

Mark O'Brien

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

I want to keep out taxes under control for the people that already live here. But we still need to invest in our Streets, Parks and Library to name a few. This can all be done without wasting taxpayer money.

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

Actually, by the items in question 1, people need something to do after work and on weekends. Parents need to have a place to go and do things. You hear many people say all kids do is sit in the house and play video games, we need to give them and their families a choice like I had when I was young 50 years ago. Parks with enough picnic tables, updated park amenities and playgrounds, lighted trails, multiple skating rinks, update the skate park, build sand volleyball courts, pickleball courts, and frisbee golf. These are just a few low dollar very low maintenance items we can afford to keep up.

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

Sticking to the budget. Getting all our parks and trails handicap accessible. Developing an environmental and developer friendly building plan. To not get into long term commitments without being sure of all the little nuances and costs. We have done this before with building the airport and buying county roads that are in the city (Main Street, Orchard Beach, Sawyer Street etc.). These items should be county run and maintained not city run and maintained, but that mistake will cost the city forever. Once decisions like that are made you cannot undo them, even if they are bad and no one is accountable.

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

I think it is successful and healthy, but it can be so much more. We need to fill the empty storefronts. We need a master plan that all business owners and building owners are working toward, with the help of the city.

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

We need to control costs. It is said we need to run the city like a business, and this is true, but it needs to be run like a successful business. One, we need to consolidate some management positions. Two, we need to work with the county, the townships, the school district, and the businesses already here. Work on balancing the budget without dipping into the reserve fund and understand that this

will hurt. Three, the council makes a decision that is painful but needed and then they back pedal on it for the next year or two until it is right back where it was. We must think our cuts through and then stay with them.

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?

It would go to revitalize Main Street, Senior Center, Library, Parks and Streets. These are the things that bring people to Rice Lake. When people are looking to move here, they drive down Main Street, ask what is there to do here, how are the schools, what is the library like and are the taxes high, let's see the parks and trails near where we are looking at a house. We cannot have them on rough roads, empty Main Street buildings, and overwhelming taxes. That's when they just move on to another city.