

# No incumbents running in South Tahoe council race

By Kathryn Reed

Sixty percent of the South Lake Tahoe City Council will be new after voters cast their ballots Nov. 2.

Jerry Birdwell joins Kathay Lovell and Bill Crawford in deciding not to seek another term.



Jerry Birdwell

“I’m going to take a breather. I’m going to enjoy running the (Black Bear) Inn, sitting on the farm (in Sutter Creek), and doing more traveling with my partner,” Birdwell told *Lake Tahoe News* on Tuesday night.

At 68, Birdwell is ready to turn his attention to things besides city government. But he isn’t turning his back on the city. Before running four years ago, Birdwell was active with the Ski Run Boulevard BID. This is something he anticipates doing again.

He wishes he could have brought more transparency to city government. He said it would only come with honesty and openness about what is going on.

“I think the first time it came to my attention was when I asked (former City Attorney) Cathy DiCamillo what the city was paying in outside counsel. She looked at me across the desk

and said, 'I have no idea.',” Birdwell said. “I said, ‘Why not?’ She said, ‘It doesn’t go through me.’ That to me was my first knowledge that transparency was lacking in city government and it was bothering me.”

Birdwell said that interaction got him thinking about his days on the Ski Run BID board and not being able to get a straight answer out of the city about the money paid in by BID members and how much had been spent.

He thinks the city needs to figure out where it wants to be and what it wants to look like in five, even 10 years. He also thinks the city better have a realistic understanding about revenues, realize property taxes aren’t going to be what they were a few years ago and that the bleeding has not stopped.

“We need to adjust our budget accordingly. I think future councils will have a major problem dealing with that,” Birdwell said.

While he continues to serve the rest of his term for the next few months, one thing he will work on is securing a permanent city hall for the town. He and Councilman Bruce Grego were appointed Aug. 3 to an ad hoc committee to investigate whether the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* building on Harrison Avenue would be viable.

(The paper is not selling or going out of business, just the structure is for sale.)

With presses having been there years ago, soil studies would need to be done to make sure no ink leached into the ground.

An appealing aspect to officials is other city entities are directly across Highway 50.

With no incumbent running for City Council, the deadline to file paperwork is Aug. 11. Here are the people who have taken out papers.