

# DECISION 2019

## Stuckart leads mayor's race, for now

By JOSEPH THOMPSON

Voters in November will choose a new mayor and city council president. Three city council seats will be on the ballot, as well.

Since Mayor David Rodgers received a second term in 1973, no other has been able to hold the office for more than four years, until Condon.

The mayor's office did not respond to several requests for comment.

While several candidates for different positions have announced candidacies, applicants will file with the county May 13-17 for the Aug. 6 primary. The top two candidates will advance to the Nov. 5 general election.

New voting guidelines allow residents to register to vote online or by mail for the primary or general elections no later than eight days before Election Day. Residents have until 8 p.m. the night of an election to register in person at a voting center. The primary is Aug. 6.

### Ben Stuckart

Council President Ben Stuckart has spent much of his two terms feuding with Mayor Condon. Now, he might replace him.

The Gonzaga graduate, as of Wednesday, has raised nearly \$45,000 with endorsements from local unions, the state Democrats and most of his colleagues on the council. Additionally, he is the only candidate with elected experience — and the most recognizable. Stuckart said his time on the dais gives him a “unique perspective on bureaucracy.”

If elected, he added, one priority would be to mend the relationship between the council and mayor's office.

During Condon's two terms, the mayor vetoed council ordinances eight times — six of those were overridden, but not always administered.

Most recently, the council passed a law to ban Border Patrol agents from searching Greyhound Buses at the city's Intermodal Center. The mayor vetoed the bill. The council overrode that decision. But, the searches have continued.

“The mayor is violating the charter,” Stuckart said. “I think it sets a really bad precedent.”

Outside of City Hall, Stuckart said homelessness, housing and public safety are Spokane's biggest issues.

Homelessness isn't a crime, he said. But encampments aren't the answer. “No one believes we should have a homeless tent city,” he said. “It's not safe for the people that are there. After about seven days, the needles started showing up [at a tent demonstration at City Hall].”

He said the answer is bolstering the Community Court for everyday



Photo by Joey Thompson

Council President Ben Stuckart speaks at his mayoral campaign kickoff party on March 7.

access. The Community Court is a one-day-a-week city program that provides the homeless with social services, court resources, food and education and job training.

To get people into affordable housing, the city needs to get denser, he said.

“We've got to get more comfortable building more apartments,” he said. Providing cheaper homes would lead to a safer city, he added.

Overall, Stuckart boasts a strong electoral history. In 2015, he kept his seat as council president with a 28-point margin. On top of being the only candidate with electoral success, Stuckart's victories came city wide.

### Andrew Rathbun



Rathbun, a retired Air Force Lt. Colonel announced his run for mayor on March 6. He's financing his campaign himself, with \$30,000 in promised donations.

His campaign is based on supporting small businesses, increasing housing opportunities, caring for the homeless and increasing staff for police and fire fighters.

“The coffee shop with five employees should be placed on par with Fortune 500 companies in terms of ability to thrive in our city and region,” Rathbun said in a news release. “I have concerns about current regulatory conversations by

some City Council members that may make affordable housing much worse, not better for tenant.”

For the last 20 years, Rathbun and his wife have lived in the West Central Neighborhood, where he has served on the neighborhood council or community center board. He said he's ready to take the step toward the whole city.

“I have learned that our friends and neighbors don't mind investing in our collective future, but they have little time for politics without purpose and vanity legislation that has no bearing on our daily lives,” he said.

The relationship between the mayor's office and council was another issue for Rathbun.

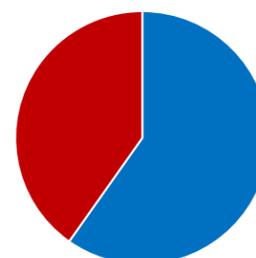
“I value people above all else. All my Washington Air National Guard co-workers will attest to that,” Rathbun said in an email. “I believe I can guide City Hall as customer service oriented and bring back and inspire work place morale similar to my experiences as a military officer.”

### Nadine Woodward



While Ben Stuckart is the most recognizable name in the mayoral race, that might change.

Recently retired KXLY anchor Nadine Woodward has publicly considered entering the race, being touted by some as the best conservative option to beat the Council president.



Funds raised  
Stuckart — \$44,905  
Rathbun — \$30,220

“Quite frankly, I do think she would be the front runner,” said Michael Cathcart, who runs the conservative political action committee Better Spokane.

Woodward would join the primary ballot as the only woman, if she runs. In Spokane's history, it has elected three female mayors.

Cathcart said he's met with all of the candidates, but Woodward is the most electable. But, that could change. He said Rathbun is qualified and in a good position with funding.

But, Better Spokane hasn't backed a candidate, yet.

“We're watching the whole race,” he said. If Woodward decides not to run, Cathcart said he expects two prominent business owners to announce campaigns.

Woodward did not respond to requests for comment.

Other filed candidates:  
Jonathan Bingle  
Shawn Poole  
Chris Schroll

These candidates were not profiled due to a lack of fundraising, campaigning and stature in the field.

## Three Council seats on ballot



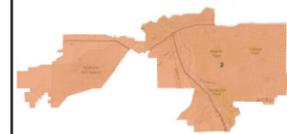
### District 1

Councilman Mike Fagan's seat is up for election and after two terms, the conservative from Bemis' seat is up without an incumbent.

Fagan said he's met with seven or eight potential candidates from all over the political spectrum.

However, he hasn't met with the only person to file for the seat, liberal Tabitha Wolf.

Wolf, who works for the area Democrats, also is a board member for Spokane Trans people.



### District 2

Councilwoman Lori Kinnear's seat is up for re-election and does not have a challenger in sight.

Monica Wachowiak from the Spokane County GOP filed to run, but said she was no longer pursuing the position.

There's still time for other candidates to file.



### District 3

Councilwoman Karen Stratton is up for re-election and is being challenged by newcomer Christopher Savage.

Stratton was appointed to the Council in 2014 and was elected in 2015.

Savage is a member of the city's salary review commission.

## Activist challenges Beggs for council president

By JOSEPH THOMPSON

Two liberal candidates have announced runs for City Council president — former head of the Spokane NAACP Phil Tyler and Councilman Breen Beggs.

This isn't the first time Tyler and Beggs have gone head-to-head. In 2016, the two applied to fill a Council vacancy, with Beggs landing the position in a 5-1 vote.

Councilman Mike Fagan, who is flirting with a run, initially backed Tyler's appointment, but has since criticized the former NAACP head.

Fagan was the sole vote against Beggs' appointment.

Kurt Robinson, who took over the NAACP chapter after Tyler's departure, said he's unsure of who he will endorse in the race.

Tyler, a public safety and information officer at Gonzaga, announced a run for Council president in November.

He did not return multiple requests for comment.

His campaign is focused on positivity, his announcement reads.

In a 2018 report from the Inlander, three of Tyler's ex-wives

accused him of physical and verbal abuse. The report states he was arrested in 1992 for domestic violence and resisting arrest. He was convicted of the latter, but the violence charges were dropped.

Tyler has publicly denied all accusations of abuse.

Lawyer and Councilman Breen Beggs announced his run to lead the city's legislative branch in December, following Tyler's announcement.

“I feel strongly that the city council president should have experience on the council,” he said.

Affordable housing and criminal

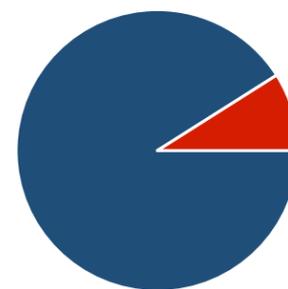
justice reform are Beggs' key issues, he said.

Success in those areas will reduce crime, free up money and make people feel safer, he added.

District 1 Councilman Mike Fagan confirmed he's considering a chance to run the Council.

With two full terms on the Council, Fagan would have the most city government experience on the ballot. He joined the Council to serve his district, not change Spokane, he said.

“I think the vast majority of the people of Spokane are getting a little



Funds raised  
Beggs — \$16,032  
Tyler — \$1,584

tired of the drum beating around social justice,” he said.