

MEET THE CANDIDATES

5th Ward Council Member

JUDY HICKEY



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WHY SHOULD SOMEONE WORKING AT A SMALL BUSINESS VOTE FOR YOU?

I recognize that small businesses are important to the economic health and vitality of the Rochester economy. If the employees of Rochester area small businesses were counted as a whole, these area small businesses would be recognized as the second largest employer in the city. Small businesses diversify the economy in Rochester, and through the training and employment of workers, small businesses create stability to the Rochester workforce.

While Rochester businesses hold 27% of the privately owned property, these same businesses pay 41% of the property taxes in Rochester (Smith-Schafer & Associates, LTD., City of Rochester, MN Financial Statement Overview 2017). I am committed to responsibly managing the city's budget and government growth in order to control the cost of government. Rochester City Council members are accountable to the taxpayers.

Overall, the Rochester City Government needs strive to deliver better services and create friendlier environments for small businesses to prosper. It is important that the Rochester City Government maintains strong communication with local business owners and considers their needs and concerns in the decision making process. The confusion and misinformation surrounding the North Broadway street redevelopment project is an example that cannot be repeated. Individual City Council members must ensure that small businesses are represented.

I would work to expand contracting opportunities for area small businesses with the Rochester city government. Expectations for the hiring of local small businesses or employees in the consultant contracting process need to be included. Rochester area businesses need to have the opportunity to compete in this contract procurement process.

Small businesses provide valuable serves to residents in the community that improve the quality of life for all. Ranging from home building and home improvements to dining and entertainment, small businesses provide the quality of life services that add function and enjoyment to our everyday lives.

I have had many informative conversations with Rochester area business owners. These meetings have been valuable to gaining perspective on business owners' concerns. I look forward to committing the time to continue meeting with business owners to inform my decision making as the Rochester City Council Ward 5 representative.

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL IN ROCHESTER?

I recognize the contribution of businesses throughout the community to providing economic opportunity, reducing unemployment, creating a healthy community, cultivating arts and entertainment, and encouraging economic growth. Job creation is critical to strong economic growth and opportunity for local residents. City leaders need to consider the needs of businesses in all quadrants of the community when allocating resources to drive growth, avoiding a myopic focus on the downtown core.

I promote a buy local philosophy and will encourage this concept as a Rochester City Council member. Rochester residents purchasing from local businesses are the very best agents to support our local community. When more dollars stay in Rochester, and circulate throughout the community, the better it is for all residents. Spending our dollars locally employs our neighbors and builds a strong local economy.

It is important that the community supports higher educational opportunities for residents through the Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC), the Career and Technical Education Center at Heintz (CTECH) program, and the University of Minnesota - Rochester. Facility buildings and programs on our community college, vocational, and college campuses have been partially funded through the city sales tax.

HICKEY (Continued)

These education centers are developing the regional workforce to fill the growing available jobs. Everyone benefits by have the opportunity for educational advancement and an available educated, trained workforce for hiring.

I recognize the importance of art, culture, and entertainment in driving a diverse economy. Artists are small business owners and independent contractors. Developing a strong arts community is good for our economy and good for our residents as they experience the arts in the community.

I support the five-year strategic initiative called the Rochester Area Economic Growth Plan, which focuses on Olmsted, Dodge, Wabasha Counties, that is being developed by the Rochester Area Economic Development, Inc. (RAEDI) and the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. I have participated in the name selection process as a community member. I look forward to seeing this plan for regional economic growth and prosperity develop.

If elected, I look forward to the opportunity to serve the citizens of Ward 5 as their representative on the Rochester City Council. I intend to continue to devote my time and energy to the Rochester community by focusing on improving the qualities and characteristics of Rochester that make it a great city in which to live, work, and raise a family.