

JAN 23 2023

City of Cottage Grove  
City Manager's Office

## Application for Appointment to City Council

Name: Alex Dreher Date: January 22, 2023  
Address: 2468 S. 8th St Occupation: Interim American Rescue Plan Manager  
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Council Ward: 4 (Cell): (541) 649-2385  
Registered Voter? Yes x No  
City resident for a minimum of 12 months prior to applying? Yes X No

## Employment, professional and volunteer background:

My career has been dedicated to public service, from my experience in the US Peace Corps where I taught English in the Post-Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan for 3 years, to teaching social work students, and managing human service programs for local governments. I have worked for Lane County government in multiple roles including as the Homeless Services Supervisor, Anti-Poverty Program Services Coordinator, and currently as a Senior Manager. I am currently the Interim American Rescue Plan Manager responsible for managing a budget of over \$95 million in COVID-19 response funds. My job is to make use of these one-time funds to help the County recover from the negative economic impacts of the pandemic. I am an experienced grant manager, having written, received, and implemented grant-funded programs with Federal, State, and Local funds. I serve on the United Way Community Investment Steering Committee (CISC) and help United Way of Lane County prioritize and make funding decisions with limited resources. My background is in community development, human services, and public policy analysis. Prior to working at Lane County, I was a Faculty Associate at Arizona State University where I taught Master's and Bachelor's level social work students about community development, advocacy, and human services. I have also worked at the State level in Arizona. I am a former board member of the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, as well as the former Board President of Materials Exchange Center for Community Arts (MECCA).

## Community affiliations and activities:

I am an active member of the Be Your Best Coalition. This is a cross-sector coalition of community partners who meet to address the myriad health needs of the community, and work together to achieve tangible results for the community. This has included activating youth sports activities, the farmer's market, and more. Prior to that, I was a participant on the City Manager's Human Services Stakeholder group. I actively support and patronize local businesses,

promoting them among my neighbors and peers, in particular the Friends of the Cottage Grove Carousel and the local food preservation group.

Previous City appointments, offices, or activities:

I was an active participant of City Manager Richard Myer's Human Services Stakeholder group.

As additional background for the City Council, please answer the following questions.

1. Please explain why you are interested in the appointment and what you, as a City Councilor, would offer to the City Council and the community.

I understand the unique needs and obligations of the City of Cottage Grove, as a rural city with a population of over 10,000 and the third largest city in the County. The Community and Can-Do nature of the residents is what led me to make Cottage Grove my forever home. I first became involved with the City as an active participant of the City Manager's meetings of human services stakeholders. I was so impressed with the integrity of people who came together with grit and determination to make things happen in their City. People were not waiting for the State or County to come in and do something about the challenges in the City. They also were not complaining. They were focused on creative solutions, focused on the strengths of the community and the people power we have here. I appreciate this initiative. It inspires me to contribute my best to the community in which I live. My professional experience in local government gives me unique insight into the unique capabilities and role of a City Council. I am familiar with the daily work of local government, from budgeting and the fiscal responsibility of managing tax-payer dollars, to transparency of activities and ensuring public trust in government. Governments can do what others alone cannot - in particular, responding to community wide needs like making sure we have functioning water and wastewater systems, and can be resilient during natural disasters. I am ready to dive in on day one. I am the type of person who will read everything, do my homework, and show up prepared to work with my Council colleagues. I am continually inspired by the depth of compassion and intellect of the current Council. I welcome the opportunity to work alongside them, learn from them, and contribute my personal and professional experience for the betterment of our City.

2. Please describe what you believe are the major concerns of the City residents and businesses. How do you think these concerns should be met by the City?

The major concerns that I hear from my friends and neighbors include: the economy (rising costs), availability of rentals and affordable housing, availability of child care, the statewide rise in people experiencing homelessness (especially families), mental health concerns and a lack of availability of behavioral health providers. These represent concerns that affect everyone's ability to live, work, and enjoy life. The City has a unique role that touches on all of these concerns. The City's role is to ensure public safety and peacekeeping through the Police Department & Municipal Court. The City's Public Works are tasked with maintaining water quality and leaf cleanup, among other important components that no one community group can do alone. The role of government is to do things that are basic underlying functions for a thriving

City that community members cannot do alone. The City also provides a public space for people to come together for recreation, education, and other community building activities at the Community Center and Library. These resources are invaluable to residents as sources of learning about what is going on in the community, what resources are available, and convening to bring even more resources to our community.

3. Please explain why you think the City of Cottage Grove should do or accomplish to improve the City and the City government.

The City of Cottage Grove should continue to seek revenue such as grants focused on rural economic development to meet the needs of our growing population. We should focus on how we can increase tourism to our wonderful area. The City should also focus on advocacy at the State and Federal level for funding and assistance to meet its legal and ethical obligations to address homelessness in our community. The City needs to maintain its water and wastewater infrastructure, with preventative maintenance and seismic readiness. This will ensure the City can meet its needs and that housing and other development does not come to a stand still. The City should explore how City Code and Ordinances can promote economic growth and attract businesses. We should maintain and update the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan and educate the public about emergency preparedness so we can be more resilient and save lives in case disaster strikes.

4. Please provide any additional information or comments which you believe will assist the City Council in considering your application.

I am applying at the recommendation of my friends and neighbors. The City has important challenges ahead, including Main St. Revitalization and addressing the homelessness crisis. I know that the community expects the City Council to move mountains, and, while that's not always possible, the actions of the City Council make very real impacts on people's lives. I am a consensus builder. I genuinely love to learn and I love to work with people. I know that public service is a sacrifice of your time, your energy, and so much more. Those who make this sacrifice do it because they are committed, and compassionate; they care about doing what is right, or, at the very least, doing the best we can do with the resources at hand. I bring a knowledge of the role and responsibilities of local government, as well as a sense of humor that can help us enjoy the work, even during trying times. The City Council helps not only direct the management and policies of the City, but build a sense of belonging. Amazing things happen in this community because we work together. I'm ready to roll up my sleeves for the community I love.

Signature: Alexandria Breher

Date: January 22, 2023

*Thank you for your interest in volunteering in your community.*