

League of Women Voters McLean County and WGLT Voter Guide

Prepared for the April 2, 2019 Election



About the Voter Guide

In partnership with WGLT, the League of Women Voters McLean County presents the 2019 Voter Guide. This guide gives you a look into the viewpoints of candidates running for office.

Candidate Responses

We sent questions to candidates in the following races:

Town of Normal

[Alex Campbell](#)

[Kathleen Lorenz](#)

[R.C. McBride](#)

Stan Nord (Did not respond)

[Dave Shields](#)

[Karyn Smith](#)

[Joel Studebaker](#)

[Pat Turner](#)

City of Bloomington

[Ward 2: Donna Boelen](#)

[Ward 2: Georgene Chissell](#)

Ward 4: Julie Emig (Did not respond)

[Ward 4: Don "Chip" Frank](#)

[Ward 6: Jenn Carrillo](#)

[Ward 6: Karen Schmidt](#)

[Ward 8: Jeff Crabill](#)

Ward 8: Travis Wilson (Did not respond)

Town of Normal Public Library

[6-Year Term: Erin Ripley-Gataric](#)

[6-Year Term: James Rogal](#)

[6-year Term: Katelyn Trunnell](#)

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[4-Year Term: JD Davis](#)

[2-Year Term: Walter Lindberg](#)

Heartland Community College District #540

6-Year Term: Jeffrey Flessner (Did not respond)

[6-Year Term: Janet Hood](#)

[6-Year Term: Thomas J. Whitt](#)

[2-Year Term: Lupe Diaz](#)

2-Year Term: Patrick Hardesty (Did not respond)

Unit 5 School Board

[2-Year Term: Meta Mickens-Baker](#)

[2-Year Term: Michael E. Trask](#)

[4-Year Term: LaNell Greenberg](#)

[4-Year Term: Barry Hitchins](#)

[4-Year Term: Alan Kalitzky](#)

[4-Year Term: Kelly Pyle](#)

[4-Year Term: Amy Roser](#)

District 87 School Board

James Almeda (Did not respond)

Tammy Houtzel (Did not respond)

Mark S. Wylie (Did not respond)

Resources

This Voter Guide includes information for races in Normal and Bloomington For additional voting resources and [races in McLean County](#), visit the [McLean County Clerk's website](#). Bloomington residents can visit the [Bloomington Election Commission website](#).

Alex Campbell - Normal Town Council

Email: alexfornormal@gmail.com

What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I am a Junior at Illinois State University and I am studying Integrated Marketing Communications and Political Science. Over the past 3 years I have spent time slowly becoming more and more involved on campus and in Normal. I have been a mentee and a mentor at ISU, have planned and implemented inclusive events on and off campus, and I have advocated for students' rights. My most applicable experience has been working in Student Government at ISU over the past year. I have lead the "you'll be fine, wait to sign" initiative to push back open leasing dates, I have advocated for the implementation of the recycling ordinance, and I have written legislation to try and expand inclusivity at ISU. Through my involvement, I have learned a lot about leading and about myself. I now know that it is best to lead by example and that I am a very quick learner. I work extremely hard to accomplish goals when I see the possibility of bettering lives.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

I love Uptown. The area is a great social setting, a place to de-stress, has great food options, and has a phenomenal atmosphere. However, I think we should slow down some of the development in Uptown. The area is pretty updated and aesthetically pleasing. I think there are other areas of Normal that would benefit from building new office buildings and receiving money for improved infrastructure. While Uptown is great, it is great because we like it in its current state. Let's hope that we can enjoy this Uptown for a while before we need to adjust to a new one.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions? If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

I think that incentives (especially tax incentives) are a great and powerful tool. However, it needs to be used effectively. Priority for tax incentives should always be given to companies that appear to offer long-term, sustainable job opportunities.

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

Social programs and services are essential to local government practices. We need to take care of our most vulnerable citizens over anything else. Taxes are essentially the government and the people investing in their community and in the future of their community. Not everyone is fortunate enough to be able to take care of themselves. When people fall short, their government should be able to step up and assist them in getting back on their feet. In challenging budget situations, I would always look to put citizens' needs over the Town's needs.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

We need to start by adding a civilians' review board. Bloomington and Normal worked with very similar groups to try and pass this about a year ago and Bloomington was successful where Normal was not. There is a large policy force in Normal (not to mention ISU PD to add to that) and there needs to be a check and balance to that. Civilians' companies (against law enforcement or otherwise) are extremely important. A government is there to listen to and better the lives of the people that elected their officials. This starts and ends by giving everyone the opportunity and the platform to discuss their issues.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The town needs to move towards more local development. There are smaller development companies that want to do business here but we keep outsourcing these jobs to bigger, outside companies. We need to keep construction jobs and money within the town. Also, we need more pro-labor developers and maintenance companies. The town desperately needs folks that are specifically trained to fix certain issues to be involved in development and maintenance. This would greatly improve life for folks within their places of residence. The town also needs more mixed income housing. I would like to see more variety in places to live. We need more options in between student housing and owning a \$300,000 home.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

The more staff for the Town, the better. The council and even the Mayor are part-time positions. They can't solve every problem nor be responsible for every piece of information within the town. These two positions could have a great impact on the town. Having staff members that are directly in charge of these specific tasks would ensure that they are always at the forefront of conversations and decisions that the Town makes.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

Yes and yes. Either one would be fine with me. I don't see a ton of problem with the current location of the library. However, I do recognize that to have a large expansion they would portably need another plot of land. The Normal Public Library offers a lot to the community and its members. The amount of resources (after-school programs, literacy programs, book clubs, events, etc.) that they offer is just incredible. Libraries are the types of establishments that hold together successful towns.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

I think that Normal is about a decade behind on a multisport complex. There are so many other projects (like the library) that could use the money that would have a much greater impact on the community. I do think that a multisport complex could bring in a decent amount of tourism money. However, I don't think we should offer up too much. Land needs to be the first priority in a project like this. If we can't find a large enough space to build this complex in then we should just stop there.

Kathleen Lorenz - Normal Town Council

Email: ktlorenz18@gmail.com

What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I hold a Bachelor's of Science in Industrial Engineering from Purdue and a Master's in Business Administration from Illinois State University. Purdue taught me to think critically and creatively to solve problems, and the ISU MBA program taught me to dig into the facts of a case. Because of this, I am that geeky person who loves digging into our council packets every two weeks. I love the breadth of topics we have to cover, and I thrive on the challenge to study them and make the best decisions.

My early professional career included assignments as a management engineer and process improvement analyst. Over my career I have held roles that have ranged from manager of people, manager of customer service, and internal consultant for process improvement. More recently, I branched out into not for profit work, and I have also done some external consulting. A common thread through all of these assignments is to find the best way to do something, and very often, creative ways to do more with less.

Prior to serving on Council I served from 2004-2008 on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and then from 2008-2015 on Planning Commission. I firmly believe that both of those appointments readied me to take the leap to the Council in 2015, and shortened my learning curve in the transition to being a Council member.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

I am impressed with the transformation of our Uptown business district, in terms of the improved value of the property, the improved quality of life for residents, and the synergy it provides to our university neighbors. I favor policies that will continue to attract developers to make strategic investments in Uptown, particularly for commercial-office space and residential units, both of which would shore up the investments already made in the retail and hospitality sector. While I am glad that we have begun envisioning plans for development south of the tracks, at this time I favor pumping the breaks a bit on the underpass project. I am concerned about undertaking such a large project that in all likelihood would require matching local funds. I would rather see

development south of the tracks drive the need for a connecting underpass, not the other way around.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions? If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

The goal of incentives is to achieve economic growth in our community, which in turn increases the tax base and the overall wealth of the community. In other words, incentives help to attract opportunities to grow our community, that otherwise would not happen. The government plays only a supporting role in this process, insofar as adopting policies that create the fertile ground for such investments.

It takes several players to make the economy work: government to lay the groundwork, developers to seize opportunities to develop property, banks to be willing to finance projects, businesses and people willing to locate here, and of course the consumer. The incentives are just a piece of the entire package that help make a project turn into a positive economic impact for a community. Not all projects need incentives, and all incentives should be closely tied to metrics (such as total investment, types and number of jobs, etc.) that will improve the wealth of the community.

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

Our first approach can't be to raise taxes and fees – not during these unsteady times of our community and state. I don't mean to sell fear, but there is unsteadiness now as we adjust to significant changes in our local employer base (2016 closure of Mitsubishi, 2016-present reorganization at State Farm). I believe we will cycle back to steadier times, and it may not be that far off – if Rivian starts pumping out cars by 2021, Brandt settles into a full workforce, and homegrown businesses like Destihl can successfully mature. These are all promising signals for our local economy; but in the meantime, we may need to pump the breaks on some things and make some tough choices.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

The Town needs to be actively working on a pension funding strategy and a budget cost reduction plan to position itself for the soundest fiscal position possible. The Town also should further develop policies for equitable and diverse housing stock, based on strategies laid out in the housing portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

I am for improving the affordability of housing in Normal, through increased diversity and accessibility. We are not very diverse in our housing stock in our community. One could argue that we have an overabundance of larger single-family homes, and yet not enough smaller, affordable housing for ownership and/or non-student rental properties. It is the Council's role to set policy towards achieving more equitable and diverse housing, and we have taken initial steps towards this with the housing study portion of the Comprehensive Plan. I would like to help shape policies that create a fertile environment for developers to want to build in our town in a way that is consistent with our current and anticipated housing needs, and to work with our real estate partners such as banks, builders, and property management companies to make sure that we're all working towards this common goal.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

The expertise of a communications manager would be helpful; however, I will need assurances from staff that we have the bandwidth in our "checking account" (aka General Fund) to afford a full-time role of this type right now. Without such assurances, we may need to defer on filling this position right now. As for economic development expertise, we do need stronger, more robust and better coordinated economic development leadership for this community (Bloomington, Normal and McLean County). Until we get on better footing there, I favor the town retaining access to some form of economic development expertise.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

Libraries are still relevant, as evidenced by the growth in outreach, technology and programming that Brian and his staff are planning for 2019.

It is very impressive how Brian Chase and his staff continue to squeeze the maximum efficiency/value out of their existing facilities, and even thinking "out of the box" to go outside their library facilities with various outreach programs -- Ex: Curb It curbside pickup program, a

bigger emphasis on home deliveries and more Books on the Go pop-up libraries. Brian Chase and his staff should be commended for thinking innovatively and doing more with less when resources are constrained.

As for a new library, I favor giving the library foundation time to fundraise from the private sector. The more our private sector is involved we can be sure that the residents are speaking for what they want.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

I haven't made up my mind, but I do think it's worth looking into this project as an economic development opportunity that leverages our central location. Venues like these in other communities, have proven to have significant economic impact in terms of sales, hotel, and gas tax revenue. The top risk of this project is the investment, and who takes that risk. I think the questions that we must honestly ask ourselves as the review is conducted are: where is the funding to build it going to come from? Is it sustainable to operate? Does it make sense for our community as a good "fit"? We've seen some entertainment venues in our community work better (e.g. softball, festivals) than others (e.g. Arena, semi-professional teams). We need to carefully assess how this opportunity and this venue compares.

R.C. McBride - Normal Town Council

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I've served nearly four years on the Town Council and was a member of the planning commission for nine years before that. I've volunteered for and worked with a number of not-for-profits, currently run a successful nonprofit entity in my day job, and have a communications background. All of that experience has honed my listening skills and taught me the importance of building buy-in and reaching consensus when planning for the future, meeting challenges head on, and making tough decisions.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

Uptown is an obvious success by any measurable standard: it has recreated a vibrant city center, created a communal gathering place, attracted private investment, enhanced ISU student recruitment, and when the TIF expires, its added value will greatly increase the amount of property tax revenue available to all local taxing bodies - especially Unit 5 schools.

I'm excited about Uptown's future. I'd encourage everyone to go to normal.org and read the revised Uptown plan the council adopted in 2017. There's wonderful opportunity for equitable housing, office and retail space, a park, and a new library, all within walking distance of transportation and other amenities. It will take another 15-20 years and a lot of hard work to get there. We'll have to invest responsibly and in a way that doesn't take resources away from the rest of Normal, but that investment in our community is worth it, both from a quality of life and from a financial perspective.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

These opportunities are, as they should be, reviewed case by case to ensure maximum community benefit. Many solicitations are rejected at the staff level because it's apparent they wouldn't bring that benefit and therefore don't warrant the staff work or council discussion.

When incentives are being considered, we always work with the other impacted governmental units. Questions to be answered include: how does this fit in with the adopted comprehensive

plans or other relevant master plans? How will the community stand to benefit? What's the financial risk to taxpayers and stakeholders? What are other potential impacts, positive and negative?

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

We went through a tough budget cycle last year and worked together as a council with department heads to come up with ideas, but in the end it was council that had to make tough decisions. Being able to make those tough calls is an important, if unpleasant, part of the job, and I have a track record of making reasoned, difficult decisions. The bottom line is allocating resources for quality core services and the staff and infrastructure to deliver them is job one.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

A big part of the job is listening, and the council and staff don't have a monopoly on good ideas. In fact, some of our recent accomplishments, such as the Welcoming Cities Ordinance and the Multifamily Recycling Ordinance stem directly from listening to constituents and their concerns.

This is also a matter of getting to work on the initiatives we've already been planning for. The Town's new comprehensive plan lays out 20 years worth of goals and actions in areas pertaining to housing, technology, economic vitality, health, sustainability, inclusion, infrastructure, public safety, and more. We need to get to work because the pace of change isn't waiting for us.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

This is for many an invisible issue in our county - unless you or someone you know is living it. The Town can be a facilitator, and we must do a better job working with builders to ensure housing diversity. This can't be achieved overnight. The continued implementation of the Town's comprehensive plan is a good start but it can't be the whole of our efforts.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

Both those positions were eliminated during last year's budget reductions in large part because the people in them were approaching retirement.

Communications should be viewed as a service to the community; people have a right to know what their government is doing, and we no longer live in an age where a newspaper beat reporter is hanging around city hall every day to pick up what's happening. I've long been an advocate for transparency and walk the walk in my own life. Still, the Town needs to do better, though we're far from alone in grappling with this issue.

As for economic development, this is somewhat dependent on what happens with the EDC, but there's no question McLean County can no longer take economic growth for granted. We need to be aggressive promoting ourselves. Recent successes with Rivian and Brandt can help us tell that story.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

I commend all the legwork of our library board and its director and staff on this issue. The data shows there's not much cost difference between expanding the current site or building on a new site Uptown south of the railroad tracks. The data also indicates there's a need for more library programming than the current space can meet. My preference would be to building south of the tracks, but we need to work to find a revenue stream to pay for construction.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

It will be a challenge to put a package together to responsibly pay for it. Unfortunately, you don't always have the money to invest in every good opportunity. That said, a multisports complex represents a very good economic development opportunity, and it's one with a relatively quick conversion timeline. We're uniquely positioned to bring people to our community for youth sports, and those people will spend money locally to everyone's benefit.

Dave Shields - Normal Town Council

Email: tall.dave@outlook.com

What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I love this community and am proud to call Normal home. I have given back and made an effort to get involved at every opportunity, starting over twenty years ago.

My involvement in local politics began after both Normal and Bloomington voted against adding 'sexual orientation' to their non-discrimination ordinances. I recognized that part of our community was not being represented. I worked with LGBTQ friends to form the Advocacy Council for Human Rights, which is now Prairie Pride Coalition. I later founded the Pride employee resource group at State Farm. Whether on the Town Council or not, I will continue to be a part of the effort to make Normal a welcoming and inclusive community.

As a member of the arts community, I've performed, accompanied, and produced dozens of local shows, leading to serving on Community Players Board of Directors. My role with community players has allowed me to understand the importance of supporting and protecting the arts in Normal.

I also served on the Normal 2040 Vision Committee, whose work created the current version of the current Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan and I am currently on the Normal Planning Commission. We are working to put the plan into effect, moving important projects and the town forward.

I want to serve on the Normal Town Council because I am prepared for the position, enjoy working alongside others who share common goals and am willing to make the personal investment in this community to see those goals turn into reality.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

The development of Uptown Normal began with a group of people who 20 years ago believed in the potential of Uptown. They worked together to create what is now a vibrant, iconic, award-winning staple of Normal.

This project was a result of the work of the community members who participated in the 2020 Vision work. The destination adds definition to the town's character. The circle in particular is environmentally sensitive and aesthetically attractive. I'm proud that I was a part of thinking about the town's next 20 years as part of the 2040 Vision Committee.

The trail east project has the potential to further Normal's economic progress by bringing in additional jobs and foot traffic to local businesses.

I currently favor the idea of relocating the library to the south side of the train tracks and creating an underpass connection between the Circle area and the 2.0 area. I believe the infusion of new workers in the Trail East building will attract small service/support business and entrepreneurs to the area. The thoughtful consideration of housing options must continue in future projects, and I look forward to being a part of that discussion. All of our residents deserve affordable housing options, which would allow them to capitalize on the opportunities provided by this extremely resourceful community.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions? If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

Incentives are tools that need to be used with care. I like to think of these incentives similar to businesses that offer discounts to customers or a bank that offers rewards cards. They are strategic programs meant to enable further growth, which benefits our town and local businesses, just like a discount helps a customer receive savings while continuing to support a business they love.

Incentives are not handouts or corporate welfare. The town doesn't write multi-million dollar checks to developers. Just as individual consumers spend their money and align with businesses which best attract and retain their loyalty, so goes the business-government relationship.

And while each economic incentive opportunity is examined on its own merits, my criteria for decision making are:

- 1) Does it make financial sense for the town?
- 2) Will there be lasting and long-term benefit to Normal and its residents?
- 3) Will the opportunity be lost for good without the incentive?

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

We need to make tough decisions in order to guarantee our core services -- water, sewer, infrastructure, public safety, and health. These should be given priority in the case of a challenging budget situation.

I would also place priority on debt obligations, including pensions. The town just faced such a situation and responded by making tough cuts and a conservative five-year budget. This move has already yielded positive results.

I do not advocate for spending more than we need to without clear explanations of why no other alternative exists, or the benefits we will receive for doing so.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

To assist our small businesses in navigating the new state minimum wage, the town should investigate the feasibility of providing tax rebates. This initiative would be aimed at reducing the additional pressure these minimums could place on these businesses, allowing them to continue to grow and serve our community.

We can also do a better job of celebrating and supporting entrepreneurship by providing an incubator or innovation center that will inspire more creativity and future business opportunities. I see this effort complimenting Rivian, Brandt, and other companies that have come and invested in Normal as a pro-business town.

Champions of public art have surfaced to defend the mural in Uptown. This is a great sign that our community values and can benefit from art. Our town covers 18 square miles and has 19 parks, we can build on these opportunities for creative minds and artists. I believe Normal can become recognized for its commitment to creating a sense of place through art, a destination and example for others to come see how it's done.

Take the Water Treatment Plant, for example. Unlike the mural, it's probably not going anywhere. Engaged people and the town should surely be able to work together and conceive it as an iconic photo opportunity, perhaps in partnership with Illinois Arts Station. Welders, woodworkers, and students could design and install fencing which is both functional and an attraction. It's a gateway to Uptown, and in my opinion, it should be made into something inviting.

Another initiative we should pursue is facilitating collaboration between students at Illinois State University and our great local small businesses. There are thousands of capable and enthusiastic students who can assist businesses and starting and growing while learning lessons that they can apply in their future careers.

I would also like to see more working groups of engaged citizens be formed to direct their energy to immediate, or chronic, issues and opportunities, along the lines of the Vision 2040 committee.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

Providing affordable housing options for all residents is an important and complicated issue, and one we need to all work together on to solve. This was a focus of the 2040 Vision Committee that I served on, and a key component of the comprehensive plan.

We need more information to analyze and tackle this matter. I would like to see an in-depth analysis of household incomes, and compare it to an analysis of the prices of our current housing stock and rental spaces. Where there's disparity, there's opportunity. I believe off-campus student rental housing would need to be integrated into this study in order to get a full picture of how housing is affecting our college-aged community members.

I support the three strategies on housing outlined in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

1. Ensure that new housing development and redevelopment contribute to a complete, compact, and connected community;
2. Preserve and improve the existing housing stock;
3. Guarantee access to high-quality supportive and affordable housing options.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

From what's going on behind the scenes of local small businesses to our rich history -- Normal has a great story to tell, and that story needs to be told. Communicating where our town is, where it's headed, and the truth about what is going on behind the scenes will help current and potential residents and businesses connect on a greater level with the town and see the promise that Normal offers.

I believe that with the truth of what is going on, the state of our town, and our future prospects, nearly every citizen would be able to see that we are indeed headed in the right direction. A full-time communications manager should lead the education of people on the facts and particulars, and help us avoid ongoing conflicts and misinformation being spread.

Normal absolutely needs someone advocating on its behalf. Someone who is selling the specific benefits of the community and ensuring a place at the table of any discussion with potential businesses and industry. However, I'm less certain at the moment about the need for a full-time economic development coordinator. There are several local and regional entities which focus on economic development, and there needs to be more clarity as to what pieces of the puzzle each own, and therefore what is still needed.

Assuming that the town did have both positions, they would need to work together. By concentrating on getting higher percentages of ISU and Heartland graduates to stay in Normal and apply their experience, education, and talents here, these positions could have a significant positive impact in a short amount of time.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

I support the construction of a new building. The library is a phenomenal modern resource with a staff that does extraordinary work in an environment that is outgrown. Libraries today are so much more than book warehouses and we need a facility that reflects that. I believe that the construction of a new building can serve as the anchor of Uptown 2.0.

What the Normal Library staff does currently is beyond impressive in providing the most extensive array of resources and services possible. If they had a facility that was built with current demands and future expansion in mind, they would strengthen and further their function as a vital component of the town's infrastructure.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

The current proposal is not a favorable one for Normal. My understanding is that it would not currently generate enough revenue to sustain itself. Towns would need to provide ongoing financial support.

Although the Grossinger Motors Arena, once the Coliseum, is useful, it has fallen short of financial expectations. I do not want the community to find itself in another similar situation, and I do not support Normal undertaking the multisport complex development on its own.

I am, however, in support of exploring future developments through a short-term volunteer group that would conduct analysis and offer recommendations. This committee could determine if there is a model that would benefit the community and be financially viable for the region.

Karyn Smith - Normal Town Council

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have a strong financial background. I graduated with an MBA with a concentration in accounting, worked professionally to provide financial feasibility studies to diverse clients, provided financial planning services to individuals and businesses, and have taught accounting at the college level since 2006.

My family responsibilities have prevented me from serving in local government until now when my youngest child is graduating high school. Throughout Bella's and Carlos' school years, I have been a tireless advocate for them to ensure that they received educational services appropriate to their needs. I can bring that persistence to my work on the council to work tirelessly for local citizens to have their voices represented as the town carries out its plans for the future.

As for actual government experience, I did serve as treasurer when Frank McCloskey first ran for U.S. Congress for Indiana's 8th district in 1982.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

I think the completed Uptown development has enhanced the town. I am concerned that vacancies exist in the retail space in Uptown One and the street level of the garage adjacent to Heartland Bank, and that the residential apartments in Uptown One are not at full occupancy. [Did the building at the corner of College and Linden ever find a tenant to replace the Cosi restaurant that vacated that space several years ago or should that space also be listed as vacant and included in this inventory of underutilized commercial space in Uptown Normal?] I would like to pause further progress on the Trail East project until an audit of these completed projects is done to compare their original feasibility projections to the actual costs at completion and current operating results. My concern is that the forecasts used to support these projects were overly optimistic and that the assumptions used to support the Trail East project may also be overly optimistic. I also question why Normal is moving forward on additional commercial space while these completed buildings have vacancies. Until a financial audit can confirm that the feasibility studies are solid even under adverse economic conditions, I think additional Uptown development should be paused.

I am also frustrated that the Town Council appears to be oblivious to opposition to the focus on Uptown Development. Town Council meetings are conducted in a very efficient manner, but too often, it appears to me that the majority of decisions are made in advance of the meeting. Reports are posted on-line and only cursory summaries are provided at the Council meetings. Seldom are notices provided before the meeting to alert citizens of links where a complete report can be accessed. Normal does not host town hall meetings to provide ordinary citizens an opportunity have a complete presentation delivered on studies and plans that become part of the Town Council agenda. I would like to see Normal provide an opportunity to receive e-mail alerts about reports and council agenda items in advance of Council meetings. I have begun receiving this information since becoming a candidate, but I believe the town should provide this opportunity to any citizen who wants to be informed of local government activities.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions? If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

My first preference is that government NOT get involved in business incentives. If a business cannot survive without these incentives, I question whether that is a sound business. If it is desirable to attract a new business to our community, I agree with Stan Nord on this matter: government incentives should be reserved for businesses that bring in revenue dollars from customers who live outside our local community and those businesses are not simply cannibalizing existing businesses in Normal, Bloomington, or McLean County. Too often, we are competing with our neighbors rather than working together for the greater good of our communities. When our first instinct is to offer an incentive, I think we downplay the resources we do have as a very livable, family-friendly community.

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

I would like to focus attention on the town's balance sheet --- what assets does the town own and are we receiving market rate compensation for those properties? Are any properties sitting vacant that could be marketed to tenants for rental income or sold to private owners? Are tax assessments consistent for individuals and businesses? One idea I would like to propose is an audit of properties adjacent to the Constitution Trail. I have discovered that my own home does NOT include the easement adjacent to the Trail and neither do three of the ten lots surrounding

me. If Normal could develop a systematic proposal to sell these easements to property owners, this would bring new dollars into Normal's treasury and increase the tax base. This could decrease the town's maintenance expenses as Normal would no longer have responsibility to service the easement properties that are transferred to private owners.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

I would like to see Normal make a new Normal library a higher priority. This resource serves a majority of town residents over Uptown businesses.

I would also like to see Normal, Bloomington, and McLean County open discussions with State Farm about the possibility of State Farm transferring the State Farm recreational park to our community. State Farm is getting push back from its other hubs over providing this perk to employees at corporate headquarters and nothing comparable for employees at these other locations. Since State Farm has downsized, they have had to tighten security at the gate to ensure that only current employees are entering the park. With these challenges, State Farm might be open to parting with this property. The park has a wonderful water area, mini-golf, ball fields, tennis and volleyball courts, soccer fields, ball diamonds, and playground and picnic areas. This could become a regional attraction for a larger number of local residents compared to the proposed soccer development.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

Normal should provide support and assistance within existing federal and state grant programs to build new housing and rehab existing structures to make it available to residents seeking affordable housing. As ISU is now considering developing new on-campus housing, more units may become available off-campus for non-student use. Recent projections speculated that rental housing might experience occupancy rates of 85% or lower.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

I do believe that the town needs a full-time communications manager to assist in connecting with local citizens about government reports, council agenda information, and town initiatives.

The economic development coordinator should focus on finding tenants for the vacant commercial space in completed Uptown developments.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

I do support the construction of a new, larger Normal Public Library. A library is a valuable community resource. It provides a central gathering place for sharing books, media, and meeting spaces. I think this project has a larger audience than either Uptown development or the soccer complex that has been discussed.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

No. This development serves a small minority of local citizens who participate in this sport. I am concerned that this would become another Coliseum that would continually operate at a loss. [I have also heard that the primary attraction of this project is its potential to attract visitors to local hotels that are experiencing occupancy challenges.]

If we are able to obtain the State Farm recreational park, I think this park could provide the practice fields to replace the airport area fields. I don't see the need to develop a multisport complex.

Joel Studebaker - Normal Town Council

Email: joel@joelstudebaker.com

What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I've lived in Normal for ten years. In that time I've been a teacher, a project manager, and instructional designer. I've worked in public schools, been self-employed, and joined two startups. I've worked from home, commuted to Bloomington, and commuted to Chicago.

In those same ten years I've been a student and I've graduated. I've been a volunteer and a member of the Normal Public Library Board.

I've also been unemployed, and I've worked minimum wage restaurant jobs to get by. I've had some great times and great opportunities -- I've also cashed out my retirement savings early so I could pay to have my electricity and water turned back on.

Mostly, I hope that the ideas I bring to the table speak for themselves. I'm proud to say that I have succeeded and struggled in this community, and I believe that gives me valuable perspective. But no resume or personal experience can compensate for a deficit in values and ideas, and that's how I hope voters will judge me as a candidate.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

Uptown has been heavily discussed, so I'll keep this simple.

Updates to infrastructure, like new roads and Uptown Circle, have been good. Subsidies for luxury apartments overlooking Uptown Circle are bad.

Investment in our historic theater and facades for old buildings has been great. New developments like Uptown Crossing (CVS) and One Uptown on the Circle detract from that charm.

The Children's Discovery Museum and Uptown Station are amazing public assets. Meanwhile, the decision to sell land adjacent to the library (now Heartland Bank) was detrimental.

Moving forward, I'm concerned about who will be left out. I'm concerned that local businesses won't be able to afford Uptown rents. I'm worried that the loss of convenient parking will be detrimental to Uptown businesses, and visits to Uptown will become too difficult for residents with health and mobility difficulties.

My priorities in Uptown will be local business, local ownership, accessibility, and affordability. That kind of development will be slower and smaller in scope than the block-wide construction projects we've seen in the recent past -- but it will also be more sustainable.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions? If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

First and foremost, we need to determine our priorities. But we also need a predetermined set of incentives we are willing to give to achieve them. We must be done with building incentive packages on a case-by-case basis.

I strongly believe that incentives should only be given to projects that meet a public need. We should always tie incentives to outcomes -- like wages, number of employees, and benefits.

Finally, we should have a public process to create a Community Benefits Agreement with any business receiving significant incentives. The public should have a voice in the process.

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

We know these kinds of challenges are difficult, and we must approach them on a case by case basis with community input.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

First, we should support local entrepreneurs. If we can offer incentives to multi-billion dollar corporations from other countries, we must be able to support local entrepreneurs as they build a new business.

Second, workers in Normal should have reliable hours, consistent schedules, and a guarantee that they will receive enough hours to meet their obligations. We should follow the lead of other communities that have expanded employees' rights with a Fair Work Week.

Third, we should seriously explore the option of a municipal bank that can offer more flexibility for funding public projects, supporting residents in crisis, and kickstarting emerging businesses.

Finally, we must take the troubling findings that African Americans are disproportionately likely to be frisked, searched, and arrested in Normal. We should bring in a third party to audit the outcomes of our policing on an annual basis and invest in training to eradicate this problem.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

In 2016, WGLT estimated that taxpayer support for One Uptown on the Circle was \$8.4 million, or 60% of the entire project cost. Many residents know this building as the site of a prominent vacancy on the circle. It is also home to some of the most expensive rents in Normal -- starting at \$1,650/month for a one bedroom apartment, and maxing out at \$4,200/month.

That isn't right -- especially when we know that there are not enough affordable homes in our community to meet demand. We must prioritize the construction and maintenance of affordable housing in every part of our community -- not only on the outskirts of town.

We also know that recent graduates and young professionals carry more debt and have more barriers to homeownership than previous generations. Because of high rents, it's becoming more difficult to build savings. And because new construction continues to be larger and higher end, it's becoming harder to build equity without gambling on an aging house that may require serious investment. Our economy -- particularly our real estate market -- depends on addressing these serious issues.

As a member of the Normal Town Council, I will:

Oppose public subsidies for luxury homes, apartments, and condos; work with community partners to jumpstart the construction of mixed-income housing developments; support programs that help homeowners make critical investments in their property (like efficiency, solar panels, and unexpected repairs); work with Illinois State University to address the housing needs of students.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

As a council member, I will be more interested in outlining a vision for economic development and community engagement than micro-managing staffing decisions in those departments. It is the administration's job to determine what staff are necessary to achieve the vision set by the council. If there is a question about the value of any staff role, we should first reevaluate the vision they were asked to implement.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

Our library is an incredible resource for our community, and I've been proud to serve on the Normal Public Library Board of Trustees. Our library is busy every day, maintains a packed schedule of programs for all ages, and serves our community in incredible ways. Our library faces one huge limitation -- its size. Expansion has been needed for a decade.

Yet in 2006 the Town of Normal sold land adjacent to the library to Bank of Illinois for \$10, boxing the library in with little room for expansion.

That's why the library board -- with the encouragement of the town -- underwent an extensive, public process for designing a new building. The plans are exceptional, but the town has yet to commit any funding to it.

In fact, despite years of talk about a new library building from town staff and councilmembers, the library has not been included as a priority in our annual Community Investment Plan.

The library is ready for a new building, but the council needs to do more than talk about it. It's time to make the library a priority and commit to a funding schedule for a new building.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

I want to be clear on this issue: the town should absolutely provide adequate spaces for residents to engage in recreational sports, intramurals, and local leagues. However, the town should not invest our limited resources in a large-scale, privately owned sports complex.

The proposed complex -- estimated to cost \$43 million -- has been called a "public-private partnership." In reality, the public would bear the upfront cost while a private business reaps the bulk of the benefits.

Instead, I believe we should focus on building and maintaining a network of excellent parks and fields that serve our community's needs.

Pat Turner - Normal Town Council

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I am a graduate of Illinois State University with a master's degree in Politics and Government and specialization in Community and Economic Development. My undergraduate degree is in Foreign Languages and Culture. I have nearly thirty years of experience in leadership, advocacy and agency management as the Executive Director of the Center for Hope Outreach Programs. I served on the Town of Normal's 20/20 Vision Planning Committee and have volunteered in the community with AmeriCorps, the McLean County Detention Center, and the Advocate BroMenn Delegate Church Association. I have received various honors for my leadership and service including the Town of Normal's Human Relations Award, the Illinois Human Relations Humanitarian Award, a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for Community Service and three nominations for the YWCA Women of Distinction award. Through my education, professional experience, civic engagement, and personal experiences with food insecurity I feel uniquely equipped for service on the Normal Town Council.

Since 2000, the town has embarked on a massive redevelopment of Uptown Normal. What do you think of what's been done so far? What should be done in Uptown in the future?

I believe that the Town of Normal should be forward thinking and should always strive to be on the cutting edge of what is excellent and innovative. However, I don't believe that kind of growth should be done at all costs. We need to re-examine our current debt status and check our spending accordingly. We should move cautiously forward in our Uptown Expansion and adjust our plans so that we do not develop one part of while allowing severe decline in others.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions? If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

Sound Economic Development is key for municipalities and the tool of incentives is reasonable when used judiciously. We must make sure that incentives don't run one-way; out of our community. Where blight, and economic decline are evident, we should first pursue local development options and when external developers are involved, we should stipulate that there are opportunities for local jobs, and other wins for our citizens.

If faced with a challenging budget situation, what would be your approach to balancing taxes and fees against preserving or expanding programs and services?

There is no question that we are currently faced with a budget situation. We need to expand programs and services but we should not let increased taxes and fees be our knee-jerk reaction. They tend to negatively impact the most vulnerable of our citizens and bring an added burden to home owners. I propose we begin tackling problems on the front end, being proactive in our social policies so that we are not spending unnecessarily on the back end where costs are out of control. We have to make sound decisions that address our needs and priorities before charging forward with project that are simply nice to have.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the town should pursue?

We urgently need to close the gaps between employment income and the cost of living so that each and every working citizen can afford to live in the community they call home. We must also create job opportunities for those still seeking sustainable employment. We have to tackle the problem of homelessness so that our residents aren't calling motels, cars and vans home. We have to create a Council that represents all of the Town of Normal's Citizens.

What should be the town's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The Town council must assume a leadership role in expanding affordable housing opportunities. There are few things that attract business, economy, and opportunity better than the reputation that a town or city is an affordable and safe place to live. Just as I did, many chose this community as a place where they felt they could raise a family. Keeping home ownership affordable and eliminating unnecessary tax burdens on home owners creates an environment that is attractive and rewarding. Our citizens become the very ambassadors to those who look to bring more jobs, and opportunities and the innovations that make our Town exemplary.

Do you think the town needs a full-time communications manager and/or economic development coordinator? Why or why not?

I felt privileged to meet with Town of Normal department heads and was encouraged by their knowledge and passion for the jobs that they and their staff carries out. It appears that at this time the position of a full time communications manager and/ or economic development officer are not critical, especially in light of budget constraints. I believe that as the Town's staffing needs change over time, we will develop both the resources and quality candidates to carry out those needed responsibilities.

Do you support either physical expansion of the Normal Public Library at its current site or construction of a new, larger building? Why or why not?

I value the Normal Public Library as one of our Town's treasures! The staff and volunteers get the most out of every square inch providing critical and unduplicated resources and programs. The NPL helps to close the digital divide helping hundreds of people to connect to possible jobs, educational opportunities and community resources. They provide access to those with varying abilities whether via audio books, or materials in Braille. The community room is a ideal space where many town organizations and groups meet and the library's children's programing is second to none. I believe its time for the construction of a more suitable space as designated in the original Uptown expansion proposal. It will be an investment on which we will see both immediate and long term benefits community wide.

Do you think the town should offer up money, land, or other incentives to support development of a multisport complex in McLean County? Why or not?

The development of a multi-sport complex in McLean County is a project for another time and possibly another place. The Town of Normal has more pressing priorities. Our tax dollars have greater purpose.

Donna Boelen - Bloomington City Council (Ward 2)

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I'm a retired medical professional. I was a department supervisor responsible for personnel management and budgeting. Being able to collaborate is an absolute necessity in a hospital setting.

Being an active community volunteer for 26 years has provided me with "institutional knowledge" of the community.

With the assistance of the Public Works Department, I was able to resolve a Public Health & Safety issue in my neighborhood.

I've regularly attended Council meetings for the past 5 years and have spoken at Public Comment more than 20 times, primarily regarding fiscal responsibility and the negative effects of raising taxes and fees on business growth and the working poor. Additionally, I served on a Budget committee to help address the structural deficit.

What would be your approach to building effective working relationships with other aldermen, the mayor, and city staff?

In a hospital setting, collaboration is a matter of life and death. I will engage in respectful dialogue with an emphasis on active listening and use my experience of collaboration. The City Staff is very qualified and professional, always willing to be of service. I've enjoyed my interaction with them.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the city should pursue?

The premise of this question implies a need for new programs. Our community has so much to offer...a vibrant college town offering cultural activities and opportunities for life long learning...excellent medical facilities...multiple parks...centrally located in the State where major highways converge. Improved leveraging/marketing of our current assets lessens the need to pursue new programs and can generate new revenue. Additionally, by conserving and preserving our current resources, we show pride of ownership.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

The use of Economic Base Analysis would provide valuable information when determining whether or not to use incentives. The new base business should be one that can both bring in new job positions and support non-base businesses. These are the types of investors that might be considered for incentives.

What specifically would you support to make Downtown Bloomington a more attractive destination for residents, tourists, and business owners?

- Allocate funds for basic infrastructure in the core & surrounding neighborhoods
- Leverage the current Public amenities through better Marketing/Management
- Protect existing historic buildings.
- Zoning/Code enforcement.

What should be the city's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The best thing the government can do to expand affordable housing is to ensure the City is business friendly by reducing the cost of doing business in order to grow and generate jobs and prosperity.

There are local programs in place for training and mentoring through the private sector and opportunities for learning at HCC and through social services. The affordability of housing is directly related to the availability of quality jobs and marketable job skills to secure adequate income for living expenses.

Repairing and maintaining infrastructure promotes economic development, thereby attracting new business.

City staff say O'Neil Pool needs to be replaced and the public library needs to expand. Should the city pursue those projects? If so, how should they be funded?

Pursuing these projects would require additional revenue sources--increased taxes. The Library is its own taxing body tied to the Property Tax Levy. It is my understanding that the Library Board has some money saved, will pursue a fundraising effort in addition to Property Tax increases.

O'Neill Pool does need to be replaced; however what is being suggested is a multi-million dollar Aquatic Center. Either one of these projects would require an additional revenue source for the issuing of a Bond.

A recent Governing magazine investigation found a big disparity in median incomes between white and black households in Bloomington. What can the city do to address this and other inequalities that exist within the community?

The best thing the government can do to address the disparity in income is to ensure the City is business friendly by reducing the cost of doing business in order to grow and generate jobs and prosperity.

The disparity in median income is related to a combination of limited local jobs outside the retail/service industry and marketable job skills for securing a job with adequate income to reduce the inequity.

There are local programs in place for training and mentoring through the private sector and opportunities for learning at HCC and through social services.

What additional steps should the city take, if any, to better protect and serve local immigrants, especially those who are undocumented?

The premise of this question, as written, implies that the entire local immigrant population is being victimized and in need of additional action for better protection. I have read or heard no media reports to that effect.

Having said that, the citizens of Bloomington are known for their compassion. State law, The Trust Act, is aimed at protecting immigrants throughout the State. Laws related to immigration are the responsibility of the Federal Legislature. True reform needs to be addressed at the Federal level.

Georgene Chissell - Bloomington City Council (Ward 2)

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

My local government, professional, and personal work experiences have well prepared me for the position of alderwoman for Ward 2. I still draw from my experiences from my background...

Civic:

- * Beautification Committee
- * Historic Preservation Commission
- * Bloomington 101
- * Multicultural Leadership Program Alumni Class of 2016
- * Campaign Volunteer for Mayoral candidate Diana Hauman 2017
- * League of Women Voters Member

Personal:

- * Faith in Action Volunteer
- * Girl Scout Leader 12 years
- * Assistant to Christian Education Director 20+ years
- * Active in Student Association activities and leadership at ISU
- * Business/Pol Sci Organizer for Bhopal awareness at ISU

Professional:

- * In-home daycare
- * Design/seamstress
- * Small Business owner for 10 years
- * Trained & Collaborated on training co-workers on technology software program

What would be your approach to building effective working relationships with other aldermen, the mayor, and city staff?

My planned approach to building effective working relationships with my government leadership - fellow aldermen, the Mayor, and City staff is first to complete introduction meetings where I would learn about each member, their roles and goals, and to share about myself and Ward 2. Secondly, look to create partnerships for like initiatives.

I would maintain these working relationships, timeless principles of listening, gain full understanding, evaluating the information, and then provide a guided decision.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the city should pursue?

I believe the City of Bloomington would greatly benefit from developing a Marketing Program to better market what Bloomington has to offer in terms of employment, social, entertainment, sports, education, retirement community, etc. Create a partnership with the Convention & Visitor Bureau, Economic Development Office, and Chamber of Commerce.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

It is appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development foothold when selectively targeting individual businesses to invest or expand that would otherwise not occur but for the incentive and it would greatly benefit our city. We should target incentives based on core principles of inclusive economic development. If we do not have core principles then we should development them for example:

- * Grow from within - by prioritizing firms in advanced industries that drive local comparative advantage, innovation, productivity, and wage gains.
- * Invest in our people and skills by incorporating workers' skill development which would result in meaningful work and wages (such as the union trade apprenticeship programs).
- * Connect place - by maybe connecting our local communities to regional jobs, housing, and opportunity. We can focus incentives on addressing blight and distress in communities of concentrated poverty.

These principles will help us determine whether local and state incentive policies are aligned with ours.

What specifically would you support to make Downtown Bloomington a more attractive destination for residents, tourists, and business owners?

Continuity! Continuity! Continuity! Let's work full circle by engaging the community and working with what we already have by bringing the Beautification Committee and the Downtown Development groups together.

What should be the city's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The city's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities should simply be facilitating the conversation between local developers and key players (such as Bloomington Housing Authority) so that the city's housing needs are addressed effectively.

City staff say O'Neil Pool needs to be replaced and the public library needs to expand. Should the city pursue those projects? If so, how should they be funded?

O'Neil Pool should be replaced on a smaller scale with a cover to be used all year round (to cut cost). This would promote water safety and water education which is a positive option than screen time. We could look at endowments and federal programs for community/youth investment.

School library's could partner with the Bloomington library to meet the needs of the children which brings the cost down. The brick and mortar, expertise, and access is already there at the school. We would need to create awareness and monitor the effectiveness and tweak as needed.

A recent [Governing magazine investigation](#) found a big disparity in median incomes between white and black households in Bloomington. What can the city do to address this and other inequalities that exist within the community?

To address inequalities the city should engage the community by identifying and prioritizing the gaps then identifying and prioritizing the solutions. Then look at partnering with the state and federal government to fulfill any remaining gaps.

What additional steps should the city take, if any, to better protect and serve local immigrants, especially those who are undocumented?

The current steps should be sufficient however, if there is a gap we need to address it. To address protecting and serving local immigrants the city should engage the community by

identifying and prioritizing the gaps then identifying and prioritizing the solution, for instance are there any gaps in protecting or serving immigrants, documented or undocumented?

Don Chip Frank - Bloomington City Council (Ward 4)

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

Owning and operating a business Capen Frank Proctor & Bowles, Inc. provides a unique perspective such a balancing a budget, human resources and sustaining your place in a competitive market. You learn how to prioritize your time and manage resources to obtain your goals. I had the opportunity to serve as president, of our state insurance association IIAI. Serving almost 10,000 independent insurance agents through out the state. Allowing me to learn a great deal about the problems facing businesses in Illinois.

What would be your approach to building effective working relationships with other aldermen, the mayor, and city staff?

I view the city council as a "board of directors" for the City taking in the big picture and setting policy. I think an alderman needs to be a good listener and willing participant in bring people together to accomplish common goals.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the city should pursue?

First being a new alderman I think that it very important to get a better handle from our Mayor and other eight aldermen on what initiatives they may already be working on. Then help to determine and prioritize those that will have the most positive impact and importance to the citizens of our community.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

The city should be a willing participant to consider all possible incentives when approached from the private sector to help achieve economic growth. We need to be aware of both the cost of our investment as well as the economic benefits to help us understand if this would make sense for our community.

What specifically would you support to make Downtown Bloomington a more attractive destination for residents, tourists, and business owners?

Our downtown certainly should be a focus as in any city or community. I would like to see us take advantage of some of the real positives that we already have. The Law and Justice Center, a great artists community, several restaurants and bars, as well as some great venues for all types of concerts and entertainment. IF we can figure a way to make those more user friendly and think we would be on our way.

What should be the city's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The city should be proactive from everything from our zoning and regulation to transportation costs.

City staff say O'Neil Pool needs to be replaced and the public library needs to expand. Should the city pursue those projects? If so, how should they be funded?

Our city has several large long term issues as it pertains to infrastructure and public safety. Knowing that I think that it is important as a community to be able to balance quality of life issues as well, which would included both of those projects. It really gets back to working with the other council members to be able to prioritize projects so we can accomplish both our short and long term plans that the citizens really want and need.

A recent [Governing magazine investigation](#) found a big disparity in median incomes between white and black households in Bloomington. What can the city do to address this and other inequalities that exist within the community?

This seems to be a country wide issue. For the most part I do not feel that local government should legislate social issues. However as a community you want to be able to provide all the opportunities possible for our citizens. We want a community that everyone is proud to call home.

What additional steps should the city take, if any, to better protect and serve local immigrants, especially those who are undocumented?

We need to continue to be proactive to make sure everyone feels welcome in our community, there are several different initiatives as examples. I feel that this is a community issue and should incorporate all possible resources to accomplish this, with a focus on recognition of immigrants contribution to our community development.

Jenn Carrillo - Bloomington City Council (Ward 6)

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What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

For as long as I can remember, I have had a burning desire to change the world. As I kid, I was always surrounded by people who struggled hard to have very little, while knowing that there were others out there who had much more than they would ever need. Even then, this struck me as deeply unjust.

As I grew up, I encountered lots of people who told me it wasn't possible to change the world, that I was naive for believing that things could be different, and that they too were young and idealistic once. This was discouraging, to say the least. But then, when I was 19 years old, I was introduced to community organizing by a group of people I met here in Bloomington-Normal. These organizers didn't dismiss my anger or my desire for things to be different. They too believed that anger was an appropriate response to a society that violates the values of justice, of human dignity, and they had faith in the ability of everyday people to change the world. They listened to me, honored my struggles, and invested in my leadership. And this intervention had a profound and transformative effect on my life.

Learning how to organize towards action with others who shared the same struggles as I did, grounded me in my values, allowed me to regain my dignity and voice, and helped me transform the pain of living under oppressive systems into energy to fight for change.

I knew then that I wanted to spend the rest of my life helping others find their own dignity and voice, and to become empowered through organizing. And that's what I've done with my time professionally and personally since.

For the past decade I have been bringing diverse--and often marginalized--people in this community together around the values of justice and equity, organizing with them to change the systems that hold us down, building their leadership, and fighting alongside them for the things they deserve. Together, we have mobilized thousands of people throughout Bloomington-Normal and central Illinois to take action through campaigns around immigrant rights, a fair Illinois state budget, environmental justice, workers' rights, payday and car title lending, and racial justice, among others.

This kind of experience, drive, and vision is what I believe our community needs, and it is in this spirit that I will co-govern with my community if elected.

What would be your approach to building effective working relationships with other aldermen, the mayor, and city staff?

Like many people in ward 6 and in Bloomington at-large, I have been deeply frustrated by the dysfunction that exists within our current leadership. The toxic dynamic at city hall has made it impossible to advance the issues that people in our city desperately need answers and action on.

I am grateful that most incumbent city council members up for re-election this year have decided to step down and make way for people with fresh ideas that will introduce a new dynamic, and I am hopeful about the energy that this new council will bring in.

You have my commitment that if elected, I will spend time getting to know the people I will be working with, and that I will be honest and genuine with my colleagues in order to build strong working relationships with them.

Being skilled at relationship-building is a requisite of any good organizer and a place of strength for me. Over the course of my career and public life in this community I have been successful in bringing people of different faith communities, political affiliations, racial and gender identities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and countries of origin around a set of common values and goals.

Given the chance, I believe that I can do the same with the council, Mayor, and city staff.

In addition to my experience in organizing with diverse groups, I am also a skilled, professional facilitator with experience around restorative practices and restorative justice (which is a process for bringing people together in situations where harm has been done). Recognizing that there are relationships on the council that may need mending, I hope to be able to offer this skillset to help us become a council that can debate, deliberate, and take action to improve the lives of Bloomington residents.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the city should pursue?

I am running for city council, in large part, because I am excited to contribute new ideas around new policies, programs, and initiatives. There are a lot of measures I think Bloomington would do well to pursue-- far more than I can accommodate in this answer--but here are just a couple that I'd like to lift up:

(1) I believe that all workers in Bloomington deserve to be compensated fairly for their work and should enjoy fair working conditions. I would like to see the city play their part in lifting up

workers by adopting policies that require employees to provide advanced scheduling and paid family, medical, and safe leave.

(2) I'd like to see the city of Bloomington take a look at how we can restructure city fees, service charges, and taxes to be more progressive and equitable. Right now, the people who have the least end up bearing the biggest burden when municipal taxes and fees are enacted or increased. While "everyone pays the same" seems like an intuitively fair way of doing things, this misses the fact that poor people end up paying a greater proportion of their income as a result of flat fees or taxes. For instance, today, a tenant bringing home less than \$20,000 per year through a minimum wage job is paying the same water rate as a person who owns a home valued at over half a million dollars. That doesn't strike me as fair, and I believe this is something the city should definitely consider re-organizing.

(3) It seems that like the legalization of recreational cannabis will inevitably be legislated on the state level in the coming months. I would like to see our city bring together a task force of stakeholders that will help Bloomington position itself to leverage this opportunity. If we create an environment that is friendly to this new industry in designated areas of the city (like downtown), we have the potential to bring in new revenue through tourism and the taxation of cannabis. Some of these revenues can then be used to invest in the communities that have been most criminalized and negatively impacted by the failed war on drugs.

(4) Recently, the incumbent attended a forum, hosted at Phoenix Towers, along with Mayor Tari Renner, City Manager Tim Gleason, and ADA coordinator Nicole Albertson. After being pressed by members of the community, city officials expressed that the city is not in compliance with 2010 ADA standards. If elected I will call on city administration to act immediately to bring Bloomington into compliance with federal standards, and will call for the creation of an ongoing public commission that will advise the council and city staff in achieving both the mandate and spirit of the ADA.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

Generally, I am not in favor of using incentives because more often than not, the result is money being transferred from working class taxpayers to wealthy out-of-town individuals and/or companies, with the "promise" that a project will bring good things to the community.

That said, I would support the use of financial incentives ONLY if they are tied to a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) and/or a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA).

PLAs help ensure that development projects create good jobs for local union workers at prevailing wages. It is my belief that any taxpayer funded project undertaken by the City of Bloomington should be required to have a PLA.

CBA's are similar to PLAs--except that they include the community groups, as well as union labor. Through CBA's community members and developers can come to an agreement about the benefits that a specific project will bring to a local neighborhood or community.

What specifically would you support to make Downtown Bloomington a more attractive destination for residents, tourists, and business owners?

I believe that we already have a number of excellent recommendations that were put forth by the Downtown Task Force in their 2017 report. Unfortunately, many of these recommendations have gone unimplemented and largely unappreciated. I believe that we should honor the time and energy that stakeholders put into these recommendations by giving them full consideration, and personally, I am committed to ensure that the majority of them move forward if I am elected.

I am very interested in experimenting with ways that we can repurpose Jefferson St. downtown to be a pedestrian friendly public gathering space. And I am also excited about an idea I heard during a listening session that would involve us cleaning up, lighting and "arting up" our alleys. I think has the potential to make our downtown really stand out. Additionally, I would like to explore what could be done to be more aggressive and thorough about snow and trash removal in the downtown area. All of these strike me as relatively "low-hanging fruits".

When it comes to the bigger, game-changing ideas for downtown, I think our best strategy is to invest in downtown in order to make it easier for people of mixed incomes to reside and recreate there. I believe we can address some our affordable housing needs and our downtown needs by creating programs that will allow local downtown property owners access to funds or loans to help them develop their properties in order to be able to house tenants and/or special projects, such as co-ops or business incubators.

What should be the city's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

Much like the rest of the country, our community has an affordable housing crisis on its hands. The wages of working class families have remained stagnant for decades while the cost of housing has continued to increase. It has been reported that a worker working earning minimum wage in our community needs to work 2.1 full-time jobs in order to cover rent and utilities. This means that families are being forced to make impossible choices, such as whether to cover rent or have food on the table. This is unacceptable.

At the same time, many of the units that are affordable are often times in bad shape and sometimes downright unsafe places to live. Nonetheless, many tenants who live in these less-than-adequate conditions often say that they do not report code violations in their apartments for fear that they will be evicted and unable to find another affordable place to live.

In spite of the fact that this is the life-threatening reality for the one-in-five households trying to support themselves with less than 25K in income per year, I have not seen our leaders rise to address this housing crisis with the level of urgency it deserves.

Housing is a human right, a right that should be guaranteed to all Bloomington residents. If elected, I will immediately call on the city to establish an affordable housing task force, led by tenants and other stakeholders, who would craft and present recommendations for what the city should do to mitigate this crisis.

I would like to see this task force explore the feasibility of measures that have been taken by other communities, such as the adoption of a source of income protection ordinance (and other measures to protect tenant's rights), the implementation of a vacancy tax, and the creation of subsidies to support new affordable housing.

In addition, I would like to see the city make a commitment to strengthen our existing rental property inspection process in order to ensure that slumlords in Bloomington are not taking advantage of this affordable housing crisis to abuse tenants.

City staff say O'Neil Pool needs to be replaced and the public library needs to expand. Should the city pursue those projects? If so, how should they be funded?

Absolutely. People tend to overfocus on the cost of these projects, without recognizing that there is also a very real human and financial cost associated with underfunding these community resources.

With already so few things for young people on the Westside to do, why did our council decide to neglect O'Neil Pool until it was at risk of not being able to reopen? And why was it ever up for debate whether or not we should continue to invest in this community resource-- particularly with a surplus in last year's budget?

The same logic applies to the library. If we know that this is the only place where certain members of our community can have access to the internet-- which is an essential tool to education and employment-- why have our representatives continued to kick the can down the road instead of making a commitment to fund the library's expansion?

This to me is not a question of resources, it is a question of priorities. If we believe that these projects are important enough to our community members, we will find a way to fund them.

A recent [Governing magazine investigation](#) found a big disparity in median incomes between white and black households in Bloomington. What can the city do to address this and other inequalities that exist within the community?

Unfortunately, the very first obstacle we face in addressing this and other issues around racial disparities is our leaders' unwillingness to acknowledge the existence of racism in our community--no, not back when Miller Park lake was segregated-- today!

Structural racism is real, still very much alive in our community, and our leadership will continue to perpetuate it unless they are cognizant of it and how it operates.

Two years ago I was involved in the campaign to establish the PSCRB, and I am saddened to say that when confronted with the reality that black people in our own community are twice as likely to be pulled over and four times more likely to be searched than their white counterparts, few, if any, council members conceded that this was an example of systemic racism.

It will be extremely difficult to address the racial disparities that exist in our community (including the one mentioned in the question above) if we are not willing to have open and honest conversation about the ways in which black and brown communities have been, and continue to be disadvantaged, and if we are not willing to aggressively make up for the wrongs of the past.

We can begin to address these disparities by adopting a race-conscious analysis of the way we construct policy at a municipal level. For example, if we increase garbage fees, we need to think: how does this affect communities of color -- black communities specifically? If we create an incentive program, we need to think: how can we make sure that people of color have access to this benefit?

More concretely-- while we may not be able to influence incomes directly-- we can give communities of color a greater chance at prosperity by adopting economic justice initiatives designed to lift up those living in poverty and those in the working class. Examples of these include: raising our local minimum wage, restructuring fees based on ability to pay, creating programs to support entrepreneurs from low-income backgrounds.

Finally, we must be willing to make specific, intentional investments towards the growth and wellbeing of these historically underserved communities.

What additional steps should the city take, if any, to better protect and serve local immigrants, especially those who are undocumented?

There are a great deal of things that our city could do to bring immigrants of all statuses into the fold of our community, but all of those efforts would require trust and community buy-in to be successful. Unfortunately, that trust is something that our immigrant community currently lacks towards the city of Bloomington-- and rightfully so.

Two and a half years ago, our immigrant community witnessed a man who ran a campaign rooted in racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant fervor be elected president of the United States. One of his first acts after being inaugurated was to direct ICE to deport any immigrant present without authorization--regardless of past criminal history, family relationships, or community ties.

Terrified, members of our undocumented community reached out to the elected representatives of the City of Bloomington via their advocates, seeking protection, and asking the city to make a simple promise: to keep ICE and our local police separate.

The actions that followed on the part of the city only served to deteriorate the already fragile trust which existed between our municipality and our undocumented community.

Trust was broken when it was revealed by community groups that the Bloomington Police had been routinely in close communication with ICE, often times offering up information about the status of local community members. This is in spite of the fact that our former chief of police and our council denied that any such behavior had taken place.

Trust was broken when council members-- like my opponent, who claimed to be a champion of the welcoming ordinance in private meetings with advocates and undocumented community members-- organized to remove the ordinance from the agenda so that they would not be forced to vote on it.

And trust has continued to deteriorate ever since because, in spite of the fact that deportations are on the rise and a neighboring community aims to open a for-profit private detention facility, our city still has not taken a bold stance to protect the immigrants that contribute so much to our community.

The treatment of immigrants under the current presidential administration is abhorrent, with thousands of children being permanently stolen from their parents, and immigrants of all ages dying while in ICE custody. At the same time, ICE's mass deportation machinery is growing.

Every day, it is better funded, better organized, and more capable of sweeping through our town, snatching up those of us without the privilege of being born on the right side of a border.

It is times like these that truly define our values as a community. Our city needs to stand on the right side of history and protect every Bloomington resident--regardless of where they were born--by doing everything in its power to prevent the separation of families until we have a congress that is willing to enact real and humane immigration reform.

If we are a city that believes that the lives of our immigrant neighbors matter, we must be willing to protect them and codify these protections into policy with the strongest possible welcoming city ordinance, which unequivocally separates the functions of local police from the functions of ICE.

Karen Schmidt - Bloomington City Council (Ward 6)

Email: karen61701@gmail.com

What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have represented ward 6 in the city since 1999. During my tenure I have worked with all city departments and local units of government. I have worked closely with neighborhoods to create neighborhood associations and watches, putting city resources directly in the hands of our residents. I regularly ask for feedback on Council decisions to be sure my votes are informed by the people I represent. I work closely with organizations throughout B-N to link our residents up to resources outside the purview of the city. Prior to my Council work, I served on the Bloomington Public Library Board of Directors.

In my professional life, I have managed budgets upward of \$35 million, and I know how to make difficult budgetary decisions that impact people and programs. As a librarian, I am well-versed in seeking solutions to problems, and in listening to the needs of others. I have a long history of involvement as a board member of many organizations in our community, including MidCentral Community Action, BCPA/Creativity Center, Boys & Girls Club Advisory Council, Downtown Bloomington Association and the West Bloomington Revitalization Project.

Personal experiences have brought me empathy and understanding for others. I have worked since I was 15, including many jobs at minimum wage, and know what it like to live from one paycheck to the next. I bring a keen and personal awareness of issues related to economic, racial and cultural differences and use these experiences to inform how I approach city business.

What would be your approach to building effective working relationships with other aldermen, the mayor, and city staff?

Strong relationships start with mutual respect and the willingness to listen. I work hard to bring that attitude into all my relationships with my colleagues throughout the city. Honest communication, along with creating the opportunity for these conversations to occur, is fundamental.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the city should pursue?

1. I continue to push for a “one stop shop” to make it easy for businesses to work with the city.
2. Our newly formed Technology Commission brings us the opportunity to rethink how the city interacts with companies and citizens, enabling us to streamline operations and realize efficiencies.
3. The arena remains a challenge and I would like to see us set up a process to solicit residents’ ideas and seek new solutions for managing and re-branding this building.
4. I would like the city to be more aggressive about adding internet access in our community, as part of workforce and economic development and to bridge the digital divide.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

The city has created an economic incentives document that focuses on a “but for” analysis and provides a menu of different incentives, from enterprise zone opportunities (when available,) to tax abatement, to facade improvement support and up to providing a TIF. These need to be applied consistently and with transparency. When we invoke strategies that impact revenue to other entities (e.g, the schools) we need to be good partners in communicating the details of our economic plans.

What specifically would you support to make Downtown Bloomington a more attractive destination for residents, tourists, and business owners?

We need to take care of some fundamental issues, including trash and parking. our downtown residents and businesses deserve resolution on both of these. I would like us to find a way to provide basic sidewalk services (cleaning, snow removal) for the whole of downtown. We need to make access to the downtown more pedestrian friendly (East and Madison Streets can be very challenging to cross.) We need to find a way to provide access to public restrooms.

What should be the city’s role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The city and its Community Development Division has been a strong partner in providing opportunities for the development of affordable housing. These include partnership with the West Bloomington Housing Collaborative, Habitat for Humanity, and Bloomington Housing

Authority. The city has supported applications for low-income housing tax credits to developers, and leveraged HUD money for zero and low-interest loans to enable residents to improve properties. We need to be sure that affordable housing opportunities are available throughout all of Bloomington and not focused on a few neighborhoods.

City staff say O'Neil Pool needs to be replaced and the public library needs to expand. Should the city pursue those projects? If so, how should they be funded?

O'Neil Pool is an important resource for west Bloomington, one that is integral to the neighborhoods surrounding it - for neighborhood stability, for providing access to good park facilities to our youth and families, and for maintaining real estate values. I am very supportive of replacing it, and would like to see us discuss a modest increase in pool fees, a minimal adjustment to our property tax rate, and possible partnership with local pool operators.

The library has a strong plan for expansion, and is a core resource for our community. Financial support for expansion comes from the library levy, which has been adjusted upward this year, and a strong Friends group providing private money. Additional increases in the library levy will require the BPL Board to make a strong case with residents.

A recent [Governing magazine investigation](#) found a big disparity in median incomes between white and black households in Bloomington. What can the city do to address this and other inequalities that exist within the community?

The city needs to continue its work to provide employment opportunities to all residents- this includes support of the Trades & Labor, EDC and other workforce development initiatives. Work is underway to more aggressively diversifying our municipal workforce. Through the work of its Human Relations Commission and Public Safety and Community Relations Board, the city has the mechanisms to continue to shape the shared values of being a compassionate and supportive city that extends opportunities to every resident.

What additional steps should the city take, if any, to better protect and serve local immigrants, especially those who are undocumented?

I continue my support for engaging with a community-wide program like Welcoming America. This brings all sectors of the city together - government, the faith community, employers and

educators together to work through challenges and provide opportunities for our immigrants to contribute to our neighborhoods, economy, and culture.

Jeff Crabill - Bloomington City Council (Ward 8)

Email: jeff.crabill@comcast.net

What in your personal and professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have worked as an attorney for 25 years, including 10 years representing State Farm insureds in court and the last 7 serving as a Corporate attorney for State Farm. In the legal work I do, you have to listen, ask the right questions and build a consensus. I plan to bring those same skills to Council. I graduated from the Multicultural Leadership Program which has taught me key leadership skills and introduced me to many people in the community. Bloomington 101 taught me a great deal about the City and introduced me to department heads and other employees of the City. After graduating from Bloomington 101, I was appointed to serve on the Cultural Commission.

What would be your approach to building effective working relationships with other aldermen, the mayor, and city staff?

The best way to build effective working relationships with people is to sit and meet with people face to face. You need to learn their life perspective and what is important to them. Relationships are built slowly and over time. I have already met with many current members of council and more than a dozen departments heads and staff members of the City.

What new programs or initiatives do you think the city should pursue?

We should focus on fixing infrastructure, which includes more than \$100 million in deferred maintenance. Upon the basis of that improved infrastructure, people will want to start new businesses and grow existing businesses. Improved infrastructure should include making City streets, sidewalks and crosswalks more accessible; providing small financial incentives to owners of older commercial buildings to make their entrances accessible; and improving bus stop access.

When is it appropriate for local government to use incentives to achieve an economic development priority? How would you make those decisions?

The benefits have to outweigh the costs. An incentivized economic development project should benefit everyone in the community for a long period of time. The impact on the taxing bodies should take priority in consideration. Incentive agreements should include claw back provisions based on the developer meeting targeted outcomes. Any agreement should require local labor, preferably union labor at prevailing wages. Priority should be given to manufacturing type businesses that can serve as economic generators, bringing in money from outside the community. We should also try to keep any incentive as short term as possible such as the five year abatement for the Foundry development.

What specifically would you support to make Downtown Bloomington a more attractive destination for residents, tourists, and business owners?

First, Downtown Bloomington is already an attractive destination, whether that is the BCPA, the Museum, the many artist studios, restaurants and specialty shops. We have multiple festivals and events that bring in thousands of residents and tourists. Improving accessibility for downtown businesses will help. We should look to implement some of the ideas from the Downtown Task Force Committee such as create more and wider pedestrian walkways, more shade, more ground level retail, more street facing windows, more street art and more public plazas. We should continue to encourage new businesses to start and grow downtown. At this time, I favor more incremental growth rather than a catalyst type project.

What should be the city's role in expanding affordable housing opportunities?

The City should work to create public-private partnerships and focus on mixed use developments that serve multiple income levels. Zoning and code issues should be reviewed that would allow for creation of more duplexes and living areas in the upper floors of downtown buildings.

City staff say O'Neil Pool needs to be replaced and the public library needs to expand. Should the city pursue those projects? If so, how should they be funded?

Both projects should be pursued and have for too long been ignored. Turning O'Neil into an aquatics center would serve as a needed community place for those on the west side and serve as an attraction for the larger community. The library likely should double in size to meet the needs of the community, similar to the size of the library in Champaign. We need to look at all funding sources, including public/private partnerships, grants, capital campaigns and the

issuance of bonds. We should finalize a capital improvement plan that includes these projects and infrastructure improvements.

A recent [Governing magazine investigation](#) found a big disparity in median incomes between white and black households in Bloomington. What can the city do to address this and other inequalities that exist within the community?

Key reasons for this disparity include long-term systemic discrimination such as redlining and denial of access to capital. Solutions need to come from all levels of government, including at the local level. Some ideas for the City to address these issues would include making sure everyone is paid a living wage, putting protections in place to minimize discrimination in hiring, expanding availability of union apprenticeships, increasing affordable housing options in all parts of the City, opening credit availability with reasonable terms and making sure that our economic development activities include promoting small businesses in communities of color.

What additional steps should the city take, if any, to better protect and serve local immigrants, especially those who are undocumented?

We need all residents to feel welcomed. Undocumented immigrants need to feel safe in reporting crimes without the fear of law enforcement communicating with federal immigration officials. We know from FOIA results that this type of communication has happened in the past. We need a strongly worded ordinance that protects the undocumented in our community and focuses law enforcement on their main job, fighting crime.

Jessica Davis - Town of Normal Public Library

Email: jddavis@normalpl.org

Why are you running for this position?

I appreciate having a voice in the governing process, and feel strongly about helping the Normal Public Library grow.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have been in a supervisory role in one form or another for twenty years, which requires me to think through situations and make decisions that affect groups of people. The past two years as a Trustee have developed my skills in this specific area, and I look forward to continuing my service.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

First, I will continue to make decisions that encourage the highly-skilled Library staff in their pursuit of increased programming and services. Next, I will support the Library Foundation as they seek funding for a new library. Third, I will seek out more opportunities to speak with constituents about what they need most from the Library.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

Sometimes ideas and plans do not match up with funding and current priorities of other governing entities. I will continue to push for what the Library needs, while addressing immediate concerns with what is feasible for the current time.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

As a Board, we listen to those community members who choose to attend our meetings or contact us in other ways to voice their opinions. We allow each other to share thoughts and arguments for or against a decision. I feel comfortable and empowered to make decisions independently, based on my own research and these resources, and not pressured to follow the group or other governing bodies.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

Constituents should feel free to contact me by email, as well as seek me out at meetings and events. I make every effort to attend as many public events as possible to allow for this.



Erin Ripley-Gataric - Town of Normal Public Library

Email: Erin_ripley@hotmail.com

Why are you running for this position?

I'd like to help guide Normal Public Library, especially the children's department, now that they've decided to stay in the current building.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

In my position as a public health nurse, I gained experience applying for and working within the boundaries of grant funding.

Currently, as a home educator, I've experienced how children learn and interact with educational resources around them.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

Library space utilization, technology guidance, and possibly expanding programs.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

Budgeting will always be a challenge, but I'm confident we can work within our means and find funding opportunities when needed.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

If a decision impacts a specific local group, I'm more than willing to consult those affected before and during the decision-making process, and to bring concerns to the board myself.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

I'm available via email, mainly. I communicate with many local organizations through Facebook.

Walter F. (Terry) Lindberg - Town of Normal Public Library

Email: tlindberg@normalp.org

Why are you running for this position?

I was elected to a six-year term as a Normal Library Board Trustee, and am proud of what the Board and Staff have accomplished. I am running for a two-year vacancy to continue the work of making sure our Library will provide excellent service our Community long into the future.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have a Master's Degree in Public Administration and over 30 years experience in local government, including service as McLean County Administrator and Interim Director of the Bloomington Public Library.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

- 1) Optimize use of our current Library by expanding outreach and offsite programming, while increasing accessibility to our inhouse programs and services.
- 2) Strengthen technology opportunities, including: STEM programs for K-12 patrons, internet access for underserved communities, and creative and collaborative tech programs for all patrons.
- 3) Continue to plan for long term Library needs, including construction of new Library when it is financially feasible. Maximize use of our current facility to provide excellent programs and services to all segments of our Community.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

I will continue to work with my Board colleagues and our excellent Director and Staff to provide excellence and variety within the fiscal constraints we all face. I've supported efforts to strengthen our Library Foundation so it can provide private and community resources to enhance our program offerings, and help generate community support for a new Library. We already do a good job serving special needs patrons, and I want to stay open to new initiatives as we identify underserved segments of our Community.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

I rely on Community input and high-quality Staff reports to make decisions. I am proud to be a Library Board member and always welcome conversations with patrons, whether during my visits to the Library or anywhere else in the Community. Our monthly meetings are open to the Public and we welcome anyone to attend.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

Our meetings are public and comments are always welcome. Our minutes and agendas are always timely posted. I am always willing to talk with anyone about our Library. Please don't ever hesitate to contact me at tlindberg@normalpl.org



James Rogal - Town of Normal Public Library

Email: jim_rogal@yahoo.com

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Why are you running for this position?

I grew up going to the Normal Public Library and I am now teaching my kids the importance of that Library. I want to ensure that the library has the resources and backing to keep it accessible and accountable to the people of Normal.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I was taught a love of libraries early in life by my parents who were both teachers. I grew up going to the Normal Public Library and take my children there now.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

The library needs to continue to be accessible and available for the needs of the citizens of Normal. It needs to expand outreach and technology while staying within the budget allotted by the city council.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

The biggest issue that the Library has to deal with is space. It can only continue to add programs if they have the space to house those programs. The city council needs to see that a strong accessible public library is just as important to the community as tax breaks for apartment owners and companies. At the end of the day if the city council is not willing to invest in the library it makes it very hard for the library to be able to invest in the community.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

The most important part of making decisions is to try and see things from all sides and get input from as many sources as possible. As an elected official you are expected to vote on issues that impact the people of the community, all of the people in the community, and you need to keep that in mind with every decision that you make.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

I have a Facebook page, a twitter account and an email address. I am very responsive on social media and will be accessible through library board meetings. As big issues arise I will seek input from the community.

Katelyn Trunnell - Town of Normal Public Library

Email: ktrunnell@normalpl.org

Why are you running for this position?

I have lived in Normal, IL for my entire life and love this town. One of the things I have always loved most about living here is the wonderful library, which I have grown up to be an avid user of. I hope to use my skills and knowledge to be able to advocate for the Normal Public Library and help NPL be in its best place to continue providing the exceptional service that it has always provided.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I am a product of the Normal Public Library. This vital institution has weaved its way throughout my personal and professional life. My entire childhood I was a regular at the Normal Public Library. One summer, as I attended ISU, I was fortunate to be able to work in NPL's children's department with the summer reading program. I enjoyed seeing "behind the scenes" of one of my favorite places. I graduated from ISU in 2010 with a B.S. in Sociology with an emphasis on health and aging; and a minor in gerontology. After graduation, I frequently used NPL's wonderful services and programming in my professional life to enrich the lives of seniors and adults with developmental disabilities.

Now for the last 5 years, I have had the joy of being the Individual and Community Preparedness Manager for the Central and Southern IL American Red Cross; where a substantial portion of my position is managing the youth and adult education programs. In this role, I have had the opportunity to partner with libraries and educational facilities across the down-state area to reach individuals with information on preparedness, health, and safety topics. Finally, as the mother of an almost 3-year-old, my family frequents the library regularly to foster a love of libraries in him as well.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

It is highly important to me that libraries are places of diversity and inclusion; and meet the needs of everyone in the community regardless of age, race, gender, socio-economic status,

sexual orientation, or ability. I will always look to find ways that Normal Public Library can increase its ability to be inclusive of everyone.

I will advocate for a change of space for the current Normal Public Library. The staff at the library have done a marvelous job making the current space work for as long as possible. However, the current building as it is does not provide the space to best serve the Town of Normal residents. While I am open to the numerous possible solutions that have been proposed, a long-term solution does need to be found.

I fully believe in the vision statement found in the current strategic plan for Normal Public Library, and will strive to ensure the library continues to push towards being “a catalyst for literacy, learning, creativity and innovation”.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

I anticipate challenges with changing the space for the current Normal Public Library. It is vital to balance both meeting the needs of the community while being financially responsible with tax payer and donor dollars. As with everything, there are only so much funds and the town has multiple competing needs.

While I will continue to advocate for the needed additional library space, I will also encourage the library and NPL foundation to continue expanding their fundraising base to help bridge the gaps. In the meantime, the library can continue to make small improvements for the existing site while a long term solution is being found so the town residents can continue to be served to the best of the library’s ability.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

True to my library upbringing, I believe in the power of research. Whether that is reading, asking questions from subject matter experts, asking constituents for their opinions, learning what other libraries have done in similar situations and seeing how that worked out for them, or learning from more experienced board members; more information is never a bad thing. I put in the time and effort to be sure I fully understand the ramifications of a decision before making it.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

As a current library board member, my contact information can be found on www.normalpl.org and I welcome anyone to contact me at any time with questions, concerns, or suggestions for the library. Additionally, if you see me at the library, please feel free to come up and introduce yourself! I would love to meet you and hear your thoughts!



Janet Hood - Heartland Community College District #540

Email: jhood49@yahoo.com

Why are you running for this position?

As a Heartland graduate, I have experienced first-hand the excellent curriculum, faculty, and facilities offered by this college. I look forward to continuing my active role on the Board of Trustees and being an impactful part of the institution's continued partnership and growth throughout the district.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I was selected to fill a vacancy on the Heartland Community College Board of Trustees in 2017 and have served as a Trustee and member of the Finance Committee for the past two years. I was a member of the Heartland Presidential Search Committee. Additionally, I was appointed to the Town of Normal Zoning Board of Appeals and served on the Board for nine years. I serve on the YWCA McLean County Board and the Central Illinois American College of Healthcare Executives Board of Directors.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

1. Continue the current level of educational excellence,
2. Strengthen vocational/technical training programs on all campuses, and
3. Maintain a strong financial base.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

1. Increasing enrollment by continuing to support strong engagement of workforce development, ESL, and GED programs, and

2. Increasing access to STEM and STEAM programming for middle school students through adult learners.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

The role of a Board member is to review all appropriate issues that come before us as mandated by State regulations and Board policy. I will study the issues, listen to all input, and ask for additional feedback when appropriate.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

I will continue listening opportunities with students, faculty, and district constituents. These conversations allow me to build a wider perspective on issues the Board might be called on to address.

Lupe Diaz - Heartland Community College District #540

Email: VoteLupeDiaz@gmail.com

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Why are you running for this position?

N/A

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

My personal experience has prepared me for this position, I'm currently the Operations Manager for one of my company's terminals. I served as Heartland Community College Student Government second President, where we passed the Constitution for our Student Government. I know how to read and interpret the budget. I'm a leader that isn't afraid to ask questions, and I like to hear all options even though I may disagree with the option or issue.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

1. Keeping tuition low so all students could attend college
2. Expand curriculum where possible and grow the current programs
3. Reasonable budgets making sure all options are on the table

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

Balancing the budget while expenses are on the rise. We will need to work with our legislators, and governor to be sure the revenue is moving forward to HCC like the state budget is supposed to move. At the same time we should be promoting all High School graduates to attend HCC for their first two years of College, and work with ISU, IWU, and Lincoln College to move HCC Sophomores after graduation into one of our local Universities. I know this is going on now, but we need to all get more involved to get this process moving forward faster.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

If it is going to be a big decision that will require the community to pay, or a long term commitment. I would hold town hall meetings throughout the HCC District to be sure everyone is heard, and we as a board listen to our constituents.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

I plan to use all communication means necessary (social media, email, text, phone). I plan to hold at least two to three townhalls a year to speak with everyone within the HCC District. I would invite other elected leaders that are within the HCC District to listen to our constituents needs or help our constituents with an issue they might be having with a decision.



Thomas J. Whitt - Heartland Community College District #540

Email: tjwhitt1967@gmail.com

Why are you running for this position?

I'm running for the Heartland Board because HCC is a jewel in our community and I want to see it continue to grow and flourish in the years ahead.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I switched careers to become a Radiologic Technologist in my mid-30's and was able to do this because my local community college offered the training I needed. I've been employed in health care ever since, and I work with a number of Heartland graduates and see the impact HCC makes on a daily basis. I believe that my experience can bring a fresh perspective to the Heartland Board.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

1. Stabilize the budget situation as soon as possible.
2. Find ways to increase enrollment.
3. Look for opportunities to introduce new programs and fields of study.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

Funding is always a challenge in higher education. I would encourage HCC's leadership and our State and local elected officials to work on ways to make community college funding more predictable and equitable in the coming years while realizing that we need to be good stewards of public resources.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

My guiding principle as a Board member will be to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

As a Board member I will be accessible via phone and email and would also encourage residents of District 540 to attend Board meetings and let Heartland's leadership team hear your concerns. The only way to meet our community's needs is to listen, and I want to hear what people have to say.



LaNell Greenberg - Unit 5 School Board

Email: MLGREENB@hotmail.com

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Why are you running for this position?

To serve my community and the families and staff of Unit 5 Schools.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

A 12 year career in Unit 5, including 4 years as Clerk to the School Board and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. During those years I learned the process of creating Board agendas and meeting minutes, and how to support the School Board and Unit 5 Administration. I am the Secretary of the Parkside Elementary Promise Council. I understand the requirements of being a School Board member and serving the Unit 5 community. I am a strong advocate for students and families.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

- *Valuing staff
- *Advocating for children
- *Protecting local property tax dollars

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

The State of Illinois does not financially support public schools at a level required to maintain them. Currently, the Unit 5 budget is in deficit spending with working cash being used to fill that gap. I intend to work with the Board to look closely at the budget and how we can shore up the deficit. Local property taxes currently make up over 73% of the budget and those dollars must be protected and spent properly.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

All seven Board members must work together to come to decisions of leadership, policies, and financial management. Each person brings their own perspective and knowledge to each discussion. Listening to and working with others is imperative. When making decisions, each member must decide for themselves how they will vote. My vote will be based on what is best for Unit 5 children and families.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

I will return every call and email received from constituents. I will serve as a Board member by listening to concerns and making sure solutions are found.

Barry Hitchins - Unit 5 School Board

Email: hitchinsb@unit5.org

Why are you running for this position?

I want to have a positive impact on the education of the students of Unit 5.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have served on the Board of Education for the past 4 years, including 1 year as Vice President and 1 year as President. In my day job as a software developer I work with a team to develop the best possible solutions to a given problem. I believe this experience helps me on the Board when we need to make a decision on a difficult issue.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

1. Work to improve the educational experience of the students of Unit 5.
2. Work to improve the operational effectiveness of Unit 5.
3. Work to improve the financial stability of Unit 5.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

The challenge facing Unit 5 is the ongoing assault on public education. Politicians at the state and federal level are making it more difficult to perform our mission of education each student to achieve personal excellence. Whether it is unfunded mandates or diverting money away from public school districts, people with no education background are making decisions that impact public school districts. We need to work with our representatives to help them understand the vital role public education plays in our community and how the decisions they make at a state and federal level will impact our district.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

As a member of the Board of Education we have a very difficult balancing act in that sometimes the decisions we make do not impact our students and the community we serve in a similar manner. When faced with this type of decision, I will always favor the best interests of the

students of Unit 5. By taking this approach we will always make the community better because a high achieving school district will benefit the community in the long term.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

My phone and email address is available on the Unit 5 website. I am always willing to take calls or answer emails from my constituents.



Meta Mickens-Baker - Unit 5 School Board

Email: Kmc2baker@aol.com

Why are you running for this position?

I have served on the Unit 5 Board of Education since 2004. As a former educator and a parent of two Unit 5 graduates, serving on the Board of Education utilizes my professional and parental experience, and lets me continue to help the district educate each student to achieve personal excellence.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

My first career was as a science teacher in Virginia. Since changing careers, I have worked to fulfill a personal mission to support public education. In 2001, I joined the Unit 5 Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), and ultimately served as an officer. Since 2004, I have served on the Unit 5 Board of Education, including as Board President, Vice-President and Secretary. I currently represent the Board on the Curriculum and Community Engagement Committees.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

1. Make the community aware of the quality education provided to Unit 5 students.
2. Explore multiple avenues to increase revenue to maintain reasonable class sizes, effective programs, and recruit/retain high quality staff.
3. Meet the needs of a diverse student and family community, including language translation, diverse staff, and social-emotional supports.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

After years of state funding shortfalls, continuing to provide the high-quality education the community rightfully expects from Unit 5, is a challenge. After making expense cuts to maintain balanced budgets, we need to continue to look for revenue generating solutions.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

First, I make myself accessible and listen to options, concerns and questions. I try to understand the varied perspectives on issues, and research facts with the district administration. Ultimately, I vote according to what I believe will best enable each student to be educated to achieve personal excellence.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

As I have since 2004, I will continue to be accessible as I engage with students, parents, and other citizens at schools, in the community, at CAC meetings and via email, phone, and Board meeting comments. I listen actively and take constituent input into consideration for decision-making.

Alan Kalitzky - Unit 5 School Board

Email: Kalitzky4u5board@gmail.com

[Facebook](#)

Why are you running for this position?

I am running for School Board because I believe that public education is intimately tied to the vitality of our community, and that a board member maintains a responsibility to be an advocate for both. This means making decisions with the benefit or safety of the student population, but by also understanding the impact of those decisions on all the people the district represents.

I am running in order to provide every child with the education they deserve, and to create vision for Unit 5 that places emphasis on the preparedness of our students for the opportunities that await them.

I am running because as a district we need to better the communication of our successes and opportunities to our citizens, so that the community can continue to be an advocate for us, and not question our intent.

I am running because over the next 2 years the district faces a budget short fall that is going to require hard decisions be made; but decisions that must put our students above all else.

I am running because I know that I can advocate for our citizens, provide the vision, tell our story, and make the right financial decisions for the future.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have made it an objective in my life to contribute to the advancement of education for all of our community's learners. During my time in Bloomington, I have been an active member of the PTO at Benjamin Elementary, including chairing committees specifically targeting revenue generation. I have proudly served on the Unit 5 Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) as a delegate and board member. I also assisted in the development and creation of the district's previous Strategic Plan. I am an active member within Junior Achievement, providing basic level economics education to k-1 classrooms and volunteer for other organizations such as serving on the Alumni Corporation Board for Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity and maintaining several coaching engagements through, Prairie City Soccer League, Bloomington Normal Girls Softball Association, and the YMCA.

Professionally, I have been employed with a local automobile insurance company for the past 8 years, where I currently serves as a Relationship Manager within their Technology Vendor Management Office. My work requires me to develop strategic action plans for the governance and cost effectiveness of our organization's technology initiatives. This includes developing and implementing risk management and training plans, and create/enforcing organizational policy. Previously, I worked for seven year in outside Business to Business sales, primarily within the IT staffing and consulting industry.

From a personal perspective, I am the son, brother, and husband of educators at varying levels and the father to 4 Unit 5 students. Growing up in the classrooms of my family has allowed me to gain a perspective that every student, especially at the earliest levels, has the capability to learn beyond what others determine to be their means. I sat at the dinner table discussing the constraints of educators in public education like financial limitations, hampered access to adequate resources, shifting evaluation standards deterring expansion of the curriculum, or the inefficiency of administrative processes that take educators away from the classroom and their students.

Since becoming a husband my understanding has further evolved. Teaching in my wife's classroom as volunteer instructor, has shown me the varying degrees of readiness for each student. Helping her set up the classroom for the year, has given me a firsthand account of the work involved with setting up students for success. By volunteering in my own children's classrooms, I can see the direct impact the entire school community has on the students and in guiding their success. It has provided them with a sense of community, the need for a strong educational foundation, and has helped them form their character.

Each of these situations above, has given me the ability to collect a lot of valuable feedback and perspective. I have listened to our students, parents, educators, and citizens as they discuss what they enjoy about our schools and programs, but also what they seek to improve upon for the future. I believe my strengths through these opportunities include the ability to take advantage of a dual sided viewpoint that can create a strategic vision that benefits all. My professional role has enhanced my abilities for critical thinking which allows me to analyze complex circumstances and develop uniformed efficiency. Lastly, my ability to forge strong relationship can be utilized to better determine needs but also leverage partnerships in finding unified solutions.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

1. Finalizing a long term budget plan that includes balances service needs and identifies new revenue sources.
2. Improve communication between the district, parents, students, and staff

3. Ensure a physically and emotionally safe environment for our students and staff

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

The weakest point of the current state of public education is the limited funding, and budget cuts that have created huge problems for most public schools in the State of Illinois. Less funding has traditionally meant smaller staffs, fewer resources and a lower number of services for students. While Unit 5 may be in a better position than most, in that we have been able to address those challenges? maintain while others will go without, the limited support at the state and federal level, requires local economies to carry the burden to primarily support their education system independently.

The fiscal restrictions accompanied with the request for districts and educators to provide more for their students, will eventually force many institutions to strip academics to only its core factors, thereby presenting more barriers to student success, than it removes.

This will need to be addressed primarily through seeking alternative revenue sources outside of property tax increases, and capitalizing on the State of Illinois' new evidence based funding model. Additionally, increased focus on minimizing or eliminating non-essential operational expenses will be crucial in ensuring we do not overburden our local constituents.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

Decisions should be made with a specific benefit in mind, but also with the impacts of that decision internally and externally. A good board member represents all students as well as taxpayers of the district and should look for the option with highest tangible benefit, and limits any negative impact. While our passion for student success should always challenge to push the district to do more, the final determination should remain fact based, data driven, and with all affected parties represented in the discussion, prior to any vote. However in most cases, the decisions are rarely this cut and dry. In some cases the highest reward also carries the highest potential risk, or there are impact unforeseen by anyone.

In these situations, or any for that matter, the board and administration should be able clearly articulate why this is the best path forward, not with speculation, but reason and logic, even in dissension.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

It is critical that we make ourselves available to our constituents in order to solicit feedback, share perspectives, and disseminate information on the issues they care about. Currently my contact information is readily available on the Unit 5 website as well as on my campaign Facebook page, with the intent that people can reach out and communicate with me directly. Additionally, I will continue to reach out to interested or affected parties to ensure they are aware of any potential issues in which their feedback would be warranted. Most importantly I will make myself physically available by regular attending community events, PTO meetings, school staff meetings, and other occasions in which I am invited to speak to and interact with individuals the reside within Unit 5's borders. To assist in keeping people aware of the districts success or decisions, I will regularly update social media accounts aligned to me or my campaign, and will be generating summaries of local district events and activities, in order to engage those that are unaware of what is afforded to them in our great district.



Kelly Pyle - Unit 5 School Board

Email: kellypyleforunit5board@gmail.com

[Facebook](#)

Why are you running for this position?

I am honored to be serving as a current Unit 5 school board member. I am passionate about education and believe that every child deserves access to a high quality education, in a safe environment, so that they can achieve personal success. I have been a resident of Normal for 10 years and have two children in Unit 5 school district, so I am vested in completing a 4-year term and beyond. I am running to retain my seat on the Unit 5 school board because I want to continue to advocate for every student in Unit 5.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

Prior to my appointment to the school board in August of 2018, I served on the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) and have been an active member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at Grove Elementary. I am the daughter of two public school teachers, and have grown up with a firm foundation of the value of public education. Professionally, I have worked as an audiologist, clinical educator and instructor for more than 10 years, at Illinois State University. Currently, I work as an academic advisor, assisting incoming college freshman and transfer students, as they transition to college.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

First and foremost, my priority will be to ensure that each child in the district receives a high-quality education in a safe environment. Secondly, I will work to maintain and develop community partnerships and relationships that enhance and enrich educational opportunities. Finally, I will remain focused on maintaining a balanced budget.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

Finances are the biggest challenge that the school district continues to face. I believe that it is important to keep abreast on state funding issues and continue to pressure state legislators to provide adequate and timely funding to schools. I also think it is very important for the district to provide transparency and inform the community how state funding is allocated and how we utilize local tax dollars. As a board member, I will continue to monitor the expenses in the district and support new ideas about alternative ways to reduce expenses and increase revenue.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

Certainly in my professional career, I have dealt with conflict in the workplace among administrators, students and staff and have been called upon to make difficult decisions, at times. I believe that I've been successful in making hard decisions by acquiring information from all stakeholders, before arriving at a final decision. I try to look for areas of agreement and would try to seek peace, common ground and cooperation to achieve a solution that is in the best interests of students and honors the integrity of the school district.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

My preferred method of communication is small, one-on-one conversations, so I can listen, connect and engage with constituents, individually. It is important to me, to be accessible to my constituents and to understand their concerns and interests. As a current Unit 5 parent, constituents often reach out to me at PTO meetings, curriculum nights, athletic events, concerts, and other Unit 5 activities. As a board member, I continue to attend Citizens Advisory Council meetings, to gain insights from my constituents. I also try to share district information through social media and through committee updates during Unit 5 School board meetings. Finally, I can be reached through telephone or email, which is posted on Unit 5's website.



Amy Roser - Unit 5 School Board

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electAmyRoser@gmail.com
[Facebook](#)

Why are you running for this position?

As a product of a public-school education, a parent of two elementary students in the district, a long-time community volunteer serving the district through various roles, a first-generation college student and a career long higher education professional, I firmly believe that education of our citizenry is critical to our future on all levels. My sense of responsibility to give back, my passion for public service and desire to solve problems to affect positive change are my primary reasons for seeking additional time on the Unit 5 school board.

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I am a career long education professional working for 24 years at Illinois State University. My career has been dedicated to helping students gain access to and success in higher education. This experience provides a unique and yet relatable perspective to supporting Unit 5 and providing strategic direction to the school district.

After being appointed to the Board through a competitive application process in July, 2018, I found that the school board was a perfect outlet for my skills, talents, and passion. Prior to my board appointment, I spent 4 years on the Unit 5 Citizen's Advisory Council (CAC). The Council exposed me to school board topics such as school finance, facility maintenance and safety and provided context to the complexities of providing a quality education.

During my undergraduate education at Illinois State, I served as the Student Regent for the Illinois Board of Regents. The board, at that time, was the governing board for Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University and Sangamon State University (Now the University of Illinois at Springfield). Given this experience, I recognize the importance of local governance would appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the sustainability and future impact of our local schools.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

With two elementary school students in Unit 5, I am personally invested in quality schools and have dedicated myself to the betterment of Unit 5 through my past involvement with the Unit 5 Citizens Advisory Council and my current Unit #5 school board position.

My three top priorities are:

- To advocate for all students while also ensuring that each child receives an education that will lead to their individual personal success.
- To support Unit 5 staff by promoting a safe, collaborative and responsibly resourced work environment.
- To ensure that a quality public education in Unit #5 provides the foundation and bedrock for enhancing our local community.

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

Addressing challenges is part of holding any elected office. For Unit 5, I believe our current primary challenge is ensuring the financial stability of our schools. With volatility in state funding and school funding heavy reliance on property taxes, board members must ensure that all financial resources are effectively utilized, that outside sources of funding are fully leveraged, and that long-term stability is carefully considered.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

As an elected official, I take seriously my responsibility to understand the full context and multiple perspectives of an issue prior to making a decision that will impact our community. My approach is typically to learn, research and gather as much information as possible. Then, I seek to ask questions clarify any necessary items. For school board decisions, I then will seek out perspectives of district staff and leadership, teachers and school personnel, parents and community members. Seeking out multiple perspectives can help an elected official see how an issue will directly impact all of those involved.

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

Maintaining contact with the residents of Unit 5 is a responsibility of any elected official. I will seek out the opinions and perspectives of constituents by continuing to be active, involved, engaged and present in our community. I will be available to community members by publicly sharing my phone and email address. Listening too and seeking out the perspectives and experiences of those in our community is my duty as an elected school board member. I will also maintain my social media accounts to allow anyone in the community to contact me with concerns, questions, or celebrations.

Mike Trask - Unit 5 School Board

Email: traskm@unit5.org

Why are you running for this position?

To help ensure the Unit 5 Mission is accomplished – Educate Each Student to Achieve Personal Excellence -

What in your personal or professional background has prepared you for this position? Include any experience serving in local government.

I have been on the Board of Education since April of 2019, serving 2 terms. My wife is a 30 year educator in Unit 5 and my 2 children attended Unit 5 Schools.

I am a collaborator, listener, and trustworthy to all of my constituents.

I am 100% behind Public Education and will fight for it every day.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

- 1) Keep our budget balanced and work on financial issues
- 2) Safety in all our schools
- 3) Stop bullying

If elected, what challenges do you expect to encounter and how will you address those challenges?

To work at keeping a \$160+ budget balanced while we continue to be under funded by the State of Illinois.

I will collaborate with the board, administrators, staff, and community members to find solutions for these financial short comings.

As an elected official, you will undoubtedly be called upon to make decisions for your community. Explain how you will go about making a decision while in office.

I will do what I have always done:

- 1) Listen to all sides of the issue

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- 2) Gather facts and information for the issue
- 3) Ask questions for clarification
- 4) Make an informed decision to the best of my ability

Describe how you will communicate with your constituents.

I attend many events in the district and always welcome emails to my Unit 5 email account if someone has a concern.