

Lund, Weston seek District 14 supervisor seat

By Ryan Whisner, Daily Union regional editor | Posted: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 9:33 am

LAKE MILLS — Voters in the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors's District 14 will select a new representative on Tuesday, April 1.

Longtime incumbent Supervisor Pamela Rogers filed noncandidacy papers and is not seeking re-election in the district, which includes Wards 1, 3, 5 and 8 in the City of Lake Mills.

Newcomer Kirk Lund will face former Supervisor Rex Weston for this seat on the board.

The two candidates were asked to provide the Daily Union with information on their background, experiences and top issues of concern related to being a county supervisor. The following are their responses listed in alphabetical order.

Kirk Lund

Kirk Lund, 42, says he is running for a seat on the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors to make a positive difference in the community by standing up for the rights of the poor and middle class, and to help foster open, honest and accountable government. A licensed attorney, Lund operates his own HandyMan business.

“My experience representing low-income clients at a free legal services clinic, my work on election integrity issues and my international work make me well-equipped to help address the many challenges facing Jefferson County,” Lund said. “I look forward to working to find common ground on the county board in order to solve problems.”

A graduate of St. Olaf College in Minnesota and the City University of New York School of Law, Lund was a solo legal practitioner in Minnesota and co-founded a free legal services clinic to advise and represent low-income clients.

He also volunteered as a clerk with Texas Rural Legal Aid and the Rainforest Foundation in Manhattan, and worked with Citizens for Election Integrity-Minnesota and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity.

“I have been an election observer in El Salvador and volunteered with a nonprofit home builder in Mexico,” Lund said.

Prior to being licensed to practice law in Wisconsin, he volunteered as a law clerk at the Waukesha County Juvenile Court.

“I believe that I am well-equipped to help address the many challenges facing Jefferson County,” Lund said. “I’ve worked in a wide range of settings with diverse people.”

He suggested that from a perspective of rolling up the sleeves and doing hands-on work to analyzing and addressing complex issues, he believes his experience would be an asset to the people of Lake Mills and Jefferson County.

Lund cited fostering an open, honest and accountable government, fiscal responsibility and sustainable economic development as his top three priorities.

“I look forward to working to find common ground on the county board to solve problems and to help foster open, honest, and accountable government,” he concluded.

Rex Weston

Former county Supervisor Rex Weston is seeking an opportunity to again bring his views of government as a straight-talking realist to the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors.

“My frustration with government is such that I can’t, in good conscience, sit on my hands while knowing that I have exceptional qualities of character to offer in service,” he said. “I’ve helped bring out the best in most people I’ve ever worked with, and to be able to do this at the level of the Jefferson County board again would be an honor and a pleasure.”

Listing his three top issues of concern, Weston first said there is the mistaken belief that government (at all levels) can create and ensure safety, security and prosperity through regulation and policy.

“This mistruth lies at the heart of many useless, and frequently bad, decisions,” he said. “Furthermore, it creates a wedge between people with differing ideas, the sheer existence of danger, insecurity or economic hardship serving as ‘proof.’”

While bad for politicians to foster that belief, Weston noted, it is even worse of the citizens.

“It enables an abdication of responsibility and a loss of self-reliance while fostering an ‘it’s not my fault,’ mentality,” he added.

Weston stressed the importance of politicians at all levels to speak the hard truths.

“Jefferson County board supervisors make decisions across the spectrum of services — roads, Fair Park, law enforcement, etc.,” Weston said. “My experience is that when reality is brought out into the open, something I’m good at doing, it gets tricky to stuff it back into the closet. The result is generally a more honestly considered decision, which is inevitably a better decision.”

Secondly, he said a lack of authenticity is a detriment to good decisionmaking in any organization.

“The pervasive reliance in our nation on polls, perceived public opinion, and buzzwords and soundbites destroys the ability of otherwise intelligent people to act independently and to communicate honestly,” Weston said. “We pay a heavy price in lost ideas every time someone chooses to say something that ‘sounds good’ rather than simply stating what they think.”

He said he believes that the role of an elected representative is not to do what he or she thinks the voters want him or her to do, but, rather, to do what he or she thinks is best for the voters.

“The voters will soon make it clear whether they got it right or wrong,” he said. “In the meantime, we all benefit from politicians who’ve given the best they had to give.”

Lastly, Weston said, competition doesn’t belong in government.

“When Fort Atkinson offers an incentive of \$200,000 to a private company and Jefferson beats them out by offering \$250,000, who wins?,” he said. “Is Jefferson County better off with a job in Jefferson or Fort Atkinson? The only sure thing is that the private company is better off with the taxpayers’ money.”

Similarly, he said when units of government compete with each other for federal or state money, waste occurs.

“If there are federal grants available for drought-mitigation studies, one school of thought is that Wisconsin taxpayers paid into the pool and we ‘win’ if we attract a disproportionate amount of that grant money back to our state,” Weston said. “By definition, a winner means there’s a loser, and when the loser of drought-mitigation money is in the southwestern United States, then we never should have entered the contest.”

He suggested that the thoughtless grasping at every available opportunity without a big-picture, long-term vision is little more than a race to the bottom funded by taxpayer money.