

Two seeking District 20 county board seat on April 5

By Ryan Whisner rwhisner@dailyunion.com | Posted: Friday, February 26, 2016 8:02 am

JEFFERSON — Two candidates are seeking the District 20 seat in the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors election on April 5.

Spring election voters will decide whether to retain Jim Mode as their representative or give the seat to challenger Frankie Fuller.

The district includes Wards 1, 2 and 3 in the Town of Jefferson and Ward 4 in the Town of Oakland.

The 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. Here are their responses, with the incumbent listed first.

Jim Mode

Jim Mode has served on the board of supervisors for 12 years.

“I’ve been serving my constituents for 12 years and I would like to continue to do so,” he said. “I will continue to bring a common-sense approach to budgeting and problem-solving.”

Currently, he serves as chairman of the Human Services Board and also is a member of the Human Resources Committee and Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium.

Mode said he feels the top issue facing the county is the escalating cost to residents due to heroin use.

“Not only are the users affected, but also their families, employers and county agencies,” Mode said. “Our law enforcement, district attorney’s office, courts and Human Services devote a lot of resources to controlling, prosecuting and treating the effects of heroin use.”

Continuing, he emphasized concerns about whether there will be adequate funding to maintain the county’s infrastructure.

“Due to levy limits and increasing costs of road building materials, we are falling behind on our scheduled county road construction,” Mode said. “We get some state aid for county and town roads, but it is insufficient to keep up with increasing costs.”

Lastly, he said he supports the continued encouragement of private investment in the county Parks Department and Fair Park.

“These services are not mandated by the state, but are important to the quality of life in Jefferson County,” Mode said.

The incumbent pointed out that Jefferson County Fair Park is expected to operate almost free of the tax levy spent to cover operating expenses.

In addition, he said, the Parks Department is increasing its involvement in the private sector.

Frankie Fuller

Challenger Frankie Fuller said she is running for office because she believes in democracy and government that works.

“I see government service as an extension of the volunteer work that I have been doing for most of my life,” she said.

Fuller has resided in the Fort Atkinson area for 25 years. Her past experience includes three years on the county board of supervisors and seven years as a legislative staffer at the State Capitol in Madison.

She is a member of the Fort Atkinson Branch of the American Association of University Women, Jefferson County Master Gardeners, Friends of Glacial Heritage Area, the Ice Age Trail Alliance and other organizations.

“I see serving on the county board as another opportunity to make this place I call home as inviting for others as it has been for me,” Fuller said.

If elected, she promised to work hard to keep the county safe, secure and fiscally sound.

Fuller said she would seek input from the residents who are affected by the decisions that are made.

In addition, Fuller promised to research answers and develop creative nonpartisan, common-sense solutions to the many issues that will arise, as well as “to promote the many interesting families, businesses and activities that are here, at home.”

Among her top priorities are the proposed University of Wisconsin-Extension cuts and their impact on Jefferson County.

In addition, Fuller said she wants to address what she feels is an ongoing state effort to cut or diminish power of local units of government.

Lastly, the candidate noted that she would like to identify ways and sources of revenue to protect and improve the county park system without adding unnecessary costs to the county budget.

“I believe that government provides order, structure and safety in our society, and when it is working well, it can enhance the efforts of businesses, social organizations, schools and families,” Fuller said.