Seven in city commission race

BY AARON SNYDER
THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

ASHLAND Three incumbents, one former commissioner and three would-be newcomers are in the race for Ashland city commission spots.

Marty Gute, Tim Renfroe and DJ Rymer are going for another two-year term on Tuesday, Nov. 3, while Amanda Clark is aiming to get back in a familiar role. Fred Unrue, Clayton Wills and Heather Hayes are making their cases for they deserve a chance to serve on the board. Commissioner Sonny Martin is not running for re-election. Chuck Charles will enter his third year of a four-year term.

The Daily Independent{/em} reached out to all candidates to ask who they are and why they're running.

Hayes is the only candidate who did not respond.

The following are listed in alphabetical order.

Amanda Clark

"Ashland has always been home. My husband, Brian, and I have been married for 32 years, and we're blessed with two grown sons, Casey (Annie) and Drew. I'm also a proud grandmother, and nothing matters more to me than making sure the next generation has the opportunity to build a good life right here at home. That's a big part of why serving our community means so much to me.

I served as an Ashland city commissioner for 10 years and spent most of my career working in economic development. I've worked with businesses and communities across eastern Kentucky to attract investment, support local businesses, and create opportunities for growth. Along the way, I've built strong relationships throughout the region and in Frankfort that can help Ashland connect with the resources and partnerships needed to keep moving forward.

I'm running for election because I believe Ashland's best days are still ahead. I want to continue working to make our city a place where people want to live, work and raise their families. That means attracting new businesses, helping existing businesses grow, encouraging responsible housing development, and creating more opportunities that give our young people reasons to stay or come back home.

I also believe the basics matter. We need to invest in our streets and infrastructure, keep our neighborhoods safe, and be responsible with taxpayer dollars. We must address today's needs while planning for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished, but there is still important work to do. I want to continue putting my experience and economic development background to work for the community I love. I want to help ensure our families, businesses, and next generation have every opportunity to be part of it."

Marty Gute

"I'm a lifelong resident of Ashland, seeking my 10th consecutive term in office. I feel there is no substitute for experience. I've been married to my wife, Sara, for 22 years, and we have six children and 10 grandchildren between us.

I currently pastor at First Congregational Church of Ceredo, going on my 14th year. I have been an assistant on the Ashland Tomcats football team for the last 23 years. It's an honor to get up every day and serve the citizens of our community, and try to make a positive difference for our city. I've been blessed to have seen and been a part of many noteworthy projects during my tenure, from the building of a new police station, to the development of the Port of Ashland, to being able to see our first inclusive playground in Central Park.

We have two of the largest projects in Ashland history currently under construction, the new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant, and the largest single investment by the State of Kentucky of $25 million for a conference center in downtown Ashland.

The four main functions of a city commissioner are to, one, help craft, draft, and enact with the collaboration with city staff and city ordinances that we govern by, two, to provide good essential city services to our citizens that include both health and safety and quality of life, three, to cultivate and attract economic development opportunities for the city, and to pursue new businesses and maintain our existing ones, and, lastly, to provide our citizens with a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-compensated workforce. Our 300-plus employees are second to none.

The Lord has blessed me over the years with the opportunity to work alongside others to make Ashland a great place to live, work and play. I'm No. 2 on the ballot and I appreciate your support. I can be reached at mgute@ashlandky.gov any time."

Tim Renfroe

"Ashland is home. I was adopted by Bill and Ann Renfroe as an infant and grew up in this community. I attended Ashland public schools, including Paul G. Blazer High School, and spent much of my working life serving the people of Ashland.

I worked 14 years at Armco before joining the Ashland Police Department, where I served for 24 years. That experience gave me a first-hand understanding of city operations, public safety, and the importance of responsible management.

I ran for city commission because I care about the future of Ashland and believe every neighborhood and every citizen deserves to be heard. I believe city government should listen to its residents, set responsible priorities, and make decisions with the entire community in mind.

I want to continue serving the city I have called home for nearly my entire life. I believe we must be thoughtful about how we spend public money, address our infrastructure needs, maintain essential services, and make decisions that protect Ashland's long-term financial future.

I also believe we must take care of our own community and ensure that residents throughout the city receive attention — not just those in one particular area.

For me, public service is about listening, being accountable, asking the right questions, and remembering that the decisions we make affect real people and families.

Ashland has given me a lifetime of memories, opportunities, and friendships. Seeking re-election is an opportunity to continue giving back to the community that has given me so much.

I would appreciate the voters consideration when they cast their votes."

DJ Rymer

"I am seeking re-election to the Ashland city commission because I believe in our city and our people, and I want to keep working to move Ashland forward.

I have enjoyed serving as a city commissioner and as Mayor Pro Tem for the past 22 months. During that time, our commission has focused on strengthening Ashland's finances, investing in infrastructure and public safety, and putting money back in residents' pockets through a utility assistance program, lower sanitation fees, and a 20% property-tax cut.

We have also streamlined city services and cut unnecessary expenditures. By managing financial resources carefully, we have created two separate rainy-day funds — one for the general fund and one for the utility fund — with combined reserves totaling nearly $5 million. These reserves will help Ashland prepare for unexpected needs while protecting its ability to provide essential services.

If you were to ask me what I am most proud of, I would say it is my ability to meet people where they are. I have spent countless hours volunteering throughout our city and many late evenings listening to residents at dinner tables, restaurants, and community events as they shared some of the biggest challenges they face. Those conversations help me understand what matters to people and how city decisions affect their daily lives. I strive to listen to every citizen and remain approachable, whether at commission meetings or out in the community. My office is always open to residents with questions, comments or concerns.

Public service is part of my family's history, and my Christian faith guides my commitment to serving others. I believe in being fiscally conservative, responsible and accountable while also staying open-minded and progressive about ideas and investments that can help make Ashland a better place to call home.

I am running because I want to build on our progress and help strengthen our neighborhoods, improve city services, support public safety, and create a brighter future for residents."

Fred Unrue

"I was born and raised here, so I've been here a long time. I've worked in Ashland in some form or fashion since I was 16 years old. I'm 67 now.

I was a self-employed business owner for 34 years here in Ashland. I ran a clean operation.

I know the town really well. I was downtown my whole career. I was on the streets, associated with a lot of business owners, and I took a big interest in things that were happening here.

I sold my business in 2016, at which point I didn't have to take a back seat all the time to politics. I started getting more involved and outspoken about things I was seeing that just weren't right.

We had an administration here in Ashland that destroyed downtown, in my opinion. It's not recovered yet, and it doesn't seem like it's going to recover.

We voted most of them out in the last election, and now they've regrouped and trying to get back into power.

I ran two years ago, so that was my first run for public office.

I feel like I can make a difference. I can keep people accountable for things that are going on.

We've got what's probably going to be another huge mistake is this convention center. It should've been attached to the hotel, in my opinion.

We'll see how it all plays out. We've got the parking garage, which has been a problem.

Take a drive through the alleys. We've got wires hanging down, and some are hanging so slow, they hit your truck when you drive through.

There are a lot of things that need to be cleaned up.

We don't need representatives from Kentucky Power on our commission. For some reason, they want somebody in the seat in city hall.

Good luck to all. I hope we make the right decisions. It's a big decision."

Clayton Wills

"I am running to provide a much needed change as one of the four Ashland city commissioners.

I have been blessed to be married for 32 years to a wonderful woman named Kym. She is a member of the Southern Hills Garden Club here in Ashland. We have an amazing daughter, Spencer, who is pursuing a master's degree in non-profit management.

I was a registered nurse from 1993-2023 — the last 27 years in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Cabell Huntington Hospital, an academic coach (future problem solving) in the Ashland Independent Schools system from 2010-19, and an Ashland planning committee member from 2011-19.

If elected, I plan to utilize a federal program known as "opportunity zones" that are responsible for almost $100 billion in private sector funding, creating around 400,000 housing units and supporting nearly 500,000 jobs across the country.

I am against unregulated data centers and data centers within close proximity to residential areas. I am for Community Benefits Agreements as a requirement. I do not believe that government officials should sign a non-disclosure agreement that keeps information relevant to its citizenry from them.

I don't believe I am going out on a limb when I say that Ashland is losing its younger population. I plan to: provide a platform that brings young adults with fresh, new ideas together with city and business leaders; establish a program that will allow our leaders of tomorrow to see first hand what it takes to run a city; and provide incentives for young adults to start businesses.

On Nov. 3, just like you, I have to decide whether to vote for new ideas or "been there, done that." As for me, I am voting for new ideas.

For a better look, visit my Facebook page at Clayton Wills for Ashland 2026."

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY, COUNTY OF BOYD

I, Mary Hall Sergent, Clerk of the Boyd District Court, certify that the following have been appointed fiduciaries. Creditors having claims against said estates must file same with fiduciary within (6) six months from date of appointment.

CASE#	DATE OF APPT.	ESTATE	FIDUCIARY	ATTORNEY
13-P-156	10/12/2026	Gene Paden	Abigail Stanley	Abigail Stanley
14-P-295	10/13/2026	Joshua Daniels	Abigail Stanley	Abigail Stanley
21-P-171	10/13/2026	Sandra Sue Dean	Gary R. Dean	
23-P-163	10/13/2026	Robert Vaden Castle	Abigail Stanley	Abigail Stanley
24-P-167	10/13/2026	Roy Gene Osborne	Abigail Stanley	Abigail Stanley
24-P-396	10/12/2026	Harriet Joyce Howard	Kevin Howard	
25-P-232	10/13/2026	Paul Edison Dean	Gary R. Dean	
26-P-285	10/13/2026	Colin Murphy Finucane	Richard Finucane	Lance McComis
26-P-339	09/23/2026	Violet J. Bullion	William Clyde Stevens	
26-P-341	09/23/2026	Phyllis Jean Boggs	Jennifer Silagi	Elizabeth Opell Thomas
26-P-342	09/28/2026	Janice L. Hale	Frona Denise Hale	
26-P-343	09/28/2026	James E. Smith	Terri Vanhorn	
26-P-345	10/05/2026	Debra Lynn Church	Timothy A. Church	
26-P-349	10/05/2026	Zane Anthony Justice	Bridget Lemon-Justice	
26-P-351	10/08/2026	Ronald Abrams	Katie Lou Justice	
26-P-353	10/15/2026	Beckham Ball	Whitney Williams	
26-P-354	10/15/2026	Cooper Ball	Whitney Williams	
26-P-355	10/13/2026	Rhonda Salisbury	Sarah Boggs	Richard W. Martin
26-P-357	10/16/2026	Danny Blanton	Evelyn Blanton	
26-P-358	10/14/2026	Anna Maria Seidle	Jeffrey Allen	Kyle Salyer
26-P-359	10/16/2026	Debra L. Barnhart	Kimberly J. Jenkins	Wendell S. Roberts
26-P-360	10/15/2026	Doris Stone	John Erik Stone	
26-P-362	10/16/2026	Leona Faye Boggs Cooper	Julia R Yates & Norma J. Fields	
26-P-364	10/20/2026	Minnie Inez Sullivan	Christine Leadingham & Edna Fraley	
26-P-366	10/21/2026	Edward Kashuba	Lindsay Gartrell Nock	Lance McComis
26-P-367	10/21/2026	Bessie Rose Chaffin	Charlene McCarty	
26-P-369	10/22/2026	Margaret L. Hammond	Brian McCormick	

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