

The Bandera PROPHEET

October 11, 2022

Bandera City Council Candidates Q&A

The Bandera Prophet invited the candidates for Bandera City Council to participate in a Q&A. Two council seats will be elected.

Each candidate's response is published in alphabetical order by their last name.

The questions were as follows:

1. Why are you running for Bandera City Council?
2. What would you like to see changed for the city, and how do you plan to implement those changes?
3. What do you believe is working well for the city, and how do you plan to preserve that?
4. What are your biggest concerns for the city?
5. What makes you the best candidate for Bandera City Council?

Alan Calaway:

Did not participate

Jeff Flowers:

1. I'm running for Bandera City Council to incorporate God, family and community to the forefront of all discussion and decisions that come to the Council. Some people are under the impression that because I'm not from Bandera, I can't possibly be for Bandera. This couldn't be further

from the truth. I grew up in Odem, Texas, an equally small town in south Texas, so I understand the need to maintain the value, integrity, and lifestyle small towns are accustomed to.

In addition, my family has been happily rooted in Pipe Creek, Comfort and Kerrville for over 20 years, and make no mistake, Bandera is and has always been a big part of my life. To ensure the roots of Bandera thrive, the city must be cared for. As it happens in many great towns, there are real missed opportunities, not necessarily to change Bandera, but to make Bandera's roots stronger. My hope is that I am given the opportunity to help in this.

2. I have learned from many people in our community that there is a real hunger for transparency and community first concerning city operations. I plan to weed out decisions based on nepotism and "playing favorites". I believe that All businesses and community members should all be held to the same standards. I plan to work side by side with the city council and its community members in an effort to work for what's best for Bandera and its community and not self-interests.

3. What I believe works well for Bandera is the historical and heritage value we offer as a community to attract vital tourism that helps grow our economy. Bandera is well known for being the gateway to the hill country and home to the old frontier cowboys that helped brand Bandera, The Cowboy Capital.

Whether it be through tourism from people looking to experience our town short term, or individuals and families looking to set in roots, I will always support the efforts and preservations to keep Bandera's rich history and heritage alive.

4. One of the biggest concerns for Bandera I have noticed is neglecting the urgent need for a new Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is my understanding that seven years have passed since a need for a new Water Treatment Plant was determined. Lack of action over the years has cost the citizens enough. It is time to act on the suggestions, plans, and

initiatives that have been presented to the city. We must work on ways to start implementing the groundwork now, instead of the all or nothing approach.

In addition, I would like to see substantial improvements to Bandera's infrastructure. Over the years, Bandera's infrastructure has gone unattended and borderline neglected. This has left Bandera playing catch up in restoring the life and beauty that it once was. It is important to take immediate action based on all resources available to better the community infrastructure as a whole.

I understand that the city has adopted the "Simple City" or Master Plan, but how do we go further in implementing certain aspects of this plan? Or any other suggested improvements vital to Bandera?

Bandera needs to be a town our children would not hesitate to flock back to when their time comes to raise a family. Currently Bandera lacks the opportunities a solid infrastructure offers to encourage that possibility.

5. I don't know that I believe that I'm necessarily "the best" candidate for Bandera City Council, but I have a heart to do what's BEST for Bandera and the community. I can wholeheartedly promise that will always be my priority.

My faith in Jesus Christ has led me on a path of opportunities only He can take credit for. For 20 years, working as an electrical sales engineer, I was blessed with traveling across all the states in our great country, including other countries around the world. I have seen the inner workings of small and big cities alike. I have witnessed firsthand systems and policies that make great towns and cities successful, and I have seen systems and policies that have destroyed great cities and towns.

Currently I work for Adopt a Highway encouraging businesses to participate in keeping the interstates and highways of our great state of Texas clean and beautiful. I also co-operate two small businesses with my wife while also raising a beautiful 10-year-old daughter. In addition, my wife and I have opened our home to a Foreign Exchange Daughter from Italy.

I believe that God calls us to community, and as such, I have immersed myself in the Bandera community as an active coach for Little League softball as well as the Boys & Girls Club basketball and flag football programs. I am also proud to be a part of BAFIT – Bandera Athletics Facility Improvement Team that looks for resources to help improve BISD athletic programs and their facilities.

Lastly, as an active member and lobbyist for Americans for Equal Shared Parenting, I advocate for children's rights to have equal access to both parents equally, following separation or divorce. As a community we must fight the separation of families and the damage it has caused to our children over the last 50 years.

With all this I feel I have the ability to offer a well-rounded perspective based on my life experiences. I can look through all angles of the glass to ensure the right decisions are made on behalf of the citizens of Bandera.

Lynn Hogan Palmer:

1. The reason I am running for a seat on the City Council is because Bandera has been my home for 44 years. I have been fortunate to raise my children in the city, where they had a community of friends and we all knew our neighbors. They had the freedom to ride their bikes to the city park and swim in the Medina River. I would like to see the integrity of our small town remain the same for many more years. If I am elected, I will ensure our community's safety, promote a positive environment for families to live in and business to grow.

2. The biggest change is the relocation of the Waster Water Treatment Site, we must accomplish this project for the economic development and for the health and safety of our city residents and businesses. City council must purchase property for a new site, budget money solely for this purpose and apply for grants.

3. Being recognized as the Cowboy Capitol of the World is working well for the city, sadly in my opinion the promotion has surpassed the

product. Bandera County has two historical buildings located in the city, the Old Jail and the Old Courthouse. I would like to see some of our Economic Development funds set aside to help with the renovations of both these projects, this will be advantageous for all parties. It will be a great visitors center and the jail is full of Bandera history, it will be a great place for our visitors and schools to tour.

4. One of my biggest concerns is traffic. I would like to see the City work diligently together with the Texas Department of Public Safety to improve the traffic flow during the busy hours of the weekday and weekends, a change in the Traffic Light Signals and creating turning lanes will make a difference to the flow of downtown traffic, especially the heavy traffic before and after school.

5. I am the best candidate for Bandera City Council because I love Bandera. I have experience, I am honest, committed and motivated to serve my community. I will be a representative of all of the people, not just a small group and will always make the right decisions for the City as a whole, I will not have a narrow perspective.

Toni Kunz:

1. Quite simply, because I care. My family founded and helped build this town and I enjoy any chance I can get to help maintain our heritage, lifestyle and values through community service. City Council and its decisions are a fundamental part of managing inevitable change without sacrificing who we are. It's such an important seat to be filled by people that truly want to represent the residents', property owners' and businesses' point of view without pushing any individual agenda, including their own. I am in this to maintain representation of the people that are Bandera. I want to continue to be a part of a council that manages the city with the residents, property owners and business owners. I believe we have it in us to do this. We just have to encourage and improve our direct communication and community involvement. Apathy is killing our country and we are too small to let it happen to us.

2. I am proud of what we have accomplished these last two years. We have many infrastructure and street projects well underway. In addition to maintaining momentum in our current projects, I would like to see more community contributions and involvement. It takes a village, after all. A few months ago I introduced an idea that was well-received by council to educate and involve our community in a review and revise process of our current ordinances and procedures. The plan that I proposed was to take one section at a time, educate the staff and community, and gather input as to if/how it should be updated then enforce it fairly across the board. One section at time, at minimum chaos and cost, we can resolve a lot of the costly struggles that have been occurring for decades. The pet and the sign ordinances as well as the permitting process seem to be the most urgent to tackle but there are many. I think we should review all of them, even if it is just a reminder. Now that we have our new City Administrator William Cox in place, hopefully we can come up with a plan and a schedule.

3. In the last two years, we have been focused on being proactive in planning repairs and maintenance and securing grants and low-to-no interest loans for these projects. We must maintain our momentum and can't let the noise get us off track. Our future depends on it. In addition, we have focused on implementing best practices within the city to include more departmental checks and balances, hiring the right personnel, keep them trained and educated, and ultimately retain the right people for our Bandera.

4. My biggest concern is the rising cost of doing business and how that impacts our community. We are all struggling with finances and the city is no different. Many of our citizens are on fixed incomes so the slightest increase may determine whether or not they can afford necessities. Being a rural tourist town in the middle of vast urban sprawl, drought, inflation, and possibly on the verge of a recession, we must continue to find ways to be more efficient and to generate alternative income that

would reduce the burden on our property taxes all while fighting to maintain our identity.

Even with all that looming, it's more important than ever that we remain focused on the urgent tasks and goals at hand to get to the end goal. For instance, our water and wastewater infrastructure must continue to be effective and secure because it's necessary to the overall health of our citizens and our hill country. Securing this infrastructure is not only needed to confidently supply potable water but we could also collect, treat, discharge and sell wastewater or manage storm water runoff, and to prevent or manage flooding and erosion and gain an alternative income. Status quo is not working. We must continue to look and find cost efficient long-term solutions with bigger return on our investments.

5. I care and I believe I have proven that am 100 percent worthy of your vote for Bandera City Council because I believe "We" are the sum of our collective passion, vision and expertise. I believe in finding solutions for the collective residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors of Bandera. No matter what the situation, problem or solution, I believe these things. Does that mean we will all agree on what the solution is? No, it doesn't. But, I can promise that I learn from our wins and our losses, and I put that knowledge to work for us. Because I believe that when we know better, we have an obligation to do better. You will hear me bring up many situations from the past as a warning to not repeat and a plea to do better. We do not have time or money to waste or repeat mistakes and misplaced trust. I vow to continue to be a good steward of "We" in Bandera and I will continue to fight for our community's success.

I have a pretty good idea of what this community is about because I am involved. I volunteer with and donate to many organizations within the City and County of Bandera. In addition to living and working here, I have two other businesses within the City of Bandera. But we need more community involvement in our decisions, so I am accessible. I am always willing to listen to, discuss with, and debate any issue with anyone willing, for the sole purpose of learning and gaining perspective

to do my best in representing ALL the people that love and contribute to our Bandera: residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors. In August 2016, I set up a Facebook page called “We the People of Bandera City and County” to promote what is happening in our community. If you want to know more about me, what I stand for, what I promote, and what I want to spend my time focusing on, you have six years of data at your fingertips. I post and present as a “We” looking at all the things in our community that shape us. If you have any feedback or comments, I would love to hear them.

If you have any questions or concerns for me, please do not hesitate to contact me at cobtonikunz@yahoo.com to initiate a conversation.

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Early voting for the Nov. 8 election will begin Oct. 24 and continue through Nov. 4, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Extended hours will be Tuesday, Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Early voting locations are at the Ray Mauer Annex, 403 12th Street, Bandera; the Lakehills Area Library, 7200 FM 1283, Lakehills; and at the Medina Annex, 161 E. Parker Street, Medina.

Election Day by precinct is Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.