

# City Council Candidate Questions

Maggie Esch

**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"?**

It's important to mention City Council does not control property taxes. However, it is important that as a City Council, we make sure that any tax dollars within the City are being used efficiently. By paying close attention to the City budget and advocating for realistic spending at the City level, we can ensure that tax-payer dollars go further.

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

From 2016-2020, I served as the talent director for Hastings Economic Development Corporation (a position that City dollars partially supported) that led the talent initiative on behalf of the Hastings community. This experience showcased that we can't do enough locally to engage with our current and future workforce and talent. We want to make students, current residents, and prospective residents know that we are a great place (the best place) to work, live, and play. Through Council, I would continue to support housing projects and mixed-use developments, small businesses and entrepreneurs, and proposals that enhance the quality of life in Hastings; things that people search for when choosing a community. Additionally, as a mom, small business owner, and young professional, it would send a great message to other people like me who want to find a community that is welcoming and allows young leaders to have a voice.

**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?**

As a City Council representative, it is our job to advocate on behalf of our ward to our City officials. The Mayor relies on the City Council to be the voice of the residents within their given ward so he/she can make better decisions for our community as they communicate and work with City administration. If elected, I would also feel comfortable speaking to City



leadership to quickly resolve issues, encourage better policies, and ensure that future strategic planning aligns with priorities within Ward 3. If all of this aligns, we can proactively position our community up for success and future growth.

**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?**

In my experience with economic development, it became obvious quickly that attracting large companies to Hastings was the exception to the rule. The rule became that if we want to see our community change, grow, and thrive, we (me and you) have to take ownership in the future of Hastings. I am a big believer in business retention and development meaning I love seeing (and helping) locals start businesses and I love seeing our local business community engage in expansion opportunities. I believe in growing our own so that investments in our community stay here and grow here.

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

To put it simply, I will continue to be me. My passion for the community is evident whether that be through the conversations I have daily, the events I attend, the local businesses I support, or what I post on my social media. I am a positive, growth-oriented voice for Hastings. As a small business owner and mom of two young children, I want to create a community that my kids will choose to stay in, grow in, and love, just like I do.

