

Ballots due April 23, 2013



Rick Hughes is the current District 4 County Council member since winning in the November 6, 2012 general election. He and his wife Marlace own Ray's pharmacy in Eastsound. He was an executive at ESPN before moving back to Orcas Island. His family has been on the island since 1944 and Marlace is a fourth-generation islander. Fowler's Pond is named after her family.

Hughes is running for the position of county Council member for the newly created District 2 which includes all of Orcas Island plus Waldron Island. His opponent is Lisa Byers.

Fundamental basis of campaign: Hughes has three pillars in his campaign: Localization, Simplification and Communication.

He said, "Localization means county services on each island, local people trying to do the work when we can."

Explaining simplification he said, "The county code needs to be as easy to follow as possible. We need to have customer service on the employee side, so whenever anyone is interacting with a county employee they receive the best service as possible, no matter how trying."

As for communication he said, "County council and some staff need to get out and reach out,

not just have Town Halls. On a daily basis or weekly basis we need to let the public know what is going on...One of the most important things on being on the council is to listen. We have amazing people in this county and great staff. Council needs to just make sure they take the time to listen to the public." Since he took office he has suggested the county make videos using a few properties as examples as a way to explain to citizens how the CAO regulations actually work.

He is setting up an office in the Orcas Senior center where he plans to have office hours every Friday. He'd like to see more county services on Orcas and Lopez so people don't always have to take a day to travel to Friday Harbor."

Economy: "My wife and I work with Orcas Island High School to help source to get local foods in the schools," he said. "It's all about sustainability, how do we keep as much money in the community as humanly possible so it circulates here instead of going off island. I'm working with Nick Jones (Lopez Island farmer) to get pork and beef in school. I'd much rather pay a local who is going to pay someone else and sustain the community, instead of paying Cisco to drop something off."

As examples of the types of business he'd like to see more of, he said, "There is the Hopping brewery on Orcas, Westcott Bay San Juan Distilling up on San Juan and Brent making wine on Lopez, we need to find more industries like that, where we can take more advantage of agricultural products...We need to figure how to help them produce a product that can make a really decent margin and a really decent revenue source for these folks."

He said, There is legislation HB 1008 in executive committee in the state to allow retailers to sell hard cider in growler form. ..We have one of the ten hard cider-makers in the state that are on the craft level...Using legislation which can help local business, our small businesses in the county succeed.

He spoke about the need to change the county code to make it easier for businesses to operate. He hopes citizens support OPALCO's broadband plans. Speaking of the economy in general he said, "I'd like to see 50 \$50,000 a year jobs in the next five years.

CAO: Hughes has voted twice to delay the implementation to give people a chance to learn

about the changes. "I am glad it passed, there are a lot of things I don't like about it, but now we are in compliance (with the Growth Management Act). But gosh it's an ordinance..we, the council, can always open it up and change it," he said.

While he has no trouble changing things, he thinks since the CAO was adopted by the previous council, the assumption should be it will go into effect. He said, "We have to move really fast to put together education to get the information out to the public as simply as we can. The last thing I want to do is to slow down people's opportunity to make a living."

County Manager's role: Hughes likes the fact the council will have more oversight with the passage of Proposition 2 which amended the Charter. He sees the role of the council as a Board of Directors and the role of the professional manager as the CEO or COO who basically runs the ship.

Under the new rules, council members can now talk to department heads. "I have the ability to talk to Frank Mucahey (Public Works Director). The council has more responsibility and there is more crossover between the manager and the council," he said. A big difference with the passage of the amendments is council members can help citizens when they have a problem with the county government which they couldn't before the amendments, he noted.

At the April 5 debate he gave an example of how council members would interact with staff and the public to help solve problems. He met earlier that day with the Orcas Recycling Services Director and county Public Works Director Frank Mucahey to help them work out a solution to a roadblock in the proposed operation. As the council liaison to the Solid Waste Committee, this was an appropriate action, he said.

Biggest Challenge for the county: In the long run economic development - how do you maintain our culture while providing a liveable wage... Our code is one of our biggest problems. Our long term cost of maintaining the government," he said. "How do we keep an economically diverse cross-section, where people can have a decent wage and live a decent life. To be able to pay their rent, put food on their table, send their kids to schools."

Community involvement: "My wife and I are both PTSA (Parent/Teacher/Student Association) presidents. In the past year we've given up 26 Fridays hosting Friday night roller-skating (in the

middle school gym)," he said. Roller skating in the gym for goes back 40-50 years. He thinks it's an example of what's needed more of - safe things for kids to do. "I have big concerns about drugs and domestic violence," he said. An improved economy would help reduce those problems since stress on families would be reduced.

Reflecting on earlier life in the county, he said, "I'd like to get back to that community that wasn't so divided on issues. We've got to stop turning our neighbors in, walking on other people's property to see what they're doing...I really fear for the rural culture here." He hopes he has the honor of serving on the county Council so he will have the chance to help make things better for the community.