costs it imposes.

During the four years I have been away from the Board, HCSD water and sewer rates have increased dramatically and, for many customers, have nearly doubled. Those increases affect every household and business in the District. A business cannot simply absorb one increase after another without eventually raising prices, reducing investment or deciding that a project no longer works.

As a builder, I understand how costs accumulate. New projects face expensive materials and labor, permit fees, State-required solar, residential fire sprinklers, capacity charges and the cost of installing water and sewer service. The finished project must still appraise for enough to support its financing. Today, that is becoming increasingly difficult.

My commitment is to examine District spending carefully, question unnecessary costs and require honest consideration of the effect that rates and fees have on businesses, homeowners and new development. Essential infrastructure must be maintained, but affordability must be part of every decision.

I will advocate for businesses by bringing their concerns directly into the boardroom, asking practical questions and insisting on clear answers. After 21 years on the Board, I know what questions to ask, where to look for the information and how to determine whether a proposal is reasonable.

2 How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy

I will evaluate State and Federal initiatives by their practical effect on the District and its ratepayers. Does a proposal help us replace necessary infrastructure? Does it offer a grant or low-interest

financing? What local match is required? What continuing obligations does it create? Will it reduce the burden on ratepayers, or will it become another unfunded mandate?

HCSD must replace portions of a large water and wastewater system that will serve this community for 50 to 70 years. It does not make financial sense to require today's ratepayers to pay the entire cost of that long-lived infrastructure all at once.

I support using grants, bonds and long-term, low-interest financing when those tools are financially sound. The cost should be shared over the useful life of the improvement so that future customers who benefit from the infrastructure also help pay for it.

This is how homes, businesses and major public improvements are commonly financed. Interest must be considered, but so must the damage caused by collecting too much money too quickly from current ratepayers. A properly structured, fixed long-term payment can also become more manageable over time as revenues and the economy grow.

My 21 years of District experience will help me evaluate these proposals beyond their headlines. I will look at the total cost, repayment terms, risks and effect on rates before supporting any funding program.

3 How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber local businesses and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met

Good communication starts before a decision is made. Businesses should not first learn about a major change in rates, fees or procedures after the District has already decided what it intends to do.

The Chamber can help HCSD understand how proposed decisions will affect employers, builders, property owners and customers. HCSD, in turn, should provide the Chamber with accurate information about infrastructure, capacity, costs and upcoming policy decisions.

I would support regular communication between the District and Chamber, including discussions before major rate, fee or development-policy decisions. When the business community identifies a problem, the District should provide a direct answer, explain who is responsible and report what can or cannot be done.

I have never been afraid to ask difficult questions or disagree when I believe ratepayers are being treated unfairly. I will listen to business concerns, take them to District leadership and, when necessary, raise them in the boardroom. I cannot promise that one director will prevail on every issue, but I can promise that those concerns will be heard and taken seriously.

4 What specific steps will you take to address the Chamber's six priorities and concerns

a Attracting and retaining businesses

A community cannot attract or retain businesses if the cost of operating or developing property becomes unreasonable. HCSD's contribution should be dependable water and sewer service,

predictable requirements, timely answers and rates and fees that are no higher than reasonably necessary.

As a builder, I know that uncertainty costs money. Applicants need to understand early in the process whether service is available, what improvements are required, how much the District will charge and approximately how long the process should take.

I will review District proposals with those real-world consequences in mind. The goal is not to give any business special treatment. It is to treat every applicant fairly, apply rules consistently and avoid unnecessary costs or delays.

b Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

HCSD does not provide or regulate healthcare, and there is no hospital within the District. Medical, dental, mental-health and other healthcare providers do, however, operate offices in the HCSD service area.

The District's role is limited to the water and wastewater services within its authority. If a healthcare provider encounters a District-related problem, I will make sure the concern reaches the General Manager, seek a clear answer and raise policy issues at the Board level when necessary.

I will not promise an outcome that an individual director cannot deliver. I will promise that providers serving our community will have an experienced advocate who understands how to bring their concerns through the appropriate District process.

c Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

This is where my construction experience is especially relevant. Housing cannot become more affordable while every agency and regulation continues adding costs to a project.

A builder must pay for land, materials, labor, engineering, permits, financing, State-required solar, fire sprinklers, utility capacity charges and the actual installation of service. After all of that, the completed home must appraise for enough to support the loan and be affordable to a buyer. Increasingly, the numbers do not work.

HCSD cannot control every housing cost, but it must examine the costs it controls. Capacity charges and infrastructure requirements should be understandable, proportionate and defensible. The District should also evaluate whether appropriate costs can be financed over time instead of demanding every dollar upfront.

New development must pay a fair share, but a charge that prevents the project from being built produces no new customer, no new housing and no new revenue. I will bring both my District experience and my construction experience to these decisions.

d Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness including access to housing mental healthcare drug treatment and creating a safer community for all

Homelessness is a serious human and community problem, but HCSD is not a housing, mental-health, substance-use treatment or law-enforcement agency. The District cannot use water and sewer ratepayer money to operate programs outside its legal authority.

An HCSD director should not promise to solve a crisis that the District lacks the authority, staff and funding to address. When homelessness directly affects District facilities, employees, customers or operations, I will support appropriate coordination with the County, the City of Eureka, law enforcement, healthcare organizations and service providers that do have responsibility in this area.

These matters should be addressed firmly, lawfully and humanely. HCSD's role must remain focused on protecting its infrastructure and delivering the services ratepayers fund it to provide.

e Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism businesses depend on the same fundamentals as every other business: reliable utilities, predictable costs and a community that functions well. Hotels, restaurants, recreational businesses and visitor-serving facilities cannot operate without dependable water and sanitation.

HCSD should maintain its system, respond effectively to emergencies and communicate in advance when planned work may affect business operations. When tourism-related businesses bring District concerns forward, I will make sure they receive serious attention and clear answers.

f Streamlining business processes with local government

HCSD has made progress in streamlining its processes, and that work should continue. At the same time, the District has a large service area, extensive infrastructure and a limited staff. We must set realistic expectations and keep the staff focused on its most important responsibilities.

Applicants should be told what information is required, what the expected fees are, who is handling the matter, what remains to be decided and when they can reasonably expect an answer. If a delay occurs, the applicant should be told why.

As a builder, I know the difference between a necessary engineering requirement and an avoidable administrative delay. Streamlining does not mean lowering public-health or construction standards. It means making sound decisions without unnecessary duplication, uncertainty or delay.

HCSD exists to deliver safe drinking water and remove wastewater reliably. It must maintain that infrastructure, plan for its replacement and do so at a cost the people and businesses of the District can afford. My 21 years of experience will allow me to begin that work immediately.

Alan Bongio

Candidate for Humboldt Community Services District Board of Directors

Gregg Gardiner

Humboldt Community Services District Director

The Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce has done an exceptional job representing and supporting our local business community, and our community is fortunate to have it. I was privileged to serve on the Chamber's Board of Directors from 2006 through 2010 and as its chairman in 2011. In 2013, I was also honored with the Chamber's Business of the Year award. These experiences gave me a lasting appreciation for the important role the Chamber plays in our community.

As a candidate for the Humboldt Community Services District Board of Directors, I want to be clear about the District's role. HCSD is primarily responsible for providing reliable and cost-effective water and wastewater services. It does not directly control healthcare, housing policy, homelessness programs, tourism promotion or most business regulations.

Nevertheless, water and sewer reliability, utility rates, capacity charges and the efficiency of District procedures can significantly affect housing, business development and the overall economic health of our community. My answers focus on what I can realistically accomplish as an HCSD director while working constructively with the Chamber, local businesses, ratepayers and other public agencies.

1 How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges

My first responsibility will be to help ensure that HCSD provides reliable water and sewer service at the lowest reasonable long-term cost.

Businesses cannot succeed without dependable infrastructure, but they also cannot absorb unchecked increases in utility rates, capacity charges and operating expenses. Every dollar HCSD spends ultimately comes from its ratepayers. We must never lose sight of who pays the bills.

I am particularly concerned about the District's capacity charges. In 2023, the combined water and sewer capacity charges for a typical new single-family connection increased from \$6,003 to \$15,571 - an increase of \$9,568, or approximately 159%. I voted against that substantial increase.

New construction already faces significant expenses, including State-required solar installations and residential fire-sprinkler systems. Adding nearly \$10,000 to HCSD's capacity charges before paying the actual installation and other development costs can make a home or business project financially unworkable.

New customers should pay a reasonable and proportionate share of the infrastructure needed to serve them. However, we must also ask whether imposing such a large upfront cost discourages housing construction, business investment and responsible development. If the total cost makes a project unaffordable or economically impossible, nobody benefits - not the developer, the eventual customer, the community or the District.

I will continue working to have these charges reviewed and adjusted, although I recognize that I am one vote on a five-member board.

I will also advocate for:

- Careful scrutiny of operating expenses and proposed rate increases.
- Long-term financing for appropriate major capital improvements.
- Active pursuit of grants, bonds and low-interest financing.
- Transparent and reasonably calculated capacity charges.
- Early communication with businesses and developers about requirements, costs and timelines.
- A practical point of contact to help applicants navigate District procedures.

My goal is not to postpone necessary maintenance or infrastructure replacement. It is to complete necessary work using the most responsible and affordable combination of reserves, grants, long-term financing and rates.

2 How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy

I will evaluate State and Federal initiatives by asking practical questions:

- Will the proposal help HCSD replace aging infrastructure?
- Will it improve the reliability or capacity of our water and sewer systems?
- Does it provide a grant, bond program or affordable long-term financing?
- What local matching funds or continuing obligations would be required?
- Will it reduce or increase the burden on ratepayers?
- Will it support housing and business development?
- Does it impose an unfunded mandate on the District?

HCSD is responsible for approximately 115 miles of water mains, together with its sewer mains, storage tanks, pump stations and other essential infrastructure. Some of this infrastructure is approaching the end of its useful life and must be replaced. The question is not whether we maintain our system; we must. The question is how we pay for that work responsibly and fairly.

My approach is similar to financing a home. Most people do not pay cash for a house because doing so would place the entire financial burden on them at one time. They finance it and spread the cost over the years in which they receive the benefit. Although financing carries interest, a fixed debt payment generally becomes more manageable over time as revenues and the overall economy grow.

Long-lived public infrastructure should be approached in much the same way. When a water main will serve the community for decades, it is reasonable for the cost to be shared across the generations of customers who will benefit from it.

Grants, bonds and low-interest financing are standard tools used by public utilities throughout the country. HCSD should use those tools responsibly instead of attempting to collect the entire cost in advance through steep rate increases or excessive upfront charges.

I will also pay close attention to State and Federal legislation that could increase HCSD's operating costs or impose new requirements. When a proposal will materially affect the District or its

ratepayers, HCSD should communicate its concerns promptly to our elected representatives and explain its position publicly.

3 How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met

I am fully committed to open, two-way communication between HCSD, the Chamber, local businesses, developers and ratepayers.

It is the ratepayers' money, and we must always remember who pays the bills. Important decisions involving rates, capacity charges, construction requirements and major capital projects should be clearly explained before they are made. The public and business community should have a meaningful opportunity to ask questions and offer input.

I would support:

- A regular HCSD liaison with the Chamber.
- Periodic meetings with Chamber representatives, businesses, builders and property owners.
- Advance notice of significant proposed changes in rates, charges or procedures.
- Plain-language explanations of District costs and policies.
- An annual discussion of infrastructure plans, anticipated development and available system capacity.
- A clearly identified process for raising concerns and receiving timely responses.
- Reporting back on what action was taken after concerns were presented.

Good communication requires more than publishing an agenda or holding a public hearing. It requires listening, answering questions directly and demonstrating that public input was genuinely considered.

Most importantly, I will be an accessible member of the Board. If you have a question, concern or problem involving HCSD, I want to know about it. You may call me directly at 707-834-9595.

It is important to understand that I do not individually run the District. I am one of five elected directors responsible for governance, policy direction and oversight. The General Manager is responsible for the District's day-to-day operations.

Nevertheless, I can - and will - bring your concerns to the General Manager and District leadership, seek answers and follow up with you. If a matter involves District policy or cannot be resolved administratively, I will bring it forward for appropriate consideration in the boardroom.

Communication begins with being available and willing to listen. If you have a problem involving HCSD, please do not hesitate to call me.

4 What specific steps will you take to address the Chamber's six priorities and concerns

a Attracting and retaining businesses

HCSD can contribute to attracting and retaining businesses by maintaining dependable water and sewer systems, controlling avoidable costs, providing accurate capacity information and making its approval processes predictable.

The dramatic increase in capacity charges is particularly concerning for commercial development. Charges rise with the size of the water meter and the projected demand placed on the system. Larger commercial projects can therefore face capacity charges substantially higher than those imposed on a single-family residence.

I will continue advocating for a review of whether HCSD's capacity charges are reasonable, proportionate and compatible with our community's need for housing and economic development. New customers should pay their fair share, but fair share should not automatically mean charging them today for decades of existing infrastructure and past costs without carefully considering the economic consequences.

I will also support reviewing District procedures from the applicant's perspective. Requirements should be clearly published, questions should be answered promptly and applicants should receive coordinated and consistent information.

b Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

HCSD does not provide or regulate healthcare, and there is no hospital within the District. However, healthcare providers operate medical, dental, mental-health and other professional offices within the HCSD service area.

As an individual board member, I cannot promise lower rates, utility service or a particular outcome. What I can promise is that I will be an advocate. If a healthcare provider encounters a water or sewer issue involving HCSD, I want to hear about it. I will bring that concern to the General Manager and District leadership, seek clear and timely answers and follow up with the provider.

If the matter involves District policy, rates, capacity charges or an issue that cannot be resolved administratively, I will raise it at the board level and advocate for a fair and reasonable solution. Healthcare providers serve an essential role in our community, and their concerns deserve serious attention from the District.

c Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Housing construction requires reliable water and wastewater capacity, but excessive upfront costs can prevent needed housing from being built.

In 2023, HCSD's combined residential water and sewer capacity charges increased from \$6,003 to \$15,571. I voted against that increase because I believed it placed too great a burden on new housing and development.

When that amount is added to construction costs, permits, State-required solar, residential fire sprinklers and the actual cost of installing water and sewer service, the financial burden can become prohibitive. Developers must include these expenses in the final cost of the property, and ultimately the homebuyer or tenant pays them.

I will support:

- Reexamining the present capacity-charge methodology.
- Determining whether charges can be reduced, phased in or financed without unfairly burdening existing ratepayers.
- Early consultation with housing developers.
- Clear and timely determinations of available capacity.
- Long-range infrastructure planning tied to reasonably anticipated development.
- Coordinating HCSD's infrastructure planning with Humboldt County's housing objectives.

HCSD cannot solve the housing shortage by itself, but it should not make the problem worse by imposing unreasonable or unpredictable upfront costs.

[d Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness including access to housing mental healthcare drug treatment and creating a safer community for all](#)

Homelessness is a serious crisis for our entire community. It damages public health, public safety and our local economy, but its greatest impact is on the people who find themselves living in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

The crisis is particularly visible within the City of Eureka. HCSD principally serves the unincorporated communities surrounding the city, and it does not provide housing, mental-healthcare, substance-use treatment, law enforcement or other homelessness services. The District cannot use ratepayer funds for programs outside the services it is legally authorized to provide. It could not, for example, fund portable toilets as a general homelessness program simply because sanitation is involved.

I do not want to promise something that an HCSD director has neither the authority nor the resources to deliver. I cannot make the homelessness crisis go away from my position on the HCSD Board.

What I can promise is to care, listen and advocate for our community. When homelessness directly affects District facilities, employees, customers or water and sewer operations, I will make sure those concerns are brought to District leadership and, when appropriate, to the full Board. I will also support lawful and humane coordination with the County, the City of Eureka, healthcare providers, law enforcement and nonprofit organizations that have the authority and expertise to respond.

I will not pretend that HCSD can solve this crisis. However, I will be someone who cares about the people affected by it and who is willing to go the extra mile to help connect concerns with the agencies that can act.

e Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism depends on clean water, dependable sanitation and a community that visitors and businesses find functional and welcoming.

HCSD can contribute by maintaining reliable infrastructure, preparing for expected demands and responding promptly to service emergencies. The District should also communicate with lodging establishments, restaurants, event operators and tourism organizations when planned construction or potential service disruptions could affect their operations.

Reliable water and sewer service may not be the most visible part of tourism, but it is essential to every hotel, restaurant, visitor-serving business and public gathering place.

f Streamlining business processes with local government

HCSD has come a long way in streamlining its processes, and all indications are that District leadership and staff are willing to continue making improvements. We should recognize that progress while continuing to listen to businesses, builders and ratepayers about where procedures can be made clearer or more efficient.

It is also important not to overpromise. HCSD has an extensive service area and is responsible for managing and maintaining approximately 115 miles of water mains, 73 miles of sewer mains, storage tanks, pump stations, sewer lift stations and limited streetlighting. It must perform these responsibilities with a limited staff and within the constraints of its budget.

The District's first responsibility must remain the dependable delivery of its essential services. Ratepayers should expect clean, safe drinking water when they turn on the faucet and the safe removal of wastewater when they flush the toilet.

Within those practical limitations, I will advocate for procedures that are understandable, consistent and reasonably timely. Applicants should know:

- What information is required.
- Who is responsible for their application.
- What the anticipated costs will be.
- What decisions remain outstanding.
- Approximately how long each step should take.
- Who they can contact when questions or problems arise.

I will support continued improvements in access to current forms, construction standards, fee schedules and application guidance. I will also encourage regular communication with applicants so they are not left wondering about the status of a project.

Streamlining does not mean weakening necessary engineering, environmental or public-health protections. Nor does it mean promising timelines that a limited staff cannot realistically meet. It means eliminating avoidable delays, duplication, uncertainty and inconsistent communication wherever reasonably possible.

HCSD's contribution to economic development should be straightforward: maintain reliable infrastructure, plan responsibly for the future, control costs, pursue grants and appropriate long-term financing, communicate clearly and treat every ratepayer and applicant fairly.

Julie M Ryan

Humboldt Community Services District Director

Hello, I am Julie Ryan and I am running for my second term at HCSD, the Humboldt Community Services District, Board. HCSD was formed in 1952 to provide water and wastewater services to unincorporated Eureka. HCSD serves 20,000 residents and 300 businesses in Freshwater, Cutten, Myrtletown, Humboldt Hill, King Salmon, and Fields Landing. I appreciate this opportunity to share what I have done to help our community and the opportunity to research how to further support a thriving local economy. You can learn more about me at www.JulieRyan4HCSD.com and reach me at Julie4hcsd@gmail.com

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

Low Interest business loans: I am the current Humboldt Community Services District (HCSD) representative on the Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RRDEC) board. I also serve on the RRDEC Executive Committee; the loans and business plans we approve help local businesses have the cash and tools they need to succeed. (<https://rredc.com>) HCSD Operations: HCSD purchases goods and services from local vendors to support maintenance, construction, and office operations. HCSD creates living wage jobs for 35 employees. When HCSD bids out contracts, this creates jobs for local firms (For transparency, HCSD must follow laws regarding bids and is required to go with the lowest responsible bidder). Personal advocacy: I shop local and encourage others to do the same; I have found many goods are the same price or better, plus local businesses come with friendly customer service. My out of town visitors eat at local restaurants, visit local attractions, and shops. My go-to-gifts are often a 'Made in Humboldt' gift baskets and local gift certificates.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

HCSD signed on to support H.R. 2766: Special District Fairness and Accessibility Act which would give Special Districts more access to Federal Grant Funding. The bill requires the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to create clear guidelines so that "special districts" are categorized as local government units for grants, loans, and other financial aid. The bill was introduced in March of 2026 has not gone through house and senate process. While grant funding is never guaranteed, when it is secured, it improves the system and everyone benefits. I will support legislation that ensures the success genuine small businesses. A great example is CA Assembly Bill (AB) 626 enacted in 2018 as it made starting a micro-enterprise home kitchen operations easier while complying with food safety law. Being able to make small batches without the cost of renting a facility empowers creative cooks to take that first step toward their dream. Legislation that puts more money into working people's pockets benefits local businesses. Multiple credible studies demonstrate that those earning a living wage spend more on local services, retail, and restaurants.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

After attending RRDEC Meetings, I report back to the HCSD Board and link organizations. I will listen. Needs change over time and vary by business type, size, and location. Gathering around the table, we can have a deeper understanding of what each partner. We can identify state and federal legislation to support and where opportunities exist.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

- a. Attracting and retaining businesses

I want our local economy to be sustainable and more resilient against outside economic influences. When attracting out of area businesses, it is important to ask if they will compliment or out-compete local businesses providing the same service? Will they detract from the tourism and outdoor recreation sectors? What niches need to be filled and can we create a local solution first? A robust local economy makes us more resilient against larger economic downturns and uncertainties. Large Data Centers are not a good fit. They pollute water, create hideous noise, will hurt traditional land use, organic farms, as well as the tourism and outdoor recreation economy. Local agriculture and small scale manufacturing are industries that make us more resilient. People love touring local farms and farm to table experiences and seeing how unique items are crafted. We can retain local businesses by regularly checking in on their evolving needs.

- b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents:

In January 2025, I attended the forum on attracting and retaining Healthcare Providers which was hosted by Supervisor Natalie Arroyo. My takeaway is that there is not an easy answer; the high cost of a medical degree & student loan debt translates into out-of-area medical providers seeking lower cost housing. There is also the recent graduates who don't stay in the area long term as they need to earn a higher wage. (<https://humalertca.gov/m/newsflash/Home/Detail/5760>) In the short term, maintain existing education, prevention, and medical care through government and foundation grant funding when available, and through legislative advocacy on the state and federal levels. A growing conversation about creating a new Healthcare District in the Eureka area similar to the Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District is gaining momentum (<https://sohumhealth.org/>) Like any Special District, citizens would vote to create the district, elect a board of directors, and create locally controlled health care options. It will take time to make it happen and will give residents another option for care. Universal healthcare will make it easier to start a small business. It would have helped my aunt keep her restaurant going when she was a single mom. My friends who dream of starting their own business have said it would give them a safety net to pursue their dream. A recent Yale School of Public Health study found that government funded Universal Healthcare will save America 1

Trillion dollars, a 20% savings over our current system. The best long term solution is voting for local, state, and federal representatives who are brave enough to reform healthcare.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing.

Lobby for local, state, and federal regulations that make it easier for working class home buyers to get low interest loans. Limit the number of Home Vacation Rentals to keep existing housing stock open. Update building codes to allow for more innovative construction methods and materials that cost less while still meeting state and local safety standards. Encourage building ADU's, but not too many on any one residential street to preserve the character and traffic volume of the neighborhood.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all.

Local business owners lose foot traffic due to undesirable behavior and waste left behind by house-less people. Despite being frustrated, businesses and residents still want to address the issue in a humane compassionate manner. It is cheaper to prevent homelessness with rent assistance programs as regaining stability is exponentially harder once you are on the street. Housing First models provide people the stability they need to access mental health care, quit drugs, and become better neighbors. I will back candidates and legislation that support compassionate solutions including senior housing, safe housing for victims of domestic violence, and housing for disenfranchised veterans. Many of the homeless youth I worked with at the RAVEN Project are now productive adults. They did the hard work of healing, yet having a safe space along the way helped.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

When my family and friends visit, they love hiking in the redwoods, exploring miles of clean beaches, eating great food, and enjoying public art. Things I can do as an HCSD Director to support tourism include protecting Humboldt Bay from spills during high storm events: Clean water protects aquaculture – and tourist events like Oyster Fest. It also ensures kayaking and water recreation remain safe. Champion Public Art as it creates local jobs and is a tourist draw that increases foot traffic. True story – HCSD saved Oyster Fest because it had up to date water quality data and verified oysters were harvested before a pollution incident (not caused by HCSD). In April I attended a presentation about Outdoor Economic Opportunities led by Geneviève Marchand, of Cal Poly Humboldt and Calder Johnson of Redwood Region Rise. I will enthusiastically support their efforts to leverage Humboldt's outdoor recreation economy. I also support allowing limited camping on private land as a win-win for tourists and property owners.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government:

Advocate to get rid of duplicate paper work and adopt forms that can be used by multiple agencies. Ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and that public health and safety are not sacrificed. Provide education to business applicants so they can succeed.

Christopher Honar

Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation & Conservation District Commissioner – Division 4

No response received.

Jane Madsen

Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation & Conservation District Commissioner – Division 5

No contact information available.

Craig Benson

Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation & Conservation District Commissioner – Division 6

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

Humboldt Bay is one of Humboldt County's most enduring economic engines. The Humboldt Bay Harbor District is a key landowner of both industrially zoned and conservation zoned parcels within and surrounding Humboldt Bay and Shelter Cove. Beyond advocacy, the Harbor District is itself a business inextricably linked to other businesses with coastal dependent uses. The Harbor District is a member of the Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce.

As an incumbent Harbor District decision-maker, vice-chair, and member of the Finance Committee, I will continue to direct staff to collaborate in all manner of economic development planning, supporting existing businesses and recruiting new businesses to Humboldt Bay. I will continue to ensure that the Harbor District remediates industrial brownfields to facilitate leases of uplands and maintains and enhances water and habitat quality to increase leases of wetland parcels.

Paramount in supporting businesses is the Harbor District's role as a permitting agency. I will continue to direct staff to streamline permit acquisition for businesses in and adjacent to Humboldt Bay.

Harbor navigation, pilot services for marine vessels, dock/marina/mooring facilities for our local fishing fleet, cargo ships, fuel tankers, Coast Guard, cruise ships among other vessels make Humboldt Bay a critical transportation and trade hub for diverse commerce. I serve on the Dredging Committee and will continue to address channel dredging as one of our ongoing challenges to ensure commercial and recreational ingress and egress into Humboldt Bay.

Lastly, the Harbor District is uniquely identified, authorized and placed to pursue grants to develop the other parts of our mission: recreation and conservation. I will continue to ensure that the Harbor District collaborates with tourism and recreation-focused businesses, entities and programs that forward Humboldt Bay as a world-class place to visit, live and recreate. Similarly, I will continue to support the restoration economy which provides FTE's for 1% of our work force and purchases goods and services from diverse local providers.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

The Harbor District exists in large part through our acumen and ability to identify and acquire Federal, State and local grants to support our harbor, recreation and conservation missions. I ran for this office to support our flagship, once-in-a-generation project the Off-shore Wind Heavy Lift Marine Terminal (HLMT) which has leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars for port development, work-force development and job creation. Mitigations for the HLMT creates community benefits synchronous with the Great Redwood Trail/Humboldt Bay Trail, bay access for recreation-based and tourism-based businesses, as well as remediation and restoration projects that support ecological fitness and biodiversity for fisheries and mariculture industries, among others.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I have championed robust community engagement processes for the Heavy Lift Marine Terminal and other bay initiatives which have included diverse business, labor unions and other commercial entities. This included the passing of a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) which ensures that commercial, educational and Tribal entities are prioritized and both union and non-union entities are eligible for contracts.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

I will continue to support the remediation and shovel-ready availability of relic industrial brownfields for the retention/expansion of established businesses and the recruitment of new businesses.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

Not applicable

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

The Harbor District is not directly involved in housing development. Our port facilities, however, can provide increasingly important links to the supply chain for housing. Our conservation lands provide green spaces which enhance livable communities.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

The Harbor District is not a social services agency. Improvement, clean up and occupation of our industrial brownfields reduces their use by un-homed elements of our community. Our constant collaboration with the Peninsula Community Services District, Sheriff's Dept, and DHHS fosters synchronization of actions that address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges and building safer communities for all. I will continue to direct Harbor staff to receive training and resources to interact productively with marginalized people.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

I have spent a large part of my career in developing multi-use trails, interpretive signage, boat launches & water trails, cruise ship coordination, among other infrastructure and programs to enhance access and enjoyment of Humboldt Bay and environs for both locals and tourists.

Humboldt Bay and seashore are known to be a world-class tourist destination for boating, birdwatching, fishing, hunting, hiking, biking and passive recreation in large part to the conservation of diverse habitats and enhancement of healthy ecosystems sought by tourists and appreciated by locals.

I have not allowed myself to be so distracted by the demands of planning the Heavy Lift Marine Terminal such that I have de-prioritized the recreation and conservation missions of the Harbor District. I ensured that a Conservation Coordinator was hired onto the Harbor District staff.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

The Harbor District is known for administrating a user-friendly, stream-lined process for businesses and lease-holders to obtain our development and/or use permits. I have worked diligently to ensure that our brand of government is user-friendly and supportive of business by the bay.

Hollie Hall

Humboldt Bay Municipal Water Director – Division 6

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

Reliable and affordable water service is essential to local businesses, from restaurants and hotels to agriculture and manufacturing. As a prospective Water District Board member, I would prioritize responsible infrastructure investments, careful financial planning, transparent rate-setting, and outside funding opportunities to minimize costs to ratepayers while maintaining dependable service. Having owned and operated environmental consulting businesses for approximately ten years in Humboldt County, I understand the challenges of managing operating expenses, navigating regulatory requirements, and planning for the future. I would bring this perspective to District decisions, balancing affordability with the long-term investments necessary to maintain reliable water service.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

My experience as an environmental consultant for local commercial farms and with the California Coastal Commission has provided me with a strong understanding of environmental regulations, public agency coordination, and State and Federal requirements. I would work with District staff and fellow Board members to pursue financially advantageous funding opportunities for infrastructure improvements, seismic resilience, emergency preparedness, and long-term water supply protection, helping reduce costs to local ratepayers. I would evaluate legislation and funding programs based on their implications for water reliability, affordability, environmental protection, and financial sustainability while encouraging regional collaboration to address shared infrastructure needs.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

Communication and collaboration have been central to my professional work, including coordinating with government agencies, businesses, landowners, and community organizations to develop practical solutions to complex challenges. I would welcome ongoing dialogue with the Chamber to better understand how water-related issues affect local businesses and to share information about District activities, infrastructure planning, and potential changes affecting customers. I would support transparent decision-making, accessible public information, early opportunities for community input, and coordination among the District, its municipal customers, and local and State agencies. The Chamber could be a valuable partner in facilitating these conversations and ensuring business perspectives are considered in regional water infrastructure decisions.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber identified six priorities and concerns. What specific steps will you take to address them?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

Reliable infrastructure and affordable water are important considerations for businesses looking to establish, expand, or remain in our community. I would support long-term water supply planning, responsible infrastructure maintenance, and transparent rates while encouraging collaboration with local governments and economic development partners. The District's existing industrial water infrastructure may present opportunities to support new businesses and industries. I would support evaluating these opportunities while ensuring that new water supply agreements are financially responsible, protect existing customers, maintain water supply reliability, and meet environmental requirements.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

Although healthcare delivery and workforce development fall outside the Water District's direct authority, reliable water service is essential to hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities. I would prioritize water system reliability, emergency preparedness, and infrastructure resilience to help ensure that healthcare providers and other essential services have dependable water supplies, including during emergencies. I would also welcome collaboration with regional partners where the District's responsibilities and resources can contribute to broader community needs.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

Adequate water infrastructure is essential to housing development. I would encourage coordination among the District, its municipal water customers, and local planning agencies to identify water supply needs and infrastructure constraints associated with anticipated growth. Early coordination can help clarify requirements, identify potential obstacles, and improve planning for new development. I would also support long-term capital planning and appropriate infrastructure funding opportunities to accommodate future demand without placing disproportionate financial burdens on existing customers. While the District does not control land-use decisions, it can support housing planning by providing reliable water supply information and coordinating with responsible agencies.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

Addressing homelessness requires coordinated efforts among local governments, healthcare providers, housing organizations, and community service providers. Although the Water District's direct role is limited, access to safe and reliable water is essential to public health and housing. Within the District's responsibilities, I would support coordination with local agencies to identify and address water infrastructure needs associated with housing and supportive service facilities. Maintaining dependable water service and emergency preparedness throughout the region can also contribute to a healthier and safer community for everyone.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism contributes to our regional economy, and dependable water service is essential for hotels, restaurants, campgrounds, and other visitor-serving businesses. The District also manages water resources associated with Ruth Lake and the Mad River, which provide valuable recreational

opportunities. Drawing on my background in watershed management and environmental protection, I would support responsible resource management that maintains water quality, protects aquatic habitats, and balances recreational opportunities with the District's primary water supply responsibilities. I would also encourage coordination with local agencies and tourism organizations where water infrastructure planning and resource management intersect with tourism.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

As a former business owner who regularly navigated environmental permitting and regulatory processes, I understand the importance of clear expectations, timely communication, and efficient government procedures. Within the District's authority, I would support providing clear information about water service requirements, infrastructure capacity, fees, and application procedures. I would also encourage early coordination with municipal water providers and other agencies to identify infrastructure issues before they create unnecessary delays for businesses and development projects. My goal would be to promote efficient, transparent, and predictable processes while maintaining protections for public health, water quality, and the District's long-term financial stability.

Michael Greer

California State Assembly

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

As a member of the Del Norte Chamber of Commerce, I understand the financial strain of small and large businesses. The biggest problem with the current business climate is the ever-changing laws and regulations that are imposed upon them. Those regulations come from the current administration and our current assemblyman. I would consistently fight against the regulations and bills that are designed to put small businesses out of business. Two years ago, I told the small businesses that the governor and our current legislators would force them to pay more for unemployment insurance because the state had no accountability for the covid unemployment payments. The local employers are now paying back a loan that the state has with the federal government. I believe that the more the state stays out of business the better off we would be. Local companies base their financials, stock, and employment on common sense, so they don't go broke, our legislators do not know what common sense is. I will not only listen to the community but put into action what is necessary. You judge policy by results not by good intentions and the policies in place are the reasons for the current climate.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I judge policy on results so I would continue to talk to the different stakeholders to find out what works and does not. Demonstration forests will hurt the logging industry, the closure and manipulation of the fisheries lead to uncertainty of employment, the tourism industry is affected by the continued high fuel taxes in California, and the agriculture industry is fighting to keep its herds, crops, and land. Our current legislators want to put in place a mileage tax that will hurt every individual and business because we are isolated from the rest of the state. I do not believe we need more regulations and initiatives, so the government has more power and control. Letting people dictate is necessary and they will find the solutions.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

The Chambers have a reputation that most people call the left and back whatever party is in power and will not fight to prevent unjust policies. What did you do to prevent increased unemployment tax or minimum wage bills? The Chamber provides a way for all businesses to come together through mixers and fundraising events. They provide advertising and promotion for the local companies to market their services and products, but they have not done a very good job on the state level. There needs to be continued discussions on how to stop more regulations and reduce the ones in place.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and

what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses-

One of the problems that I see all over the county is the never-ending homelessness problem, which prevents people from going to stores and the crime that is associated with them, such as urinating and sleeping in businesses doorways. We need to protect our businesses from the shoplifting and destruction of our storefronts. There is no place to park, and no one wants to walk 2-3 blocks to go to the store they want to patronage. The parking is getting worse, not better, so it is difficult for the city to increase the economy when no one wants to go downtown. Businesses are closing, malls are shutting down, strip malls are empty and will continue until the city culture changes. Make businesses safe, increase available parking, and do not encourage disruptions and start arresting those who cause the problems.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents –

We need to stop the fraud that is happening in our health care economy. Our current legislators refuse to hold health care clinics accountable and that is the first step. Audit the non-profits that are receiving the money and get rid of those that aren't doing the job and give it to the ones that are. We need to evaluate and eliminate the hidden medical practices that are siphoning off the money for their personal use instead of having facilities locally. It will not be fixed overnight because of the policies in place for the last ten years and the state's mismanagement of the budget.

c. Expanding access to afford low cost and market-rate housing –

It cannot and won't happen because of the state laws on zoning and all the regulations that are in place to prevent it. The state legislators want the citizens in government housing, which is the staple of every beginning socialist country, which California is quickly becoming. We need less regulation and more accountability of builders who are being given state dollars for their projects, and the state has never been able to come under budget for any building program they want, so the prices keep going up. Results count not good intentions.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all –

The governor promised 8 years ago he would take care of it, and it has only gotten worse. The current legislators are the cause of the problems and when they try to fix it, they lose 23 billion dollars. I would first initiate an audit of the money being sent to the non-profits who have failed miserably with the money they have been given. Audit, get rid of the bad and fund the ones that are doing the job. Wrap-around services are needed but the people themselves must be held accountable and stop blaming it on everyone else. I have family that spent years on the streets of San Francisco but when given the opportunity she overcame her situation. For ten years the democrats have been telling us

they can fix the problem but throwing tax-payer money after it hasn't helped but caused it to rise. Holding people accountable for their actions will do more to solve it than the non-profits. Once they are held accountable then you can find the reason that they are homeless and then help them.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem-

Why are they coming here? Are they just passing through or is there a special event or location that is bringing them here? You cannot just rely on the Redwoods to bring tourists to the area; there has to be an entanglement of different things to keep the tourists here and to spend their money in the city. Combine the forests with the ocean and the cool summers as compared to the other side of the mountains and people will flock here and stay in Trinidad. The city needs to dress itself up because people don't like to stay in Eureka. The old downtown area is nice and anchored with the Mansion but the lack of parking and the homeless loitering on the streets does not make people stop and linger. There is a great harbor and many of my friend's fish out of it but state regulations and fishing do not work well together. If your ecosystem definition means only outdoor activities of hiking at the Redwood Acres Park or visiting the marshes, then the people will be tired of them unless there is something else, especially since there are better beaches and bigger trees elsewhere.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government-

There are regulations that have been established for the processes that need to take place. I would certainly help to navigate the road through the regulations. I have been on a city council and school board for over 20 years, so I know how to work through issues and problems to reach a conclusion. I have contacts on both the state and national level, if I cannot help, I know someone who can.

Chris Rogers

California State Assembly

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

Small businesses are what keep communities like Eureka going, and I know how tough the environment is right now—from rising costs and insurance to workforce shortages and access to capital.

In the Assembly, I'm focused on making sure state programs actually work for small and rural businesses, investing in workforce development and infrastructure, and cutting unnecessary red tape. Just as importantly, when a local business is having trouble navigating a state agency, I want them to know they can call my office and we'll help. Over the last two years, our office has participated in business fairs, closed casework with state agencies, and run legislation to help businesses on the north coast.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I look at these programs through a North Coast lens. A program can sound great in Sacramento or Washington, but if a small business in Eureka doesn't have the staff to navigate it—or our communities don't qualify—it isn't doing us much good. We regularly hear from our businesses that even well intentioned assistance comes with costly strings, or unmanageable reporting requirements.

I'll keep working with local businesses, the Chamber, local governments, tribes, labor and educational institutions to bring more state and federal investment to Humboldt County and make sure rural communities are not an afterthought.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I want the Chamber to have a direct line to me and my staff. Regular business visits, roundtables and conversations are useful because you often see problems developing before we do in Sacramento.

And that communication needs to go both ways. My office should be keeping you informed about legislation, grants and regulations that affect local businesses—and you should be telling us when something coming out of Sacramento simply doesn't work on the ground.

Over the last two years, we have held nearly 40 town halls - in every corner of our district - to hear directly from constituents and this has informed our legislative agenda. We also have had direct Q&A sessions with groups who have been interested, such as the Humboldt Realtors, various Rotary clubs and Chambers and would be happy to do an annual one with the Greater Eureka Chamber as well.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

We need to make the North Coast a place where people can build both a business and a life. That means housing, healthcare, childcare, broadband, infrastructure and a trained workforce.

I'll keep fighting for state investment in those basics while making sure rural communities get a fair shot at economic-development funding. We should also build on Humboldt County's strengths—from small businesses and tourism to healthcare, natural resources and emerging clean-energy industries.

I serve on the Utilities and Energy Committee and have been very involved in pushing for greater transmission and energy infrastructure investment in the North Coast. We regularly partner with the Chris Mikkelsen and the Harbor District and secured \$250 million last year for the infrastructure to support the harbor. I have run multiple pieces of legislation to expand investment in transformers and substations in Humboldt County, and currently have a bill (AB 2369) sitting on the Governor's desk awaiting signature.

We work with our local Supervisors and address the challenges of the community - strengthening our workforce development, expanding access to healthcare, building housing - because we know businesses can't survive with the basics to attract people to Humboldt County.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

Healthcare is also an economic issue. It's hard to recruit a nurse, teacher or employee if they can't find a doctor for their family.

I'm fighting to protect rural hospitals and clinics, expand our healthcare workforce, improve access to mental-health care and create more opportunities for North Coast residents to train for healthcare careers here—and then stay here.

This year, I successfully pushed back on one of the Governor's proposals that would have effectively eliminated mobile crisis clinics in rural areas. I have authored AB 1811 awaiting signature from the Governor, which would create a state Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designation that would have created incentives to attract healthcare and dental workers (such as loan repayment or enhanced reimbursement rates). Last year, I worked with the Open Door clinic system on AB 1460 that attempted to tackle restrictions on discount pharmaceuticals in rural areas. While unsuccessful, we continue to work on that issue.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

We simply need more housing. Employers can't recruit workers and young families can't stay here if there's nowhere they can afford to live.

I support more affordable and workforce housing, but we also need market-rate housing. The state can help with infrastructure, financing and sensible changes that make it easier to build homes in communities like ours.

As Mayor, my city received the second highest score in the state's pro-housing designation because we focused on the time, certainty, and cost of building. There are now more units of housing under construction in Santa Rosa (where I served) than at any other time in my life because of these reforms. In Sacramento I have consistently been one of the most pro-housing votes as we implement similar reforms on the state level.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

We need both compassion and accountability. Leaving someone suffering from addiction or serious mental illness on the street isn't compassionate, and asking businesses and residents to simply accept unsafe conditions isn't a solution either.

I'll keep fighting for more treatment, mental-health care, supportive housing and effective outreach, while giving local communities the tools they need to keep public spaces safe. Twice in the last two years, the Governor zeroed out the budget for housing and homelessness programs for local communities and twice I joined a group of legislators that were able to push back.

Just last month, I was able to secure \$1 million in the state budget for the County of Humboldt's one-stop-shop for county services and resources. I also have looked downstream at what causes homelessness and have successfully had legislation signed into law on some of the sometimes quieter reasons people might become homeless - such as Domestic Violence (AB 1657) or lack of support exiting the foster care system (AB 1378, AB 1574).

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism is a huge part of the North Coast economy, and it supports far more than hotels—it supports restaurants, shops, outdoor recreation, arts and locally owned businesses throughout the region.

We need to protect the natural beauty that brings people here while investing in our parks, downtowns, transportation and recreational and cultural assets. And we should always be looking for ways to get visitors to stay another night, visit another community and spend another dollar at a local business.

This year, I partnered with leaders in ecotourism, such as REI, and introduced AB 2578 to expand the state's support structure around outdoor based economies and ecotourism. I was the keynote at a conference on the subject as well. We will be bringing this bill back next year to continue to work on it. We also passed AB 720 which expands the ability to create a marketable "experience" for tourists interested in wine.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

Businesses should be able to understand what government is asking of them, know who to call and get an answer in a reasonable amount of time.

A lot of permitting happens locally, but the state can help simplify requirements, modernize systems and eliminate duplication. I'd also like the Chamber to flag specific problems for my office—because sometimes the best way to fix red tape is to start with a real example of where it's getting in someone's way.

Damon Connolly

California State Senate

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

Local businesses in Eureka and across Humboldt County are facing real pressure from rising costs, workforce shortages, insurance challenges, and limited access to capital. I will focus on making state government a better partner for small businesses — helping them access grants, loans, tax credits, workforce programs, and other resources while pushing for clearer, more predictable regulations. I will also advocate for investments in the fundamentals that businesses depend on, including housing, broadband, transportation, wildfire resilience, and reliable infrastructure. As a former president of the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay, I have seen how effective partnerships among employers, educators, workforce organizations, and government can help businesses grow and workers succeed.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

My first test will be whether a program actually works for small businesses and rural communities like Eureka — not just whether it looks good on paper. I will work with the Chamber, local governments, Cal Poly Humboldt, College of the Redwoods, workforce partners, and local employers to identify opportunities in state and federal programs and make sure the North Coast is competing effectively for those resources. I will prioritize investments that strengthen the regional economy, including broadband, transportation, clean energy and resilience, healthcare workforce development, housing, and infrastructure. Just as importantly, my office will help local partners navigate state agencies and connect them with funding opportunities before deadlines arrive.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I want the Chamber to have a direct and consistent line of communication with my office. I would establish regular business roundtables in Humboldt County, maintain an accessible district staff presence, and make sure local employers are consulted early when legislation or regulations could affect them. I also want my office to proactively share information about grants, regulatory changes, and state programs rather than expecting businesses to find them on their own. Good policymaking depends on hearing what is working — and what is not — from the people creating jobs in our communities.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

A. Attracting and retaining businesses

Eureka needs the infrastructure, workforce, housing, and quality of life that allow businesses to start here and stay here.

I will support small-business technical assistance and access to capital, workforce training tied to local employers, investments in broadband and transportation, and policies that make it easier to reuse vacant or underutilized commercial spaces. I will also work to ensure rural and North Coast businesses receive a fair share of state economic-development resources.

B. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

Healthcare access is both a quality-of-life issue and an economic-development issue. I will fight to protect rural hospitals and clinics, expand behavioral health and substance use treatment, strengthen Medi-Cal access, and invest in recruitment and retention of doctors, nurses, mental-health professionals, and other healthcare workers. We should also expand local training pipelines and remove barriers that make it difficult for healthcare professionals to live and work in rural communities.

C. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

We need more housing at every income level, while protecting existing residents from displacement. I support accelerating appropriate infill and workforce housing, expanding affordable housing financing, investing in the infrastructure needed to support new homes, and using tools such as revolving loan funds to help projects move forward. State policy should give communities resources to build housing rather than relying only on mandates from Sacramento.

D. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

We need an approach that is both compassionate and accountable. That means expanding shelter, permanent supportive housing, mental-health care, substance-use treatment, and outreach while giving local governments the tools to address encampments that create serious health or safety problems. The goal should be to move people indoors and into appropriate services, not simply move them from one block to another. Improving public spaces and helping people stabilize are complementary goals, not competing ones.

E. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

Tourism is a major economic asset for Humboldt County, built around the redwoods, coast, parks, arts, food, culture, and the character of communities like Eureka. I will support state investments in destination marketing, parks and trails, transportation, downtown revitalization, cultural institutions, and wildfire and disaster resilience. We should also strengthen the hospitality workforce and support the small businesses that make visitors want to stay longer and return.

F. Streamlining business processes with local government

Businesses should not have to navigate unnecessary delays or multiple agencies giving conflicting answers. I support clearer permitting timelines, online and consolidated application processes, one-stop assistance for small businesses, and better coordination among state and local agencies. Where state law contributes to unnecessary complexity, I want to hear directly from local businesses and local governments so we can fix it while maintaining important worker, environmental, and consumer protections.

Tief Gibbs

California State Senate

No response received.

Jared Huffman

Congress District 2

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I support improved funding for SBA and federal workforce development programs, which are among the most significant federal contributions to small businesses. But by far the biggest federal government impact on our local businesses right now comes from policies I firmly oppose – dubious tariffs and trade wars, a disastrous war of choice in Iran, deep cuts to Medicaid, Medicare and the ACA that are causing a spike in healthcare premiums and threatening the entire healthcare system, an all-out attempt to destroy the offshore wind industry, and a mass deportation program that is having a crippling effect on our immigrant communities and their ability/willingness to participate in the workforce. In addition to these specific policy positions, I regularly work to deliver solutions for local businesses who encounter a variety of problems or questions relating to the federal government, including problems with the IRS and other agencies, and I will continue to be accessible and responsive to those needs.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

My previous answer largely answers this questions as well, but I would add that my office regularly works with our state legislative counterparts to make sure constituents' needs are being met through whichever office (state or federal) is best situated to help them, and I would continue to do that. And, my staff and I are always eager to hear from small businesses and the business community about their legislative and policy priorities.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

I welcome ongoing conversations and meetings to make sure this happens. Beyond that, my staff in the Eureka office is a great resource and I hope you will keep in touch regularly with them about all needs and priorities. Please invite us to meetings and events, share your newsletters and updates with us, and keep in touch.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses

Improving and maintaining critical infrastructure throughout the North Coast is one way I am trying to help. This includes my longstanding leadership to advance a viable solution for the failing Last Chance Grade section of Highway 101, my support and funding wins for local airports, and the funding I have delivered for local and regional clean energy projects, including microgrids, and broadband expansion. And while the Trump administration has moved to cancel the transformative \$426 million in funding I secured to modernize the Port of Humboldt for a heavy lift terminal to service the offshore wind industry, I continue to support that project and will keep working to restore that funding.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents

As stated above, I'll be fighting to restore funding for Medicaid, Medicare and the ACA. I'll also fight for expansion of Medicare to include younger people, probably starting at age 55 but I also support full expansion of the program to universal coverage (Medicare for All).

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing

I support increased funding for HUD Section 8 vouchers and VASH housing vouchers for veterans. I'm also proud to have co-sponsored the bipartisan 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act that became law this year. That new law streamlines federal regulations, eases lending restrictions, and provides incentives for state and local governments – all designed to make homebuilding faster and cheaper. It also takes an initial step toward preventing large investors (private equity) from buying up single-family homes, a problem that has driven up prices and constrained the supply of affordable housing.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all

In addition to my work to improve housing supply and affordability discussed above, I'm committed to restoring the social safety that is critical to meeting all of these needs. Averting a looming healthcare crisis, which is a top priority for me, includes protecting mental health and addiction treatment services which are already underfunded.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem

As the Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee, I'm uniquely positioned to protect and enhance our public lands and national parks which are tourist hubs throughout my district. I'm leading efforts to pass the bipartisan reauthorization of the Great American Outdoors Act, the biggest investment in tackling the deferred maintenance problem on public lands in a generation.

f. Streamlining business processes with local government

This is the domain of state and local government, and as your Congressman I have no authority over it.

Robin Littau

Congress District 2

1. How will you advocate for local businesses to help them navigate current financial challenges?

I have been a Redding local business owner/sole proprietor of Rockin Robin's Cleaning Service since 2017, and Joyful Living Magazine since March 2026. I have personally experienced the various legislative requirement hurdles and frustrations that have significantly complicated or impeded my small business growth. Through distributing Joyful Living Magazine, I have been able to converse with a few hundred small businesses, and the feedback is the same. The required regulations are making it very difficult to succeed. Many long-term businesses are considering closing. These are excellent community members who have contributed years of their life toward providing excellent services, yet they are feeling exhausted and defeated from excessive taxations, burdensome regulations, ridiculous fees and employee requirements that exceed their capacity to comply with. I will strongly advocate to decrease legislation burdens by condensing it, revising it, and voting no to additional requirements that only serve to break businesses. I will support small businesses over large cooperation agenda's in any way I can! I will support local businesses as much as I possibly can because our communities depend on the provision of jobs/work to adequately provide for our families.

2. How will you evaluate and leverage State and Federal initiatives and legislation to better support our local businesses and economy?

I will vote for Federal legislation that is aligned with supporting our local business economy and oppose excessive Federal legislative overreach that is unnecessary, redundant or harmful to America's small businesses. I will advocate for States to hold the primary power as it was designed to be, and for the Federal Government to remain within its specified jurisdiction.

3. How can we work together effectively to improve two-way communication between the Chamber, local businesses, and local and State government to ensure local business needs and priorities are met?

Increase effective communication and unity by intentionally positioning right valued representatives who will listen to constituents' concerns, who will value people's voices over self-serving political agendas and abstain from corrupt conduct for the entire duration in office.

4. The Greater Eureka Chamber polled our membership about a variety of issues impacting local businesses and organizations. We asked them about their biggest concerns impacting their work, and what they want our Chamber to advocate for. Given this context, what specific steps will you take to address their top six priorities and concerns for the greater Eureka area, as follows?

a. Attracting and retaining businesses:

Support business with common sense legislation, and oppose burdensome legislation that is breaking business opportunities.

b. Making healthcare more plentiful and accessible for local residents:

Removing or opposing legislation that is hindering growth. Confront Big Pharma agendas and create more affordable healthcare. Advocate to get the majority of financial support to the local level by a more direct method, to prevent essential funding from being skimmed off the top all the way down.

c. Expanding access to affordable and market-rate housing:

Work with leaders at every level to implement housing solutions that are practical and affordable, require higher audits/accountability for funding so fraud/waste and abuse is prevented in the process.

d. Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including access to housing, mental health care, drug treatment, and creating a safer community for all:

We have laws in place which are not being enforced. I will advocate for our homeless citizens to be given the option of either receiving (higher standards) of ethical effective inpatient treatment/care, assisting their return to their family/location of origin, or jail time, with immediate removal from interference with neighborhood or business safety and a zero tolerance for loitering, littering, or establishing camps. We currently do not have sufficient infrastructure for this or funding available, but there are so many creative ideas that can be considered. I have seen examples of an abandoned mall being transformed into abundant housing opportunities. It's a mountain sized problem, but many hands make work light.

e. Supporting a healthy tourism ecosystem:

We need to get our communities cleaned up, adequately uphold justice for crime, and strengthen our local businesses so tourists WANT to come visit California!

f. Streamlining business processes with local government:

Perhaps there needs to be a business representative position on every City Council to relay the needs of the community during the decision making process. Having collaboration, open lines of communication and showing up to every possible opportunity to advocate for local needs is essential. I've noticed so few show up when it matters most. We must show up! If we want California to be better, it's all hands on deck time, to bring our voices and our votes to every table where decisions are being made for our communities.