

City Council Candidate Questions

Michael Anderson

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"?

Department heads need to meet with the full council and go through the budget, department heads need to justify their budget. The council can not represent the citizens if they don't know the budget they are expected to vote on. If the budget can be adjusted to save money it should be, why would we spend more than necessary, we knew inflation was going to be a big factor. Inflation is not going away anytime soon and that is clear to everyone, this is why department heads discussing the budget in open dialogue with the council is important. The budget affects everyone and the levee affects everyone, it is time for serious discussion and action. The department heads will list priority items and non priority and that will determine what makes the budget and what waits. This is not a new concept. I can't see any board voting on a budget without knowing what is in the budget and the priority items if the budget has increased. I might add this, the Citizens are people, we know inflation is real and hitting some harder than others. Just because higher taxes aren't an issue for one person, doesn't mean that for another person. Not all citizens have extra unallocated money for higher taxes. Walk around the community and see people where they're at, you might see budgets from a different perspective. Who increases the budget of the struggling citizen, and by increase I mean the income side?

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

I'm going to read talent as skill, talent is not a word I use very often. By creating an atmosphere where businesses can grow and inviting new business to come to Hastings, I won't need to bring talent/skill. The businesses will bring talent/skill as they expand, grow, and bring in other businesses. Demand will bring talent/skill to Hastings. Listening to the citizens and making it easier for them to start small businesses will help expose the talent/skill that already exists in Hastings. Also, by allowing the citizens to keep more of their money and decide where they want to spend it. The citizens will shop and work where they want and that will determine what this city has to offer. I won't bring new talent or



skills to the community, the community will do that based on opportunity. You create an atmosphere where people can afford to work a little outside the box and you will see new business opportunity in Hastings where talent/skill will grow or be revealed. Can you show an example of the council impacting talent in Hastings because I can't. My point is please give an example of the council directly impacting talent in 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?

The Mayor should be a leader that leads the council in the direction of the citizens needs. The mayor must listen to the citizens, city council, and city staff. The city administrator and assistant should listen to the council, the council is who the citizens elected to represent them. The mayor and City Council must listen to the citizens and encourage citizen input and get that information to the Administrator. The Administration must work with council and mayor to implement change that will encourage meeting the determined needs. Citizen needs would include functional city departments, staff and system, safety and infrastructure.

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?

My vision for growth is to bring business to Hastings that can enhance the existing businesses. By enhancing existing businesses that will strengthen them and give them benefit, often the focus is on giving new business help and existing businesses are left to struggle. With new business and strengthened existing businesses it should improve wages but not only wages, also benefit packages, along with a need for employees. This will in turn encourage young people to stay here and new people to come here, that will also spread the tax burden across a larger platform. Our utilities will be a core focus for new and existing businesses that are going to be looking for reliable, uninterrupted energy as well as the new and existing citizens. I would suggest getting business leaders together and see what they can offer new businesses as well as seeing if any businesses they currently work with would like to relocate here. We have a good community here and I believe businesses that believe in strong families are what we are looking for.



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

I would truly encourage citizen input and interaction, it's hard to convince unhappy people that they're really happy. I will count on the citizens for this, the citizens are the cities greatest asset and we need to start acting like we understand that. People see what they see, lived experience is everything. We have to start meeting their realistic needs and build trust, at that point I think the atmosphere will begin to change. Then the citizens will start reflecting positive feedback and encouraging input along with great ideas. Wouldn't it be great if high school and college graduates looked forward to staying in Hastings, not just for factory jobs but jobs from top to bottom. That can be achieved but it will take a combined effort from Mayor, City Council, and citizen commitment. How many town halls have the City Council done, compared to all the board meetings attended? Generally where you focus your efforts will be your strong points, maybe it's time to focus on the citizens. Hastings can be Great, we just need to achieve that as a city.

