



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AGENDA
TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025
5:30 PM - COMMISSION ROOM – 503 S. HIGHLAND AVENUE**

Please join the Zoom meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85264354380> | Meeting ID: 852 6435 4380
You can also dial in using your phone.
+1 312-626-6799

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADOPT AGENDA

VACANCY INTERVIEWS

- 1) Overview and Questions of Interview Process
- 2) Introductory Statement - Mary Gales Askren
- 3) Introductory Statement - Luke Hof
- 4) Introductory Statement - Jenny Wolff
- 5) City Commission Questions

PUBLIC COMMENT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 6) Next Regular Commission Meeting – Monday, August 4, 2025 at 5:30 pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 7) Pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(1)

ADJOURN

Anyone wishing to speak to an item on the agenda must be acknowledged by the chair and come to the podium to address the Mayor and City Commission. Addressing other audience members will not be permitted.

Supplementary agenda information may be accessed at www.cityofmadisonsd.com

If special accommodations are necessary to attend any Board of Commissioners meeting, please contact the Finance Office at (605) 256-7500 at least 24 hours before meeting time. All attempts shall be made to accommodate a request.



2025 City Commission Vacancy Interview Process

Individuals applying to fill the Madison City Commission vacancy are invited to appear before the City Commission to provide comments and respond to questions. The process will proceed as follows:

1. Each applicant will have up to five minutes to provide introductory remarks to the City Commission.
2. The City Commission will ask questions of the applicants. Each applicant will have the opportunity to answer each question.
3. Public comment will be heard. Members of the public wishing to provide comment will each have three minutes.
4. The City Commission may enter into Executive Session for the sole purpose of discussing the qualifications of the applicants.

The City Commission will approve the appointment of an applicant during the August 4, 2025 regular City Commission meeting with swearing in at the same meeting.

Address:

503 S Highland Avenue
Madison, SD 57042

Phone:

(605) 256-7500

Website:

www.CityofMadisonSD.com

First Name

MARY

Last Name

GALES ASKREN

Address**City****State****Zip Code****Phone Number****Email Address****Employer**

retired

Occupation

news reporter

Please list any civic activities in which you have been involved:

As a reporter, I could not be involved in any civic activities. Since retirements I have (a) volunteered at the Madison Public Library; (b) volunteered at the Lake County Museum; and (c) served on the Internal Review Board at Avera Health (which is not in Madison, but affects Madison area patients; I'm on a 15-person committee which reviews all clinical studies which are conducted through Avera; the board meets twice monthly on Wednesdays at noon).

Have you watched and/or attended any City Commission meetings?☒ Yes☐ No**Why would you like to serve on the Madison City Commission?**

(1) Because I understand how city government works having covered meetings in Pierre, Fort Pierre, Lake Preston and Madison (occasionally); (2) Because I live in Madison and want to support efforts to have a strong and healthy community; (3) Because I am retired and have time to research matters which are brought before the commission.

Please describe any specific qualities that qualify you to serve on the City Commission.

(1) I am a good listener and able to understand multiple points of view; (2) I don't rush to judgment, but weigh matters carefully; (3) I am a good researcher and am able to seek out information which enables me to make good decisions; (4) I am able to maintain confidentiality; (5) After covering government at multiple levels -- city, county and occasionally state -- I understand that most issues facing elected officials are complex; there are no simple solutions.

In your opinion, what are the three most significant issues facing the community of Madison?

(1) Money -- always, but especially if there is a recession. What will our priorities be? (2) Infrastructure -- the work which has been done needs to continue -- if funding can be found. We should not be having frequent watermain breaks, and the work done has reduced that number significantly; the work needs to continue. (3) Community stability -- we live in a volatile time politically, which can trickle into our communities if we allow it. Maintaining a healthy community (especially supporting recreational activities for youth) will help us ride that out. The meetings that Roy and Jamison have been having in the community are proactive and will help us do that.

What improvements would you like to see accomplished in the City of Madison?

I don't know if we can focus on improvements when so much is in flux. How much will the loss of federal funds hurt this region? If, for example, farmers were counting on federal funds they don't receive, it could affect their spending, which would affect businesses and nonprofits. I think the most important thing the city can do in the immediate future is work to maintain stability within the community -- keep people informed, support community activities, continue funding programs which benefit area residents, take care of our employees & give them the resources they need to serve the public well. I think that maintaining a strong and healthy community will position us to act when things become more stable.

Please provide any additional information or comments you believe will assist the City Commission in considering your application to fill this vacancy.

As a journalist, I felt I was making a difference by keeping people informed. Serving on the city commission would again give me the opportunity to make a difference, which I believe is my calling.

First Name

Luke

Last Name

Hof

Address**City****State****Zip Code****Phone Number****Email Address****Employer**

Electric construction company

Occupation

Foreman electrician

Please list any civic activities in which you have been involved:

I am a registered voter, I support local business's by shopping locally, and I have to various projects in and around the Madison area

Have you watched and/or attended any City Commission meetings?☒ Yes☐ No**Why would you like to serve on the Madison City Commission?**

I enjoy the community as I am Madison native and alumni, I've been seeing the beautiful improvements being made in town and would like to be a part of this process. I plan on building and raising my family in this town for many years to come.

Please describe any specific qualities that qualify you to serve on the City Commission.

I have the ability to navigate blueprints and drawings quickly and accurately, typically I am able to find any issues on my projects quickly and have them fixed in an efficient manner, ultimately bringing down costs in my trade. I also am incredibly savvy with proceedings with construction projects which involves: material handling, manpower coordination, communicating with other companies, and finalizing projects.

In your opinion, what are the three most significant issues facing the community of Madison?

- 1: improving the sidewalk situation in front of Madison homes
- 2: utilization of advertising to promote new industry
- 3: sharing our resources with other local

What improvements would you like to see accomplished in the City of Madison?

With the increased infrastructure being done around town I'd like to help coordinate with the continuation of finishing out utility improvements and looking towards the next ten year plans with Madison. One thing I do notice around Madison is the amount of people walking down the roadways instead of the sidewalks, this is most likely because of some homes that do not have an accessible sidewalk on their block, finding funding to aid the town or homeowners would be a good priority to look into.

Please provide any additional information or comments you believe will assist the City Commission in considering your application to fill this vacancy.

I've been in Madison all of my life and would love to help serve this community and help its continued growth and keep it a safe place to raise my two young boys.

First Name

Jennifer (Jenny)

Last Name

Wolff

Address**City****State****Zip Code****Phone Number****Email Address****Employer**

Marsh McLennan Agency

Occupation

Market Researcher/Communication Strategist

Please list any civic activities in which you have been involved:

- I was appointed to the Planning Commission by Mayor Lindsay in January 2017
- Vice President Madison Area Arts Council
- Leadership Madison and Leadership South Dakota graduate
- Former activities include: Madison Water Advisory Committee, Totland Park Improvement Committee, Friends of the Madison Public Library, Madison Toastmasters, and Interlakes Area United Way

Have you watched and/or attended any City Commission meetings?☒ Yes☐ No

Why would you like to serve on the Madison City Commission?

Madison deserves a decision-making body that offers perspectives to be representative of our city's entire population. A crucial component of ensuring that is diversity among our elected officials. In my line of work, facilitating diversity among leaders is a key risk management strategy we coach clients on. Studies show gender diverse team process facts more carefully, offer more innovative approaches, and produce better results.

Historically, women have been underrepresented on the commission. In its ~112-year history, only four women have served on Madison's city commission. Commissioner Cronin's addition in 2024 helps alleviate this disparity, but four women in the span of more than a century is still a drop in the bucket when it comes evening the balance. Of course, it would be discriminatory and offensive to select a commissioner based solely on gender. I would not offer myself up for consideration if I was not confident my qualifications stand on their own accord.

Please describe any specific qualities that qualify you to serve on the City Commission.

I've been fortunate to have a career path and other development opportunities which have provided me with a number of skills that are essential to being an effective elected official. I have:

- familiarity with many issues that ultimately come before the commission due to previously serving on the water advisory committee and currently sitting on the city planning commission.
- extensive leadership experience and training, including completing the Leadership Madison and Leadership South Dakota programs.
- functional expertise in utilities, risk management, economic and community development, and communications.

Furthermore, when I ran for city commission in 2020, I received an endorsement from Run For Something (RFS), a national organization which vets down-ballot candidates for competency, integrity, and commitment to representing the voices of their constituents. As an endorsed candidate, I received dedicated training on policymaking and how to be an impactful and unbiased government leader. At the time, RFS had endorsed candidates in every state except South Dakota. Madison had a competitive slate of six candidates for two positions to choose from that election, and though I was ultimately not successful in my bid, I am extremely proud to have put South Dakota on the map of highly regarded candidates by RFS.

In your opinion, what are the three most significant issues facing the community of Madison?

1. Finances – Madison has typically enjoyed a sound financial position, but the current administration has made sweeping and sudden changes to federal programs which could have short and long-term implications for the city's ability to fund infrastructure improvements, economic development initiatives, public services, crisis management, and more. Additionally, tax reform at the state level could present question marks as to what we can expect for revenues. Inflation is poised to cause major direct and trickle-down impacts; I foresee budgeting in the coming years to be a challenge that will require creative solutions and tough decisions.
2. Housing – This was identified as critical need in the PASQ survey and incorporated into the 2026 Strategic Plan. Housing issues encompass availability, affordability, safety, zoning, and nuisance properties. I've seen a number of housing-related requests come through the planning commission over the years. We have discussed the need to update ordinances to make housing development more attainable. Additionally, we lack a dedicated short-term housing ordinance and I have advocated for this to be looked into to mitigate problems other communities have seen with the rise of popularity in vacation rentals/AirBnbs.
3. Crisis Mitigation and Resiliency – In the past several years Madison has dealt with city-wide flooding, a regional destructive storm in the form of the derecho, and a global health pandemic. Trends indicate other natural and man-made disasters are concerns we could be faced with in the future. Cuts to federal funding threaten our ability to safeguard against crises. Further, as someone who works in the risk management industry, I've seen a shifting appetite among carriers to extend insurance coverages coupled with a drastic increase in premiums. This opens the city itself up to potentially take on more liability, as well as residents possibly being undercovered and unable to recover from an incident.

What improvements would you like to see accomplished in the City of Madison?

Rather than rely on my personal preferences, I again looked to the PASQ survey and 2026 Strategic Plan so my answer can be informed by the wants and needs of Madison's residents at-large. Areas of improvement included road conditions, improved availability of housing, increased retail and food options, and more community safety and inclusivity. Kudos to the City and partner stakeholders for making great progress in a number of these areas! Principles with several initiatives that are still in development lie under Addressing Critical Needs and Enhancing Quality of Life. Some areas I would advocate for work to continue include:

- The Master Plan for Recreational Trails – I know this has been stymied by past failed grant attempts, but as expanding recreation trails remains a prominent interest among citizens, I hope the latest renewed funding effort will be successful.
- Economic & Community Competitiveness – Workforce recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge for many employers. At the same time, we experience "brain drain" with many MHS and DSU graduates leaving the area (as someone whose own daughter left to pursue employment opportunities after graduation). I myself work remotely. Retaining graduates in Madison while also advertising the benefits of establishing roots here to those who can work from anywhere has yet to be fully capitalized on.
- Greater collaboration with and engagement with our lake communities – I am not sure where we stand on initiatives to involve residents of Lake Madison and Lake Herman on boards and committees to ensure they have representation as stakeholders. But overall, there is more opportunity for mutual benefit for lake residents to feel like Madison is their home, and the lakes are an extension of Madison residents' homes.

Please provide any additional information or comments you believe will assist the City Commission in considering your application to fill this vacancy.

I have lived in Madison my entire adult life, and grew up on a farm in nearby Miner County, so it's always been like home to me. I graduated from DSU, as did my daughter, and my son will be a senior at MHS. My knowledge of Madison is intimate and I take deeply personal pride in being a "Madisonite." On the other hand, working for a global Fortune 250 organization has given me worldly exposure to trends, externalities, challenges, and opportunities. For example, the coronavirus was on my radar a couple months ahead of it becoming news here. I believe my knowledge of up-to-the-minute global and national market impacts and ability to apply them locally offers a unique asset. Thank you for considering me for this opportunity to serve the community I care deeply about!