

Betty Winholtz

City Council Candidate

Website: <https://www.winholtzforcouncil2020.com/>

Contact: (805) 772-5912 / winholtz@sbcglobal.net

Candidate Introduction and Statement

In 1986, I arrived from Iowa with an MA in Counselor Education. Hiring freezes allowed me to become a part-time employee for John and Donna Baker's ice cream store on Main. John and I had discussions about hard work and service, his foundation for a successful store-front and way of life.

Using hard work and service, I created a full-time career as an academic tutor. As a self-employed businesswoman, I learned the additional value of fiscal conservatism.

In 2002, I won a City Council seat by 12 votes. Four years later, I was re-elected and the top vote-getter, having applied the principles of hard work and service.

I have been a member of the White Caps and German Bands, Morro Bay Beautiful, MB Historical Society, MB Seniors, Save the Park, a non-profit that fought for Cerrito Peak; and a volunteer with MBHS and El Chorro Regional Dog Park (near Cuesta).

As a fiscal conservative and prior City Council Member, I know we can do better with City finances.

A budget should balance without using emergency reserve funds. First Responders and other City services can be locally maintained through concrete (not temporary) changes and strict spending rules (not expensive consultants).

Continually raising the "guaranteed maximum price" for the sewer plant is a red flag. New operating costs for pumping sewage 3.5 miles uphill is untold. There are options. For example, it's less expensive to stay at the current site where the Water Board's standard will be met when Cayucos goes offline. The City receives no fines. Coastal Commission has no jurisdiction if it's not new. Sewer and water rates would have to be reduced.

Let's change the old paradigms that result in financial debt. The City needs to refocus away from "down the road dreams" and address current realities.

Question: Do you think our four economic centers (Downtown, Waterfront, Quintana and North Morro Bay) are healthy and successful? If not, what three things are needed to improve business conditions in the city?



Across the whole town, I assume most businesses are less financially healthy due to COVID-19 than they were last year at this time. By observation, however, it appears some are making a strong come back, some have gone to online sales, and some have closed permanently.

Firstly, what can be done to improve business conditions is stay out of the store fronts' way. What I mean by this is the businesses know their customer base and how to successfully adjust to retain them. An example of "staying out of store fronts' way" was when the City proposed closing a part of the Embarcadero to vehicles, and the affected businesses said no. The City listened.

Similarly, I would not install parking meters Downtown or on the Embarcadero unless the respective businesses ask for them. The City should demonstrate that installing, maintaining, and enforcing parking meters will be cost effective. Such a project should provide a significant financial gain to the City, not just break even financially. Parking meters must not be a detriment to businesses.

Secondly, fulfill the decades old request for public bathrooms downtown. The single one at Grandma's Frozen Yogurt is insufficient.

Thirdly, there must be greater care of our public sidewalks. The beauty of our Rock, Harbor, Estuary, and Beaches is our product. The City has done well maintaining our shady and flowering trees, shaving down raised sidewalks, and supporting flower beds. However, the neglected look of grasses and weeds growing out of the concrete sidewalks leaves a poor visual impression and sour memory. I don't expect to see weeds in the streets of Verona, and I don't. I shouldn't see weeds in the sidewalks of Morro Bay. Mundane? Yes. Critical for tourist retention? Yes.

Question: If you received a \$1 Million dollar grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?

A million dollars is a drop in the bucket for what I would select: street paving. Regardless, if I had \$1 million of discretionary money, I would use it to repair approximately 1 mile of streets.

The reason I choose paving is because 1) it is the number one request of every resident, and 2) the Pavement Plan for this year has been canceled for budget reasons.

The more difficult question is where should we pave; who gets the benefit?

Residents and visitors do not want to drive on a failing infrastructure. Some of our tourists stay in vacation rentals in residential neighborhoods. Paving arterial and feeder streets will serve both permanent and transient populations. I would split the money between north and south Morro Bay. Street paving serves vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.



Question: What do you think are your shortcomings or lack of expertise and how do you intend to deal with them?

I was once told I had an overly developed sense of fair play. Wow! Who doesn't want to be known as a fair person and fair player? It implies trustworthiness; a characteristic one would be happy to have their name associated with. At the time I took it as a compliment. In hindsight, I'm not so sure.

I think this characteristic is why I ask so many questions and drill down for the details. I am unsatisfied with partial answers. It is why I consider following required procedures and public noticing important.

An overly developed sense of fair play can have the tendency to wane into self-righteousness if one is not careful. It is why I appreciate having experienced life from both sides as renter/landlord, employee/employer, and resident/elected official.

To compensate, as a City Council Member, I seek balance. Find the middle ground. Compromise. I am committed to doing the right thing for the people. It's what I stand for. It is what I believe in, and it is what you can believe in. I will seek for the fair play.

Please describe your business experience.

Like a lot of people, I held a variety of jobs through my school years: babysitter, camp counselor, waitress, assembly line worker, library assistant, student secretary, and college activities planner.

Professionally, I was a college Residence Hall manager and Acting Director of Residence Halls responsible for \$100,000-\$1 million budgets, as well as staff supervision and evaluation for 7 years.

Arriving in Morro Bay in the midst of a higher education hiring freeze, I balanced 4 part-time jobs, 7 days a week for a year, until I was hired full time at Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes in SLO as a tutor. After 5 years of being a commuting employee, I started my own tutoring business in Morro Bay. I have been successfully self-employed for 25 years through economic good times and down turns. Today, my academic focus is pre-algebra through statistics.

Concurrent to tutoring, I am a trustee managing a handful of rental properties.

In my role as a Morro Bay City Council Member from 2002-2010, I took responsibility for the fiduciary health of Morro Bay quite seriously. During this time, we planned for the loss of the power plant income and balanced a budget through the Recession using zero-based budgeting. With Cayucos, we initiated the process of building a new sewer plant. My institutional memory goes back further than most City employees.

My principles are hard work, service, and fiscal conservatism.

