

# Sheehan: Leading by example, hard work

**Publisher's note:** *Lake Tahoe News* asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.



Kelly Sheehan is running for one of two seats on the South Tahoe PUD board.

**Name:** Kelly Sheehan

**Age:** 58

**Job/profession:** Owner/manager Steamers Bar & Grill

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** I served two terms on the St. Theresa school board, two terms St. Theresa Pastoral Council and am currently on the St Theresa Parish Finance Committee. I am currently the vice president of the board of directors at the district, as well as the board's alternate representative to the El Dorado County Water Agency.

**Why are you seeking re-election to the South Tahoe PUD board?:** I have gained so much knowledge these past four-plus years, leading me to believe I still have much to offer as a board member.

**Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:** I have no personal agenda and base my decisions on what is best for the district and its customers.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** I have been in management for most of my adult life. I have always tried to lead by example and hard work. Objectivity is one of my best traits.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure transparency. I, along with fellow board members and staff, have just completed ethics training. The district and its board are always mindful of the importance of transparency.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** The district is on a good path with the budget and long term planning. Staff has done an excellent job of prioritizing projects. It is definitely a balancing act to keep rates reasonable without ignoring the infrastructure. I would not change this direction.

**Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain:** I struggle with the \$15 minimum wage as I am in an industry where the employees receive gratuities. As a small business owner, payroll is always one of your largest expenses. Someone, most likely the consumer, is going to have to help shoulder that cost. But I am a firm believer in a fair, living wage.

**Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:** Yes, especially

for the benefit to K-12 and community college education.

**Describe three attributes for a successful board:** Respect for your fellow board members, even when you may disagree with them.

Objectivity: making decisions based upon what is best for the district and all of its customers, leaving your personal feelings and benefits aside.

Preparedness: do your homework and make informed decisions.

By the way, I feel our current board has all of the above attributes.

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** There has been such a large shift between the benefits of public and private sector employees in the last 40 years for multiple reasons. I feel the most important thing about public employee benefits is that they don't become an unfunded liability.

**Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff:** This something that is done for various reasons, most importantly efficiency and cost effectiveness. I have no problem with this practice as long as those are the factors considered.

**What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?:** To continue to provide clean and safe drinking water, as well as environmentally responsible wastewater collection, treatment, and export for our community in a financially responsible manner.

**What as an elected official are the three things you are most proud of during your tenure?:** I don't know that I can name three specific things. But, I know that I have strived to handle myself in a gracious and adult manner even when being publicly criticized for decisions I have made. This was hard for me. By nature, I tend to be a people pleaser, I want everyone to be happy. But I know that cannot always be the case. I have based every decision made since being a

board member on fact and the good of the district and its customers, whom I represent. I have never made a decision based on what would be easiest and most beneficial for myself.

**Which votes would you change and why?:** I would not change a vote.

**Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?:** I will continue to listen and be prepared, I will respect my fellow board members' opinions, while ultimately basing my decisions on fact, the good of the district and its customers.

**What should be the three main priorities for the board?:** 1.) Provide clean and safe drinking water.  
2.) Provide environmentally responsible wastewater collection, treatment, and export.  
3.) Make sure our infrastructure is able to provide protection against the devastation of forest fires.  
Further to achieve all of the above in a fiscally responsible manner.

**How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?:** As I have said before, this is a balancing act. We need to be sensitive to our local economy, but realize the infrastructure ages regardless. We can't ignore the infrastructure. But, we need to explore every funding source, such as state and federal grants in an effort to keep our rates affordable.

**STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?:** It takes a significant responsibility and skill to maintain the district's systems, especially in Lake Tahoe's sensitive environment. We need to be able to attract and maintain a skilled work force. This is not to say that we should not ask for exceptional performance in return for one of the best

local public compensation packages.

**When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?:** I think they are bit high. I would like to see the board do some research and perhaps consider more affordable options.

**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:** I am actually quite shy. Speaking in public is hard for me. I tend to get tongue tied around people I do not know and am not comfortable with. Once I do feel comfortable though, this all changes.