

## **James Resac**

### **1. Why are you seeking the position of Rice Lake City Council member?**

My wife Julie and I have lived in Rice Lake for 29 years moving here from Fort Wayne, Indiana in late January 1992 after being selected as the fire chief. We raised our family in Rice Lake and are proud to call Rice Lake home. I am a proud veteran of the United States military retiring with the rank of Master Sergeant (E7).

Having served as the fire chief for the City of Rice Lake for 28 years, I am well-versed on the operation of the Rice Lake City Government. I now have the opportunity to give back to the community that supported me throughout my career. I have the time to become educated, and informed while maintaining the ability to keep an open mind regarding the issues that come before the City Council for the betterment of our community.

The city needs a fresh perspective. A perspective that is based upon a proactive position rather than a reactive position. This fresh perspective coupled with common sense will diminish the chance for missed opportunities as we move forward.

I look forward to the opportunity to serve Rice Lake as a Councilmember At-Large for at least the next two years.

### **2. What can the City of Rice Lake do to attract a viable new workforce?**

Provide and improve access to affordable housing to make Rice Lake a desirable and attainable place to live and work (explained further in question 3a below). In addition, continue to work with the local technical training college to provide training specific to the skills required by Rice Lake Businesses.

### **3. What will be your top 3 priorities for the City of Rice Lake this year?**

- a. *Continue to explore the development and access to affordable housing.* The need for affordable housing far exceeds the current availability. Affordable housing is a key component of developing a viable workforce. There are many challenges associated with accomplishing this goal, none of which are insurmountable with open communications between developers and City officials.
- b. *Ensure that adequate fiscal and human resources for police and fire are continued to be provided.* Rice Lake offers a high quality of life due in part to its public safety components. One cannot enjoy the many amenities that Rice Lake has to offer – multiple parks, the Cedar Side Trail and the events sponsored by the Main Street Association and other civic organizations - if residents and visitors do not feel safe.

The safety and health of a community, its residents and visitors should be the priority of the local government. A safe community encourages growth and stability and keeps the community viable for the future.

- c. *Modify the culture of the Council.* Unfortunately, the public perception of the current Council is one that is unfriendly, unapproachable and unprofessional. There is also the perception that the Council is being controlled by a non-political staff member whose role is to advise, and not direct, the Council. These perceptions need to change.

In order to maintain current businesses and the current workforce, let alone attract new businesses and new workers, the city can ill afford to portray itself in a negative light.

“Outside-the-Box” and proactive thinking should be encouraged vs. stymied. Proposals brought before the Council should be analyzed and discussed with respect rather than being treated with disrespect, contempt and a closed mind.

The job of the Council is to provide what is best for the city, not based upon a personal agenda. This requires one to be receptive to fostering ideas, not to remaining ‘status quo’.

**4. Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?**

I do believe that the main street/downtown is healthy and successful. The programs sponsored by the Main Street Association and the Chamber (ice skating rink, Main Street Halloween, Merry on Main, etc.) are strong attractors for the city.

The aesthetic improvements to the Main Street buildings are commendable and are directly attributable to cooperation between business owners and the Main Street Association.

**5. If elected, what 3 steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?**

- a. I believe that an increased focus on revenue generation - which is controllable at the local level - needs to be the focus of the future Council. I believe revenue opportunities are being lost or in some cases, down-right ignored based upon personal bias rather than community need.

This does not mean that I support an environment that fosters uncontrolled spending but rather focusing attention on one that is positive in nature rather than negative. In order for services to expand to meet the City's growth, this needs to occur so that an undue burden is not placed upon the taxpayers.

b. Work with State Representatives to:

- (1) change the sales tax legislation so that Rice Lake can capture its fair share of the sales tax generated by our robust retail establishments.
- (2) change the archaic State's Shared Revenue system to make it easier to understand and to make the distribution of those funds more equitable across the state.
- (3) allow levy limits to be set by the local municipalities who understand the local needs vs. having the State be the controlling entity.

c. Explore the current 30-year-old organizational structure of the city. Is the current structure economically and operationally viable for the next quarter century? Could select positions best serve both the County and the City? The next Council needs to plan for the future in order to best utilize available funding.

**6.If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?**

There are many worthwhile projects that the grant funds could utilize to complete. However, there are two public safety projects in the City's Capital Improvement Project (CIP) that have been identified but not yet completed due to lack of funds.

The first is the replacement / upgrade of the communications systems for both police and fire departments. Currently, there are multiple 'dead-spots', areas in which radio communications are marginal or non-existent. It is paramount that our law enforcement officers and firefighters have reliable communications for their safety and effective day-to-day emergency operations.

The second is the installation of a Global Position Satellite (GPS) Traffic Preemption system on all traffic control signals as well as police and fire vehicles. Traffic pre-emption is a system that will turn a traffic control device to a 'green' signal in the emergency vehicles direction of travel when responding with audible and visual warning devices while simultaneously changing the opposite or cross-traffic signal to "red" reducing the chances of an accident and improving response times to an emergency incident.

Our Community Services Department has taken a proactive approach by installing hardware in the traffic control signal boxes located at the intersections controlled by a traffic control device. This foresight and communications with police and fire officials will go a long way into reducing the total cost of this essential system.