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THE NEWCOMERS

**RENFREW'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION
DECISION 2026**

PART 3: THE NEWCOMERS

Of the ten candidates in the contest to secure six council seats later this month, three of them are political newcomers, at least as it involves running for public office.

Hayley Heaslip, Scott Miller, and Bruce Rozycki are their names, and all three carry with them substance and presence.

In fact, any one of, or all three of these candidates has/have a real shot at success, and if so, that's going to put pressure on a couple of incumbents perhaps.

The backgrounds that lay behind each of these three are impressive, and I believe there are legitimate pockets of support for them. As well, voters looking for real change — as in new brooms sweep clean kinda change — might find one or all of these three attractive enough to vote for.

Remember that we have the incumbents, other candidates with previous experience, and the newcomers. The first two groupings may be lumped together by many voters because of their incumbency or the perception of being refurbished candidates from another time. Voters looking for something completely different have an opportunity with these three to affect that type of change, if that's what they're looking for.

And let's face it, if all three of these candidates get elected, there's going to be extraordinary pressure placed on the campaigns of incumbents who may be vulnerable, especially if they're lurking around that critical sixth position in the race.

As of right now, I'm predicting that at least one of these three makes the cut, and wouldn't be surprised if it was two. I would be surprised to see all three but, again, it's possible, especially in a tight race.

HAYLEY HEASLIP

Prior to earlier this year, I had not heard the name Hayley Heaslip. But then suddenly her name seemed to be everywhere, whether it was throwing people in jail to fundraise or organizing a community-based event at Low Square or involving the Renfrew Public Library.

I covered town council pretty extensively for several months but then sort of drifted away from that coverage. That drifting happened before I had an opportunity to see Ms. Heaslip make a presentation to council as acting chair of the Renfrew Library Board, a presentation that I've since heard was very impactful.



Obviously, public service is something that runs through Heaslip, and that makes sense given her educational and business credentials. She has a business and marketing background, so I would expect her lawn signs to be among the best and genuinely crafted by real live humans.

For anyone looking to inject new life into council, Ms. Heaslip would certainly be in the mix. Her enthusiasm and level of care for her community are hard to miss. My great fear is that she gets elected and has to start being a councillor, something that may scrape some of that bubbly personality off a bit and dull the

shine for her. And to me, that would be terrible, not because of the election result, but because of the nastiness that sometimes bubbles to the top of relationships at this level. Her being ground down by politics and the town's administrative staff would be a shame to watch and I hope it doesn't happen.

As well, planning and hosting community events is important work, especially when accompanied by that level of enthusiasm. But it's a far cry from taking about Ma-Te-Way debt and ever-increasing property taxes. And it's way more fun than discussing options for the town garage, the old water treatment plant, and all the crap buried underground but left unmapped by previous generations in the engineering department. These items, and plenty more like them, can wipe the smile off anyone's face right and proper.

And finally there's the self-doubt factor that can creep into an intelligent individual who leaves a council meeting feeling stupider than when they went in. This is the kind of challenge facing Ms. Heaslip if she successfully secures a seat.

A marketing expert who now has the opportunity to market herself. It'll be worth watching.

SCOTT MILLER

Scott Miller is a funeral director and proprietor of *Pinnacle Cremation Service* here in Renfrew. Working with people every day who have suffered loss lends a man a lot of experience in dealing with people, and I don't simply mean the dead ones.

I've discovered the fact that Scott is the son of Dr. Lance Miller, a former general surgeon at Renfrew Victoria Hospital. As far as surgeons go, that's probably as cool a name as you're going to get, but I guess that's sort of a cutting remark.

Anyways, Mr. Miller has had extensive experience in all manner of endeavours, many of them outside the funeral industry. He's been on his share of boards in other jurisdictions and has served as a member on a number of governmental arms-length boards and committees. This indicates a strong background in governance, not just in the political arena but also in the business one as well.

Mr. Miller grew up in Renfrew as his father arrived in town to work at the hospital, and when an adult he found endeavours elsewhere before eventually returning to what he considers his home, that being Renfrew. And now he wants to get involved and assist with its governance.



As with the other two, this is a person of substance.

BRUCE ROZYCKI

This guy looks the part, with a calm, dignified bearing and a general disposition that comes right out of central casting, political division. His résumé is nothing short of impressive and he's been in many rooms where people have decided the fate of millions of dollars.

Mr. Rozycki had a successful career in upper management at *Enbridge Gas* and had extensive responsibilities in the engineering division. He followed that up with no fewer than

ten years as a board member of *Renfrew Hydro*, serving the last four of those years as the board chair. And along with all of that goes his membership in other parts of the community, such as I believe being a past president of the local Rotary Club among other things.



From my point of view, this is the kind of background that screams gravitas, and it may well help him across the finish line in a couple of weeks.

His campaign-dedicated Facebook page lists in detail what would be considered his platform, and

detailed it is.

Any way you look at it, Bruce Rozycki has to be considered a major candidate in this race. He appears to have a fully loaded shopping cart full of proposed actions and intentions should he be elected councillor, something that differentiates him from many of his rivals in the race.

It will be one of the more interesting storylines of election night I think, the idea of where Rozycki will slot in on the leader board.

As indicated before, I believe this candidate is a strong pick for council, so much so that he may just happen to place among the top contenders. Perhaps even the very top.