**Sarah Schroeder: Schroeder:** (00:01): I'm **Sarah Schroeder:** Schroeder. I grew up in Spring Grove, right here, where I live now. I'm the mayor of Spring Grove. I work at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. In my non-mayor time, my full-time job is graphic designer. I was on city council for four years and took a four-year break. And then I ran for mayor in 2014.

**Sarah Schroeder: Schroeder:** (00:36): I was producing a play and producers kind of figure out everything that's not happening on stage. If they need something, they figure it out. So we needed playground equipment for our production of Grease. And I had to go to a Park and Rec meeting to ask if we could get the slides that they were going to get rid of in the park, because they were dangerous and they had to remove them. So, I sat through a Park and Rec meeting for very long time.

**Sarah Schroeder: Schroeder:** (01:03): And I ended up getting into an argument with the city administrator at the time about the prices of the new swimming pool. And after the meeting, we got the playground equipment most importantly. And after the meeting, he stopped me and said, "You know, you should consider running for city council." After I'd argued with him about something. He was thinking this punk 24-year-old kid is, probably should be on city government. And I was like, "I don't know."

**Sarah Schroeder: Schroeder:** (01:32): And I thought about it and thought about it. And another friend of mine, Steve Kemp, called me and said he was considering running. And I said, "Well, I'll run if you run." And unfortunately, I won and he didn't. So then I served for four years and I kind of, it was tough. I mean, it was not, there was a person on the city council that I fought with all the time and it was... And I just said, "I'm done. I'm not doing this again."

**Sarah Schroeder:** (02:04): Well, I [inaudible 00:02:06] kind of bit and I quit and I wanted to get back involved. And I kind of like to be in charge. So I thought, if I'm going to do this again, I want to be running the meeting. I want to be in charge. I want to help steer the ship. Group of people, we were all talking about who should we talk into running for council? Because we didn't like the way the council was going.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (02:32): So I said, "Now I can maybe do it. I've been thinking about doing it again." And he said, "No offense, but I think it'd be easier to get a man elected." And that was it. When he said... A good friend of mine, good friend. I said, "That's yeah, no, I'm running. Thanks."

**Sarah Schroeder:** (02:55): If I may say just as a personal thing, anytime anyone's ever told me that a girl can't do that, I did that. It's nothing like hearing that girls don't do that to make a girl want to do that.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (03:09): But, I really do think that a 25-year-old, or when I was councilor, a 33-year-old would have probably not gotten elected, female, let me be clear, would have maybe not gotten elected if I wasn't from here. I don't know whether that's a good or a bad thing.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (03:23): I think being active in a lot of nonprofits was a huge help, because a lot of people know me. And, this is probably going to sound silly, but my mom is a beautician and her beauty shop is attached our house where I grew up. I like to joke that I have like 30 grandmas because every little old lady that got her hair done since I was a little kid knows me. And of course they're going to vote for me.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (03:47): I actually, the first time I ran for mayor, I put Holland in parentheses so people would know who I was because I was pretty recently married. And I was like, people are going to see my name on the ballot and not know who Sarah Schroeder is.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (04:01): I think Spring Grove used to be way more about what your last name was. When I was a kid, little kid, I felt like there was much more to, if you're not this name, this name or this name, your opinion doesn't matter. And I feel like that has, for the most part disappeared, the Holland family is not one of those families. You know what I mean? My parents were not super active and stuff. My grandparents weren't, we were not one of those important families, air quotes. That was super great that I just did that.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (04:33): I would door knock and people would be like, "So what do you want to do?" I don't know. I just want to do something. So I think that was a refreshing thing for people to hear. My husband and I don't have kids. We're not going to, but I still don't want Spring Grove to fall apart when I'm dead. I want the legacy of this great little town to keep going.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (04:54): I think I mentioned before I'm publicly, obviously a Democrat to everyone that knows me. I have been for as long as I knew what a Democrat was. And I think that scares some people, some more conservative people, that I'm the mayor and I'm a Democrat. But I try to always say that the two have nothing to do with each other. Partisan politics doesn't apply in the same way to city government, or even county government, as it does state and nationally. But I think now that I've been there for a while, the people that were nervous about a lady Democrat, a young lady Democrat... I don't know how much longer I get to say young, but I'm going to go with it. The people that were nervous about that have kind of gotten over it, because you end up getting along with people you never thought you would.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (05:40): Two years ago we were approached to put a Veterans Memorial in the park. Who's going to be against a memorial to veterans? Well, it turns out there was some people. Not so much against the idea of a memorial, but the location that they wanted to be in. And that was one of the more controversial things I've dealt. That made some interesting relationships happen. Some people I know that are extremely conservative, who know I'm extremely liberal, we became allies in that because they're veterans and they wanted to see it happen. We would joke with each other that it was so funny that we were on the same side of any issue.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (06:20): In my first term, I was asked to give a resolution of support of the ban on frac sand mining. And I stupidly said, "Sure, I don't want frac sand mining. That's terrible." Because I knew about frac sand, like what they do with it. And I said, "Yeah, that's a great idea. We should do that." And I didn't... Huge mistake. I didn't research it. I didn't talk to anybody. We just voted on it right then and there because a council member brought it up. And then I got a call from a good friend of mine, friend of mine's dad. And I've always respected him. He's a super smart guy. He lives in the country. So he knows more about this stuff than I do. He called me and he said, "**Sarah Schroeder:**, I see in the paper that the city council voted to support our frac sand mine ban."

**Sarah Schroeder:** (07:10): And we talked on the phone for maybe 10 minutes of him explaining to me what that actually meant. And this goes back to what I said before of, if you actually know the details of an issue you can easily change your mind. And what Dan explained to me was, there's no such thing as frac sand, it's silica sand mining, and you use silica sand for a lot of things other than fracking. And a lot of those things are necessary to farmers. He said, "Basically what we're trying to do is make the ordinance so you can't have a mine that's big enough to make it worth it for the fracking companies to come there. And that's how we're trying to regulate it."

**Sarah Schroeder:** (07:47): This is going to sound stupid but I'm saying it. It reminded me of when I was on council the first time. We had written a chicken ordinance that you could have chickens in town. And basically we made it so it would be really hard unless you had a really big yard because we didn't want to bother people's neighbors. And it was kind of a thing where, yep, we allow chickens, but you've got a really big yard so they're not... And they've got to be far away from the borders. So nobody ended up getting chickens. One person did. They moved away a couple of years later.

**Sarah Schroeder:** (08:18): I think the fact that I am younger and I am out more out in public, I think people are more interested in what's going on in city government than if I were a 50-year-old man that didn't go out as much. And I should say Spring Grove's had a lot of female mayors. So, go Spring Grove. I frequently get introduced as the mayor and people are surprised. And I always want to ask them, are you surprised because I'm younger, because I'm female, or because I don't dress very nice. What are the reasons that you're surprised? Because I know there's a lot of them. I wore makeup for this and I haven't worn makeup in a month. For anything. I'm not your typical anything, I don't think, but I do care about Spring Grove and I don't care about my appearance. I remember my first couple of meetings I dressed nicer than I normally do. And by the third meeting, I said, "You know what? They elected a hooded sweatshirt mayor. They're getting a hooded sweatshirt mayor. I'm sick of this."

**Sarah Schroeder:** (09:25): I think you have to be authentic to get elected. I don't think that, at least around here, if you're a polished shaking-hands and kissing-babies kind of politician, people see through that and they don't like it. If I were to start going to sporting events all the time, people would be annoyed because I don't like sports and they know that. The fact that we're a small town in a small county, everybody kind of knows everybody. So they know you, but they know you in a different context. You're not the mayor to them, you're their friend or you're the person they see at the grocery store or whatever. And being a mayor is not a full-time job. My life is about so much more than that. So I know people through a lot of other things that it's not even a thing that I am the mayor. I'm just their friend or person that works with them at the Opera House or whatever I am to them.