

City Council Candidate Questions

Brian Hoffman

It's easy to campaign on "lower taxes," but, as costs increase, how would you accomplish a lower property tax rate? How do you prioritize realistic budget choices within each department to meet a goal of "lower taxes"?

Leveraging my experience within Hastings' non-profit and educational sectors, I understand fiscal accountability. While across-the-board cuts are feasible with personnel, equipment, and supplies budgets, there are better choices than these. More effective alternatives include reviewing budget specifics, identifying personnel opportunities within departments such as implementing hiring freezes and relying on attrition, renegotiating contracts, consolidating duplicate resources, and fostering departmental equipment sharing. These methods allow the department leadership and employees to be critical thinkers and part of the process instead of across-the-board cuts. Reducing a city budget where feasible can aid in the city tax levy request.

However, lowering property taxes requires collaboration beyond the city level. Open communication and cooperation with the county assessor's office is key. We need a system that ensures accurate and fair property valuations for all Hastings residents. Here's where citizen engagement becomes crucial. If you believe your property valuation is inaccurate, I encourage you to proactively engage with the county assessor's office. They have established procedures for appealing valuations, and your participation is essential. By working together, Hastings can hold the county accountable for fair property assessments.

As an elected leader, how do you feel you can impact the talent availability in our community?

Hastings is filled with a wealth of recognized and undiscovered talent bolstered by three colleges within our 25,000-strong community. By utilizing these college networks and drawing upon existing community wisdom, we possess the means to foster Hastings' growth; all that remains is to use our local talent pool fully. As revealed by the StrengthsFinder assessment, my strengths include being a Maximizer and possessing Connectedness, further positioning me to contribute to this challenge of leading Hastings.



Describe your thoughts about the relationship between the position of the Mayor and the City Council. Also, between the City Council and the position of City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator?

With my background as a coach and a non-profit board member, I grasp the relationship between the City Council and the Mayor—they are like a cohesive team. The mayor acts as the team captain, providing direction and drawing upon the City Council's expertise to make well-informed choices. It's all about teamwork. Meanwhile, the City Administrator and their team take on the role of coaches, providing guidance and tactics to tackle the city's challenges effectively. Success comes from having a strong coaching staff, dedicated team captains, and skilled players.

What is your vision for the growth and development of Hasting's business and industry? What specific strategies do you have in mind to attain them?

I envision a brighter Hastings, built on the strengths that define us. This means leveraging our vibrant schools (PreK-College) by supporting sports, music, and other social activities. Market our innovative healthcare institutions to attract families and top talent. We streamline city development processes for manufacturers and contractors. Leverage our downtown, north commons, and theater district by promoting mixed-use developments.

Hastings will be a beacon for families. We'll actively promote this message to our youth and students, fostering a strong sense of community where everyone feels supported. For those seeking a vibrant work-life balance, Hastings offers the perfect solution. Our lower cost of living, lively downtown, and widespread high-speed internet make us ideal for remote workers. I believe our library, downtown areas, and museum can become more than just places to visit and gather resources. They can be dynamic hubs for entertainment, socializing, and community connection.

Finally, let's embrace our unique identity! We'll proudly brand Hastings as the Kool-Aid Capital, a city full of flavor and spirit.



As an elected leader, how will you help to shape a positive, growth-oriented narrative for the Hastings community?

It starts with WE. As leaders, it is our responsibility to create a shared vision of success for our city. This vision starts with us. I believe in leading with service, support, and a positive outlook. Let us send a clear message: WE are a welcoming city. WE want you here. WE support one another, and WE will work through challenges together. By fostering a spirit of collaboration and celebrating our collective achievements, WE can shape a prosperous future for Hastings.