



2026

Murray City Council Candidate Survey

A business community voter information guide

Published by: Murray–Calloway County Chamber of Commerce

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Candidate responses • Six community and business policy questions • November 3, 2026 election

About this guide

The Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce invited all candidates for Murray City Council to share their perspectives on issues important to our local business community, including economic development, infrastructure, fiscal responsibility, workforce needs, and community partnerships.

The survey questions were developed with input from Chamber members and the Chamber's Advocacy Committee, reflecting issues and priorities important to our local business community. Through this effort, the Chamber seeks to provide voters with information about candidates' perspectives while encouraging informed civic participation.

This guide is intended to help Chamber members and community voters better understand each candidate's priorities and vision for Murray's future. Candidates are presented in alphabetical order by last name. The Chamber does not endorse candidates through this publication.

Survey Process: All candidates were emailed an invitation to participate on Friday, September 11, 2026, using the email addresses provided when filing for office with the Calloway County Clerk. Candidates were given until September 30, 2026, to submit their responses.

Candidate Responses: All responses are published as submitted, preserving each candidate's original wording, spelling, punctuation, and views. Responses exceeding the established word limits have been cut off at the maximum word count without editing or completing sentences. Limits were 75 words for biographies, 125 words for the community vision question, and 150 words for each of the five remaining questions.

Questions left unanswered are identified as "No response submitted." Candidates who did not participate are identified on the last page.

An asterisk (*) next to a candidate's name indicates they currently serve on the Murray City Council and are seeking reelection.



William C Adams

NO HEADSHOT SUBMITTED

OCCUPATION

Attorney

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

wcadams3@wcadamslaw.com

Candidate biography

I am attorney in private practice in Murray, Kentucky. I am a 1993 graduate of The Murray State University and a 1996 graduate of the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University. I served as the Assistant County Attorney for Calloway County (1999- 2000), the Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for the 42nd Judicial Circuit in Calloway and Marshall Counties (2000-2003), and as an adjunct professor for Murray State University. I have been in

Response cut at 75-word limit.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

Continued growth for the City of Murray, without sacrificing or changing the current character of our city. The two most important priorities that I would have would be the attraction of additional business/industry and maintaining and improving existing city infrastructure. With respect to any specific action, I would consult with City Administration as to the best way to move forward.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

The City of Murray should maintain an active and proactive role in recruiting businesses and industries to our community. Further, the City should support all existing businesses and industries and take steps to ensure that the City's regulatory environment fosters growth instead of acting as a deterrent.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

Quality services and growth cost money, and that money has to come from somewhere. If taxes are going to be increased, the City needs to inform the citizens as to the reason for such and be prepared to exhibit recognizable results for any citizen expenditure.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

The City needs to maintain and improve the existing infrastructure. With regard to specific improvements, I would defer to the Department heads as to their priority list of projects and long-term plan.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Find a way to get people to come to Murray. Our community of people, and our collective interaction with newcomers, are the best advertisements for our City.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

Collaborative efforts among all stakeholders are essential for any community. There are certain things that the City does well on its own (fire protection and law enforcement, among others). There are certain things that the county does well on its own (fire protection and law enforcement among others). There are certain things the City and County do well together (the Airport). There are certain things that the City and County do well through a third party entity (the Hospital) The key is identifying areas for collaboration and make the determination as to which entity or governance model is best equipped to provide the service. With respect to 911 operations, there is no quick and easy answer to the question of how that service should function in the future. If elected, I would require much more information so that an educated decision could be made that would best serve the City.

Linda Avery



OCCUPATION

retired Circuit Court Clerk

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

LINDAAVERY1958@YAHOO.COM

Candidate biography

I stepped into retirement in 2023. It didn't take long to realize that I genuinely missed my wonderful connections with our community. I'm excited to share that I'm ready to put my professional background back to work! Combining 27 years as a paralegal with all the practical knowledge and insights I gained as your Clerk, I have a skill set that would allow me to make a positive impact on our community.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

My vision is for Murray to remain true to its identity as "The Friendliest Small Town in America" as it grows. This spirit is the foundation on which Murray was built. The City Council must continue to use every available resource to provide the services our community needs to care for one another. We must also collaborate with public, private and nonprofit organizations to ensure our city continues to that shared commitment.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

Murray needs additional industries that offer competitive salaries and benefits, outstanding working conditions, and a commitment to our community. These opportunities would give young adults and Murray State University graduates stronger reasons to build their futures here. Economic development should therefore remain a high priority for the city. Murray must create a welcoming, supportive environment that attracts new industries while helping existing employers remain and grow.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

The City Council must maintain financial stability while providing high-quality services and making responsible investments in Murray's future. I do not take tax increases lightly and would consider one only if accurate financial information clearly showed it was essential. I am equally committed to transparency: I will represent all Murray residents and clearly communicate the issues and decisions before the council so the public can understand how its tax dollars are spent.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray’s economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Maintaining and improving Murray's existing infrastructure is essential. Well-kept roads, parks, and public buildings support economic growth because businesses and industries consider the condition of a community when deciding where to invest. The city must regularly review and update a long-range plan to guide consistent, sustainable growth. The Planning and Zoning commission plays an integral role in carrying out this vision.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Affordable housing for residents at every income level should be a top priority for the City of Murray. The city should leverage all available resources, including state and federal funding, to address this need. We must also continue building a safe, inclusive community where crime remains low and every life is valued regardless of our differences.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

The city, county, Murray State University, and the business community must work together to identify opportunities for coordination and reduce unnecessary duplication. Murray is not isolated from the broader community; our success depends on collaboration and a shared commitment to making our community the best it can be.

Jeremy Bell*



OCCUPATION

Sales Executive

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

jbellfamily@att.net

Candidate biography

I have been married to my wife for 31 years with two kids. I have served on the Council for 20 years.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

My vision is to make sure we are efficient, as we have been in the past, with what we have. I believe Park funding and making sure our public utilities stay in good working order are two priorities. We are constantly upgrading our utilities to make sure we keep up with the growth the last several years. The Park is always in need of more funding and the City has put forth it's fair share plus some to make sure things are working properly

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

I believe we should work to bring any business whether big or small to Murray. In the past we have offered tax break to industries looking to locate in Murray. It is important we work together to find ways to help our existing employees and small businesses thrive in the City.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

The City has been very good at managing the money we have, providing quality services without placing a financial burden on our residents and businesses. If any new tax was to be enacted it would be a good idea to let the people vote on it. A Park tax was placed on the ballot several years ago giving the citizens the chance to vote yes or no. Providing the citizens the chance to vote ensures transparency

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Roads and utilities are crucial in Murray's economic future. The City has made significant improvements to water and sewer plants plus running more natural gas lines. For any growth to happen you also have to have roads. It's important to continue to provide funding for these two. Planning and zoning continues to lead the way in the growth process. It is important to maintain and adapt the standards that have been put in place

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

People need to feel safe so public safety is a big priority. Making sure our employees are paid a good wage goes along way in retention. We have tried over the years to increase wages but need to do more. Having a viable park can also have a greater impact on overall quality of life.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

I believe we should always look for opportunities to work together with everyone. The City has done a great job of handling the 911 services since the beginning. I trust they will do so in the future. I don't believe there should be a consolidation of that service with the county. As always we should be open to future discussions

Holly Blalock-Herod



OCCUPATION

Realtor(R) and Adjunct Instructor at MSU

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

hollyherod@gmail.com

Candidate biography

Holly Blalock-Herod, holds a B.S. in Biology and an M.S. in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. My 30-year federal career focused on conserving fish and wildlife resources nationwide, a passion from growing up in Murray. Now “retired”, I teach at Murray State and work as a REALTOR®. I am running for City Council to bring my public-service, policy, planning, and budgeting experience to support sustainable growth and expand opportunities for Murray’s local businesses.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

My vision for Murray balances sustainable growth with green infrastructure. During my first term, my priorities include reviving our local economy by attracting small businesses into existing, unoccupied buildings and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

My vision for Murray begins with listening to our citizens to actively recruit the specific small businesses they want to see in our community. To attract these new businesses into existing storefronts, the City must aggressively market existing tools like our Tax Moratorium for building rehabilitation, matching grants for exterior updates, commercial energy efficiency incentives, and Murray Main Street programs like pop-up incubators. To support and encourage the success of existing small businesses, I will promote education on State Small Business Tax Credits and foster local workforce partnerships to lower overhead costs, streamline city permitting, and help our established local employers expand.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

The City must carefully balance essential services with strategic investments in our future. Prior to considering any tax or fee increases, we must thoroughly audit the existing budget to identify cost savings that can fund new initiatives. I would only support a new tax or fee if it directly drives environmentally sustainable growth and economic prosperity. For instance, any new revenue should explicitly fund green infrastructure projects or directly incentivize small businesses to revitalize our unoccupied buildings. To ensure absolute transparency and accountability, any such proposal must be backed by a comprehensive public review of the budget and a rigorous, detailed cost-benefit analysis.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray’s economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Murray’s economic future relies on modernizing our utilities, upgrading regional transit corridors like US-641, and expanding broadband. To foster environmentally sustainable growth, capital investments must prioritize green infrastructure, like storm-water management upgrades and energy-efficient commercial hubs, alongside pad-ready industrial properties. The City must prioritize projects based on a transparent cost-benefit analysis, seeking state infrastructure grants and public-private partnerships before burdening taxpayers. Planning and zoning are critical tools to manage this growth responsibly. By aligning development with the City’s updated Comprehensive Plan, we can guide high-impact commercial projects to proper zones without overstraining city services. Crucially, adaptive zoning should incentivize small businesses to move into unoccupied buildings and preserve walkable green spaces, protecting our community’s charm while actively driving economic prosperity.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

To attract and retain a vibrant workforce, Murray must be a city where families thrive. The city can drive this by addressing affordable housing with green infrastructure and childcare accessibility. I will champion flexible zoning code updates to allow mixed-use and multi-family developments, expanding affordable housing options without overstraining city services. I will propose investing in green infrastructure and upgrading community parks and funding youth recreation programs. Connecting residential areas to green spaces directly improves overall quality of life and makes Murray highly attractive to young professionals and working parents. Secondly, we can address the childcare shortage by partnering with Murray Main Street. Using micro-grants and streamlined city permitting, we can help entrepreneurs safely establish new childcare facilities in underutilized commercial spaces. These targeted actions cut costs for working families, enhance our local quality of life, and give Murray’s employers a competitive edge in retaining top talent.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

Collaboration is key to stretching tax dollars and improving local services. I fully support a formal, public cost-and-service review of our local 911 operations. Currently, our area relies on separate dispatch entities, including the City, Calloway County, and Murray State University. This fragmentation has the potential to cause administrative duplication, fragmented fee structures, and redundant overhead costs. A data-driven review will give us the transparent facts needed to evaluate whether sharing services or consolidating operations can cut costs for taxpayers while maintaining—or even improving—our emergency response times. Our top priority must be public safety, and ensuring that our first responders have the most efficient, streamlined coordination possible. By partnering closely with Calloway County, Murray State, and the business community, we can find modern efficiencies that keep Murray safe without placing an unnecessary financial burden on our citizens.

Ken Claud



OCCUPATION

Calloway County Jailer

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

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Candidate biography

I am a M.S.U. graduate earning a B.S. degree in Political Science/Criminal Justice and later a Master of Public Administration. In 1987 I began my law enforcement career with the Murray Police Department. I served from 2004 until retiring in 2010 as Chief of Police for the City of Murray. I am also a 2002 graduate of the F.B.I.'s National Academy. In 2014 I was elected Calloway County Jailer and have served three terms.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

One issue potentially affecting Murray residents is the possibility of A.I. data centers locating in our city. While the City Council has passed an ordinance placing certain restrictions on data centers, we must remain vigilant to ensure they do not negatively impact our community or quality of life. We must continue improving our infrastructure to attract new businesses and industry. The mayor, city manager, and City Council have done an excellent job maximizing available grants by utilizing city engineering and public works personnel. New sidewalks have been built, with more underway, making it safer for residents and visitors to walk throughout our community. Learning more about how to make the most of the resources available to us would be a top priority.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

We of course need a healthy mix of industry, small businesses and professional services to enhance our quality of life in the city. City government needs to be a partner in growth and expansion and not create new obstacles or maintain outdated regulations. We should look for ways to streamline permitting and licensing processes to make Murray as business friendly as possible. I would support a comprehensive study that includes public forums, town halls, and community surveys to identify what should be updated and explore ways to encourage new business investment while supporting the growth and success of existing businesses.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

City residents expect quality services from their local government, including well-maintained infrastructure, sanitation, utilities, and public safety. Providing these services requires sufficient revenue, while the city's annual budget must balance income and expenditures. Our city already utilizes allowable taxes, including payroll, insurance, property, and alcohol sales taxes. I understand that residents do not want existing taxes increased or new taxes enacted. At the same time, we all have services or resources we would like to see improved. Our park is a great example. It could be enhanced with improved facilities, additional activities, and more staffing, but those improvements would require additional funding. If new revenue is needed for expanded services, residents should have a meaningful voice in the process. We deserve to know the costs, understand the options, and provide input before any new tax or fee is enacted.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

To attract new industries and businesses, Murray must have the infrastructure needed to meet their needs. Properties that are already developed can help speed the startup of new industries and support the expansion of existing businesses. The city has already made progress by installing new, larger water and sewer lines to our industrial park. We should continue identifying grants and incentive programs to help fund infrastructure improvements and support responsible growth. By maintaining our infrastructure and strategically planning for future growth, we can encourage economic development while preserving Murray's high quality of life. Planning and zoning should always play an important role in managing growth. We want new industries and businesses, but we also need to ensure they are properly located and do not infringe on residential neighborhoods. Responsible planning and zoning allows us to grow our economy while protecting our community and identity.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Murray's future depends on maintaining strong infrastructure, providing quality city services, and managing growth responsibly. We must support existing employers while creating an environment that attracts new businesses and jobs—without losing the community we value. With 39 years of public safety experience, keeping Murray safe will be one of my top priorities. Our low crime rate is a major part of what makes Murray a great place to live, work, and raise a family. We have a strong police department with excellent facilities and well-trained personnel. We must provide competitive compensation to retain these dedicated officers and support staff. Our fire department also has two excellent facilities. We need to keep equipment current and ensure our firefighters are competitively compensated. Strong public safety, responsible growth, and quality services will help keep Murray a great place to live and work.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

I believe there are opportunities for the City of Murray and the county governments to share services and resources in ways that could save taxpayer money while maintaining or improving public services. The potential merger of the city and county E911 centers has been discussed for several years. I would support conducting a comprehensive, independent study to examine the potential benefits, costs, challenges, and drawbacks of such a merger before any final decision is made. If a merger were ultimately determined to be beneficial, I believe the combined E911 operation should be established as a stand-alone entity with its own dedicated emergency headquarters. This approach could provide the independence, resources, and infrastructure necessary to ensure reliable emergency communications and effective service to the entire community. 2026 Murray City Council Candidate Survey

AJ Cunha



OCCUPATION

Retired Military

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

<https://www.facebook.com/share/19RhXrh8Y2/>

Candidate biography

Natalie and I are proud parents of four children—two currently in college and two at home. Professionally, I am a retired U.S. Navy Master Chief, a Kentucky Colonel, Murray Lion, past MSU VA Director, and hold a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from Saint Joseph's University. Our family enjoys traveling, music festivals, sporting events, and playing tennis. I remain dedicated to public service, mentoring, and building meaningful relationships to support others in our community.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

To support Murray's steady 6% growth since 2010, we must proactively invest in our public safety and economic development. Specifically, I would urge the council to prioritize the following key initiatives, first being public safety. We need to repair overdue city sidewalks and install light-up crosswalks and stop signs in high-traffic, low-light areas to better protect pedestrians and cyclists. During my first year, public safety will be my top priority. As our community grows, economic development must meet the demand. Consideration should be given to construct a multi-sport complex keeping local sports tournaments in Murray. This will support our youth, bring families together, and generate valuable economic investment for local restaurants, hotels, and small businesses. Our families, children, and local business community deserve this investment.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

To drive sustainable growth, our city should target tech startups, manufacturing, and green energy companies. The City's role is to facilitate, advertise, and encourage businesses looking to start or expand in our community, ultimately providing employment opportunities for our residents. To support existing employers and local small businesses, the City should establish mentorship programs and assist with applications for micro-grants for technology and storefront upgrades. A partnership between city, county, and university leadership could also be established as a work-study initiative to identify buildings that can be repurposed for local startups. Additionally, city leadership should host regular roundtable lunches with business owners to ensure our policies directly address local challenges.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

Our city must prioritize taxpayer-funded public services by driving operational efficiencies and fostering forward-thinking community partnerships. It's important for the City Council to hear the needs before the annual budget is finalized. The needs of our city, our residents, and businesses vary year-to-year, so our annual budget should reflect adjustments. I would only support a new or increased tax or fee as a last resort—specifically if essential services face severe shortfalls, or critical long-term infrastructure requires dedicated investment. Any proposed increase must demonstrate a clear return on investment for taxpayers, be temporary in nature, and backed by a third-party research-based study as an option. To ensure full transparency regarding major community changes, I will advocate for public input sessions, clear reporting on fund allocation, and published performance metrics that reach as many residents as possible.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Our city should prioritize and is behind on addressing sidewalk infrastructure which causes safety needs in our city. The poor condition of—or total absence—of sidewalks limits mobility and poses a serious safety issue for our residents. This objective would be paid for by applying for grants for public safety. Our downtown is a true investment and a historic part of our city. Our downtown non-profit works tirelessly to keep the area clean, updated, sponsors an expanding farmers market, community events throughout the year, and encourages downtown business. But they are severely constrained by their restricted annual budget. I support a funding increase to continue the historic preservation and investment into our city, current businesses, and those looking to open a business in downtown Murray. Every great city relies on a thriving core. Let's invest back in the basics and give our downtown the funding it needs to flourish.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

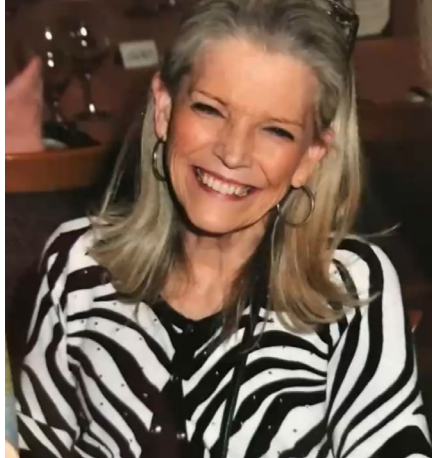
To improve workforce attraction and retention, our city government should focus on housing affordability, public safety, and essential municipal services. These priorities are critical to ensuring businesses choose to move to and stay in Murray. Housing affordability has been a persistent issue, and rising costs are a frequent concern raised by voters. The city can address this by reviewing and updating zoning regulations to encourage multi-family developments. Ensuring employees can afford to live near their workplaces is essential for long-term retention. By prioritizing manageable housing costs and affordable city services, we can directly address the primary financial hurdles facing working families. This will make Murray a place where people want to establish roots, stay, and succeed.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

Strong collaboration among the City of Murray, Calloway County, Murray State University, and local businesses is essential for driving growth, optimizing resources, and enhancing public safety. Regarding local 911 operations, I fully support a formal, public cost-and-service review of current operations, and fees. Evaluating these services is a responsible step toward ensuring taxpayer dollars are used efficiently, which we owe to you as taxpayers. A review will identify potential concerns, explore opportunities for shared services and/or consolidation while determining if streamlining operations can improve response times and service quality. If this is a change that would help our first responders communicate effectively and save taxpayers' dollars, this is where collaboration is a win.

Marti Erwin



OCCUPATION

Retired healthcare attorney

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

martiross20@gmail.com

Candidate biography

I am Marti Erwin, #4 on the ballot, graduate of Murray High and Murray State. I love Murray, Kentucky. I am a mother, grandmother, friend, baker, Sunday school teacher, choir member, board member on three boards, a dancer, gardener, a retired nurse and a retired attorney. I worked part-time for two mayors of Murray updating ordinances. I work out and do zumba at Senior Center or Wellness Center. I am honest and forthright and what

Response cut at 75-word limit.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

My vision is that Murray will be recognized as a premier location where people want to live, work, attend church and school, play, rear their children and retire. Murray City Council will seek to maintain an atmosphere and environment where quality of life is a priority and where people can get satisfying work and earn enough money to provide for their families and send their children to school. It is my hope that our City will offer the opportunity for working people and retirees to enjoy the unmatched amenities we have in Murray. I believe the City Council should also take the opportunity to explore such measures as adding utility services such as natural gas and water to our neighbors in the county. These services

Response cut at 125-word limit.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

First, the city should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment looking at our population, ages, educational level, skill sets, health issues, transportation needs, housing requirements, agricultural concerns, businesses available and not available. We could see what realistically we need for the population we serve and what we can do based on the data. We must ensure that our zoning and licensure requirements and other ordinances are business friendly while maintaining safety for the community. The Council could work with developers to emphasize the importance of pricing on proposed projects rather than missing opportunities for growth. City Council could assist with planned development and growth. Our Chamber could work with City and County on this endeavor. Do we really need seven or eight coffee shops and numerous fast food places? Finally, Murray needs additional retail clothing and shoe stores, restaurants that are not fast food or coffee shops, and a grocery that

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QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

Basically, we get what we pay for. The City depends on taxes to pay for those services that a successful and desirable city needs such as streets, clean environment, beautification, law enforcement, etc. We must have highly trained and qualified employees that are appropriately paid and rewarded with benefits commensurate with comparable occupations. If we want these things, the City needs to make sure the taxpayer understands what they cost and how tax dollars are spent. Citizens should be encouraged to study documents and city council meetings.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Streets, public facilities are paid for by taxes. Public utilities such as natural gas, water and sewer are paid on a fee for service basis and not by taxes. For some things government grants are available with the right personnel to write the grant. The City does not and should not fund development ready property--the developer does this with the City's input on utilities, zoning, requirements, infrastructure needs, etc. The city council should, however, study the zoning ordinances and determine if the thoughts and planning that went into developing the ordinances still hold true today and if not, work to change them so that they are business friendly while retaining a safety structure. The City Council must also ensure that those pipes and structures underground continue to be upgraded and positioned for the next generations of Murray citizens. People appointed to zoning boards or other city boards should have a

Response cut at 150-word limit.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Based on the outcome of the needs assessment, the city could encourage building and attraction of retail stores. For example, no boy or girl clothes for age 6 to 13 can be purchased in Murray except at places like Walmart or Marshall's. We need affordable housing for young families and seniors and our ordinances could allow for that. We need a classy tiny house community. City Council could facilitate the zoning for this type of housing. Our parks should be governed under the City Council and not by an independent park board. This would allow the city more control and accountability and help the park receive the funding it needs for improvement and growth. Invite more tournaments for traveling teams and if personnel are needed, find the fit that works. The park is used but it is underused and not up to its potential for all population segments. Finally, public

Response cut at 150-word limit.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

The City, County, and University could collaborate on addressing housing and entertainment venues, as well as public safety. It is my opinion that the 911 system operates quite well as is. Combining the three entities would jeopardize each of their 911 dispatch emergency operations. The level of service might decline for the City. Currently the City has an excellent 911 system as does the county and the university with each helping the other as needed. They communicate well. The cost would be higher and a large segment of that would be borne by the City.

Marty Futrell



OCCUPATION

Self-employed businessman

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

carscowsracers@gmail.com

Candidate biography

I'm a fourth-generation Calloway-countian and self-employed businessman, owning several businesses of my own in the last forty years. I was a board member of Murray #2 water district for over 35 years, serving 30 years as chairman. I am currently serving on the City of Murray comprehensive plan work group and have been since 2022. I'm also a member of the Murray Transit Authority Board, and Murray Housing Authority Board.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

Shouldn't our vision be to live in a place with pride? Murray needs to clean up and make our town more attractive. Most all residents, in their normal travel routes, go by a rundown abandoned house, or a place with inoperable cars that have been there for years. The city has ordinances against these eyesores that need to be enforced to make our community more livable and loveable. This makes Murray more attractive for years to come. Condemning the broken-down homes would make room for more affordable housing for anyone. Let's strive to clean up our community, putting residential pride back in our hometown of Murray.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

The city should play a major role in business growth both large and small, that is the backbone of our community. We need to become even more business friendly to see our city thrive in a way that people from surrounding towns would come here to shop, eat, go to a movie, or anything to enjoy this place we call home. We should want a business to look at Murray and say, "That's a place I'd like to start or expand my business". Let's welcome them and be flexible. Other towns do this, why not Murray? Murray has a 10,000-student university, Kentucky Lake, and the largest hospital within a 40-mile radius. Let's be flexible and sell them on Murray, Kentucky. Businesses make community, and there shouldn't be a single business that can't be sold on Murray. Make Murray a destination spot!

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

Statistics show that one of the first things, outside of schools, that a family or business looks at before coming to a community is the parks system. We have two very nice parks, but I think most residents would agree that Murray is losing this race. Why? Because our parks shouldn't be a bickering point, they should be a reckoning point. Our future leaders are playing here. City and county government should work together, yes, I said together, and find a way to continually fund our park system that is fair for everyone, because the parks are there for everyone's use, not just city residents. A strong and inviting parks system brings people to our community to stay in a hotel, eat, shop, and spend money that in turn makes our businesses grow and expand our job base. It's a win, win for our adults, children, and grandchildren.

Response cut at 150-word limit.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Murray's infrastructure isn't a spring chicken, but our leaders have done a good job in the past of making every dollar count. Constant maintenance is required for roads and utilities, and we should continually seek grants to help fund these projects. If the money is out there, Murray should get its fair share. Murray has a comprehensive planning committee, that I have been a part of the last four years, that looks at transportation, education, housing, roads, utilities, and the overall growth for the future. This committee also works closely with the Murray planning and zoning departments. My priority as a councilman will be to push for our planned business loop on the East side of town to be a true loop, with a bicycle path, and not stop at the end of Chestnut Street. It should follow the railroad to Highway 80; that's a true business loop.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

As I mentioned earlier, when a community invests in its park system and does its best to enforce ordinances to keep our city clean, this will give our citizens a unified sense of pride for the place we call home. I'm sure these ideas will ruffle the feathers of a few, but overall, I think it's what's best for Murray. When condemned housing is demolished and disposed of, it makes room for new affordable housing, which is highly needed. Most of these homes are in older parts of town on small lots which are desirable for smaller, affordable homes to be built. Whether an existing owner remodel or new construction, these ordinances to keep our city clean have to be enforced. We can do better Murray! Growing pains hurt sometimes but we're all in this together. Show pride, don't let a few bad apples spoil the barrel.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

The City, County, and University needs to work together, it's a must for us to ever achieve greater things. There are City and County governments within 50 miles of here that can't agree of the two colors of a stop sign - what impression does that leave on a factory, business, or family wanting to relocate to a community? When services are duplicated because of a disagreement, that's a waste of taxpayer dollars. A perfect example of that is our 911 system. This should be our top priority for consolidation. Murray should be the envy of every city in West Kentucky and West Tennessee, and when elected I will use my 40 years of business experience to work toward that goal. I've lived here my entire life, and I'd like my grandchildren to boast that as well. "Raise the bar, Murray," we deserve better.

Bonnie Higginson*



OCCUPATION

Retired from MSU

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

Bonnie.Higginson@murrayky.gov and Facebook

Candidate biography

Bonnie Higginson has served on the Murray City Council for four years. She volunteers at Angels Attic and the Murray Art Guild and serves on the boards of the Calloway County Community Foundation and Angels Attic. She is a member of several other civic organizations and received the Donna Herndon Award for Community Engagement in 2025. Bonnie retired from Murray State where she was a faculty member and administrator.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

Within the next 10 years, I hope that Murray will continue its upward trend, attracting new business and industry and providing outstanding employment opportunities to current and future residents. 1. Sound financial funding for the Murray-Calloway County Park. We will need to work closely with the Calloway County Fiscal Court to ensure that the future of the park is on solid ground. 2. Transitional housing for individuals who are seeking a more stable life. My involvement with Angels Attic and the Recovery Community Center has made me aware of the challenges faced by members of our community. I believe that the city can be involved with appropriate nonprofit organizations to create temporary housing for homeless individuals and families.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

Fortunately, the number of commercial and business licenses granted over the past four years (2022-26) is the highest in 15 years. This indicates that we are doing a good job in attracting new businesses to Murray. Still, there are some gaps, and one need is for a mid-range department store. I hope that we can attract industries that provide well paying jobs and are environmentally friendly. We must continue to strive to create a culture to help entrepreneurs and new businesses to be successful, with clear coordination across city offices.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

I believe that the City has been very sensitive to the tax burden placed on citizens and businesses. The key is sound financial management with an eye towards future needs. We have not had to raise property taxes for five years and will be voting to decrease the tax at our October City Council meeting. We have also been able to complete a number of infrastructure projects in-house and this has resulted in significant savings for the City. Careful budgeting and planning are essential. I would be extremely reluctant to support new taxes or fees. I would have to be convinced that the public would truly benefit from an increase and would want to be fully informed about alternatives to raising taxes. Careful analysis and research would be essential and public hearings would be an integral part of the process.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray’s economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

I have been fortunate to serve on the City Council's Long Range Planning Committee for the past four years. Many of our goals relate to infrastructure such as paving and sidewalk projects, water and sewer improvements, and flooding abatement projects. Fortunately, nearly all of our goals for 2023-26 have been met. With federal funding and grants, we were able to complete a \$11,000,000 water and sewage extension to Highway 80 and that area is now ready for occupation by industries. The Long Range Planning Committee will develop new goals in early 2027. I am confident that the competent staff in City Hall will make every effort to secure external funding for projects to reduce the burden on our budget.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

A recent population change report (2020-2025) shows that Calloway County grew more than any other county in far west Kentucky. This indicates that we are on a very positive trajectory, yet we must strive to address areas of weakness. One problem that I and others have noticed is that there are several properties in the city that are dilapidated or abandoned. I would like for the City to work with property owners to pursue improvement or elimination of these properties. This would enhance the beautification of Murray and improve the property values of neighboring residences and businesses.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

I believe that cooperation among the leaders of the city, county, and Murray State University is essential. All of us have the same overarching goal: to make our entire community the best that it can be. To that end, I suggest that several focus groups be formed to examine areas such as infrastructure, public services, business development, and housing. The groups should include representatives from each entity and would meet regularly to share information, identify challenges, and find common ground to improve existing services and set goals for future endeavors. One such group would focus on 911 operations and fees to determine the best and most fiscally responsible way to deliver excellent 911 services to all citizens.

Thomas Hornbuckle*

NO PHOTO SUBMITTED

OCCUPATION

Geriatric Behavioral Health Nurse

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

Thornbuckle1@gmail.com

Candidate biography

I am a husband of 28 years, a father of 3, and a grandfather of 1. I've had the privilege of serving on the City Council for 2 years where I continue my endeavor in learning to become a worthy leader in the community like those that have come before me. I've worked in Geriatric Psych at Murray Hospital for 9 years. I also worked at our family owned childcare center for 19 years. My

Response cut at 75-word limit.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

Murray has many great qualities that attract young families with or without children, those looking for a place to retire, adults looking to receive a quality education for their families or themselves, as well as new business wanting to expand. Although there are benefits of a growing city, it also comes with its share of problems. The two most important priorities I believe the City Council should address are: (1) The increase in development of Domestic Violence/Women's Shelters, emergency short-term crisis shelters, and shelters for homeless and disabled Veterans. (2) Public Safety which in a small town means strengthening community bonds, improving infrastructure, and increase in supporting local services. My specific action during my first year would be to speak with local and regional

Response cut at 125-word limit.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

Murray should actively work to attract more businesses like Kenlake Foods, Pella, and Sportable Scoreboards. The City Council's role should put favorable policies in place and approve financial and regulatory incentives. One way to support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses is to focus on retention by addressing their issues before the business decides to relocate.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

The City should balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth by prioritizing core operations and projects as well as aggressively pursuing federal and state infrastructure grants to reduce local debt financing. I would ONLY support a new or increased tax or fee when there's an unavoidable public need and our citizens clearly see what they pay and where those funds go.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Infrastructure or capital investments that are most important for the economic future of Murray should be: 1) Parks, community centers and libraries. 2) Walk-able, functional downtown Main Street that increases foot traffic to local retail. 3) High-Speed Broadband internet 4) "Shovel -Ready" sites that will be already cleared and zoned for light industry.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Murray can improve workforce attraction and retention by: 1) Offer housing incentives such as housing stipends or employer assisted housing for essential workers. 2) Support non- traditional hours childcare options for shift workers, overnight employees, and weekend staff. 3) Partner with local University to develop incentives for graduate retention as well as to learn what career trends new graduates are looking for. As City Council I would ask the citizens of Murray what they're looking for. I would encourage them to come to a monthly City council meeting and voice what they want in their community to in order to build a life in which they would want to stay. Then as a city official we would realistically try to appease the people as much as financially and necessity will allow at that time.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

Murray Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community can work together more effectively by: 1) Develop partnerships where businesses offer mentor-ships, comprehensive facility tours, and host on-site training programs. 2) Murray State could have a more active presence in the historic down town area such as an office of recruitment, computer labs, recreation, off site classrooms, or non -denominations religious events. Having a larger campus presence downtown would increase foot traffic which would attract more business.

Monty McCuiston*



OCCUPATION

Small Business Owner

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

montymccuiston@gmail.com

Candidate biography

Born and raised in Murray, business owner for the last 22 years and seeking my fifth term as your city councilman. Married to my wife Rebecca for 26 years, we have two adult children and 3 grandchildren. Murray is where our heart is and we strive to make it the best place to live, work and play.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

There are many things facing our community but the two most important priorities in my opinion are affordable housing and funding, maintaining and building our parks system. Affordable housing issues will need to involve zoning reform, lower cost innovation such as alternative designs or modular homes, repurpose vacant commercial property to affordable residential housing. Our parks system needs additional funding badly and we need to explore how we are going to fund our parks moving forward. In addition to adding more youth sports opportunities by adding an indoor sportsplex.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

My opinion we can never have too much industry, we need to work closely with our EDC and the state on recruiting good paying employers and community stewards. Although we have many great businesses already in Murray we continue to lose dollars to surrounding communities. We need to work with developers and streamline our process to make our city as attractive or more than others so they will locate and build in our community. You should never overlook our existing and local small businesses as they are the backbone of any community and should receive all the support they can get from our local government.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

It costs money to provide quality services and with the increase in cost of materials, fuel, labor, etc it is inevitable to not see an increase in fees or taxes. But that is why it is important to elect business knowledgeable individuals that understand how to balance a budget, how to cut costs when needed but still provide the same quality services. I am not about increasing taxes, I am proud to say that during my 8 years we have not raised taxes, in fact we just voted to lower the tax rate for 2027 all while providing quality service. All records are open and available to the public, there is not anything that needs to be hidden or kept from the general public's knowledge.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray’s economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

All infrastructure and investment is important for our economic growth. Industry in general looks for quality of life before locating to a new community. Our parks, school system, library, entertainment. These are contributing factors to the economic future of Murray. We have to continue upgrading and expanding our water, sewer and gas infrastructure, keep our roads maintained, follow through the business loop plans and apply for as many grants as possible to help fund any future projects.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

As mentioned above, affordable housing and our parks systems would be on top of my list in addition to more amenities such as more retail, grocery and nightlife opportunities.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

I would be willing to sit down with representatives from all agencies to hear their view on a combined 911 operation. Who better to answer that than the Police Chief, Sheriff, Fire Chief from city and County, EMS Services, Emergency MGT, 911 Dispatchers, etc. Regardless, a better community evolves when everyone works together and not against each other.

Gayle Rogers



OCCUPATION

Adjunct Instructor, Murray State University and
ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

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Times Facebook page

Candidate biography

After a thirty year career as a Court Reporter and small business owner, I completed a Bachelor and Master's Degree at MSU. I am now an ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist and Adjunct Instructor at MSU in Yoga for Wellness, Kinesiology and Teacher Education, and volunteer with various athletic teams at MSU. My husband, Bob, and I have two children, six grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. I am a member of First Baptist Church.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

My vision for Murray is to balance economic development progress and growth with continued improvement to the quality of life in Murray by improvements to parks, sidewalks and paving. Two important priorities for the City Council, in my opinion, include continuation of vital infrastructure for residential areas, such as extension of South 16th Street sidewalks, and increasing utility access on North 641, an area of future business and commercial growth. Since all infrastructure projects begin with the Long-Range Planning Committee, I would educate myself as to the mechanics of the committee and stay abreast of the citizen needs. As a council person, I would seek a consensus relationship with the mayor and other council members to influence and accomplish the goals of the LRPC.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

Murray should actively pursue businesses and industries that complement our quality of life, provide needed jobs, and enhance our image as The Jewel of West Kentucky! But, they should work with the Economic Development Commission and Chamber of Commerce to support and encourage their efforts. During the past four years, more commercial growth and expansion has occurred in the commercial sector of Murray than any four-year period of the last fifteen. The City should continue to play a role in that type of growth. I would work actively with all departments at the City that consistently have an open-door policy and provide complete transparency to all local officials, employers and businesses as they work to be successful for themselves and their employees.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

Nobody, including myself, wants to pay higher taxes or fees. During the last eight years, property taxes in Murray have stayed the same or decreased. The payroll tax rate is the same as passed in 2018. That said, in the event of any unexpected, unplanned and non-budgeted financial disaster or emergency that interfered with the City's ability to provide quality services to residents and businesses, tough decisions regarding taxes and fees might have to be made. Those decisions would require input from everyone. One council member cannot pass an increased tax or fee, but one council member can gather knowledge and information to provide input on how to maximize services within the framework of current revenues. All committee and council meetings are open to the public, and I personally will answer any questions about taxes or any issue freely and honestly to ensure total transparency to all.

Response cut at 150-word limit.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray's economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Once the Long Range Planning Committee identifies projects and goals for the future, and the City Council approves their recommendations in a Comprehensive Plan, it becomes the road map for future decision making. The projects on that Comprehensive Plan are prioritized by the City Council as to the most needed quality services to provide. Serving on that LRPC is where a council member can have input. The Planning and Zoning Committee is not included in that process. Their role is to enforce the ordinances as set forth by the City Council under the guidelines of the State of Kentucky that affect the development of property within the City in compliance with the LRPC Comprehensive Plan. As a council member, I would seek to serve on the LRPC and be a voice in planning for community needs.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Of the list of areas you present, City government can assist developers who want to build affordable housing or childcare facilities by helping them navigate the ordinances involved in the process through complete transparency and a willingness to do all they can to help them be successful. Two actions that are priorities, in my opinion, are the continued improvement of the park and public facilities and keeping public safety services as a number one priority.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

Generally speaking, all stakeholders should participate in joint decisions, but the decision about Murray 911 Service is not a joint decision. It must be made by the Mayor and City Council. Public safety is a priority for Murray citizens. As a major priority, Murray's 911 Service is not an issue. It is an outstanding public safety service currently provided to citizens of Murray by very capable public safety officials who do an excellent job within the same revenue framework in existence for many years. Why should thousands of dollars be spent to conduct a cost-and-service review by people who do not live in Murray at the expense of taxpayers? Changes to 911 services shouldn't be done on a whim or because they sound good in theory. Only in a situation where specific needs were unmet by the City's 911 Service might such a review be appropriate.

Rose Ross*



OCCUPATION

Retired

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

Roserooss71061@gmail.com

Candidate biography

I have been on the city council for 8 years and have served on various committees including chair of Long Range Planning. I am a retired teacher and local to Calloway County.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

My vision for Murray is a community that grows thoughtfully while preserving the qualities that make it a great place to live. Over the next 5–10 years, I want Murray to be a community where people can safely walk and bike, where our infrastructure is well maintained, and where responsible growth strengthens our quality of life. Two of my priorities would be: 1. Pedestrian-friendly Murray. Continue expanding sidewalks and bike paths so that residents of all ages have safe alternatives to driving. 2. Responsible infrastructure investment. Continue repairing and updating our infrastructure before small problems become expensive ones. We will pursue grants to supplement taxpayer dollars and use a fair, competitive bidding process to ensure we are good stewards of public funds.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

I believe Murray should be thoughtful about what types of development we pursue and make sure new development does not place an unreasonable burden on our existing infrastructure or resources. Data centers, in particular, can require significant amounts of electricity, water and infrastructure capacity. The City's role should be to create an environment where businesses want to locate and stay—through responsible infrastructure investment, efficient government processes, a safe community and a high quality of life. At the same time, our locally owned small businesses are an important part of what makes Murray a community rather than simply a place to work. We should listen to their needs, reduce unnecessary barriers, promote local businesses and work collaboratively with them on opportunities for growth. Economic development should mean both recruiting new investment and helping the businesses already invested in Murray succeed.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

We lowered the property tax rate this year and have not raised it during the past four years. Our city employees have worked hard to secure grants and make responsible use of taxpayer dollars. We will continue to be good stewards of public funds by carefully prioritizing projects, seeking efficiencies, and aggressively pursuing federal and state grants to supplement local tax dollars. If circumstances ever require a tax increase, I believe we have an obligation to be fully transparent with our citizens, clearly explain the need, and explore every reasonable alternative for securing the resources necessary to provide essential services.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray’s economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

Murray has made significant progress in improving our infrastructure, including the stormwater repairs and improvements, street lighting, and the repair and expansion of sidewalks; just to name a few. These investments not only improve the quality of life for our residents but also make Murray more attractive to businesses looking to relocate and they help encourage existing businesses to remain and grow here. Our Planning and Zoning plays an important role in managing growth and looking ahead to determine what is best for Murray. Thoughtful planning, responsible infrastructure investment, and good stewardship of our resources will help ensure that Murray continues to grow in a way that benefits our community for years to come.

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

A community’s quality of life is an important part of attracting and retaining both residents and a strong workforce. One of my priorities would be to continue improving our parks and recreational areas. The Murray Pickleball Association added value to the community and made it a more attractive place to live. We’re grateful and aspire to continue providing opportunities. This will make Murray a more desirable place to live, work and raise a family. As chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, we are continuing to focus on affordable housing. A community needs housing options that allow people who work in Murray—including young families, teachers, healthcare workers and other members of our workforce—to afford to live here. I believe we need to take a thoughtful, long-term approach to expanding housing opportunities while maintaining the character and quality of our community. This includes looking at barriers to housing development,

Response cut at 150-word limit.

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

I support opportunities for the City, County, Murray State and local businesses to collaborate and find ways to improve efficiency and eliminate unnecessary duplication. However, when considering any change to 911 operations, my first priority must be the quality and reliability of emergency services for our citizens. I would not support consolidation without a clear understanding that it would maintain or improve service for both City and County residents. Before making such a significant change, I would want assurances regarding response times, staffing, accountability, funding and the quality of service provided to everyone we serve. Efficiency is important, but it should never come at the expense of the safety and quality of life of our citizens. I believe we should carefully evaluate opportunities for cooperation while remaining focused on providing the best possible emergency services to our community.

Alice Rouse*



OCCUPATION

Retired publisher, Murray Ledger & Times

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

ajrouse@murray-ky.net

Candidate biography

I am a proud resident of Murray, and have dedicated more than 40 years to this community through public service and professional leadership roles. I have served eight years on Murray City Council, retired in 2015 as publisher of the Murray Ledger & times. I have served on several boards, including EDC, Rotary club of Murray and United Way, Community foundation and was past Kentucky Press Association president. Bill and I have two sons Justin

Response cut at 75-word limit.

QUESTION 1 / LONG-TERM VISION

Looking five to ten years ahead, what is your vision for Murray? What are the two most important priorities the City Council should address during the next term, and what specific action would you pursue during your first year?

Murray has always been a city that encourages growth that will enhance the quality of life. We have come to expect. Two priorities that I hold dear are getting the bypass done so we can keep truck traffic manageable. I also want to see us attract more restaurants, and high-quality manufacturing jobs.

QUESTION 2 / BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What types of businesses or industries should Murray actively work to attract, and what role should the City play in that effort? How would you also support the growth and success of existing employers and locally owned small businesses?

As I stated in question six, we need more sitdown restaurants in Murray, as well as an additional retail development, such as a Hobby Lobby. We need to keep retail expenditures in Murray as well as attract shoppers from the region as a whole As far as industrial goes, we need more. The city has traditionally been a good partner for the EDC and should take an appropriate steps to help bring more high-quality jobs to our citizens.

QUESTION 3 / TAXES & CITY SERVICES

How should the City balance the need to provide quality services and invest in future growth with the financial burden placed on residents and businesses? Under what circumstances, if any, would you support a new or increased tax or fee, and how would you ensure transparency in that decision?

Under the current administration fiscal policy has been both responsible and conservative. We need to continue that for the future understanding that sometimes growth requires prudent Investment. Personally, I don't foresee the need to increase taxes and don't believe we should do so unless there is significant return on investment. Obviously, if there is ever is a need to increase taxes, there should be a publicly available information as well as a public hearings.

QUESTION 4 / INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING

What infrastructure or capital investments—such as roads, utilities, broadband, public facilities or development-ready property—are most important to Murray’s economic future? How should the City prioritize and fund these investments, and what role should planning and zoning play in managing growth?

We need to finish the bypass and perhaps look for a west side bypass for the future growth. We also need to recognize that there is a need to assist with shovel ready property both for commercial as well as industrial development. Planning zoning are critical to smart growth and should continue to provide excellent parameters for orderly growth

QUESTION 5 / WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE

Employers need a community where people can build a life and want to stay. What can city government realistically do to improve workforce attraction and retention through areas such as housing, childcare, public safety, amenities and overall quality of life? Identify one or two actions you would address first.

Currently, we seem do you have a community where people want to work and stay. We have great schools, plenty of things to do low crime, etc. One area that needs help is single-family housing if possible, I would like to to see if we can find ways to increase a number of homes being built every year. I also want to see the city continue to do it with communicate for first class, Park amenities

QUESTION 6 / COLLABORATION & 911 SERVICES

What opportunities do you see for the City, Calloway County, Murray State University and the business community to work together more effectively? (Specifically, would you support a formal, public cost-and-service review of local 911 operations and fees to determine whether greater coordination, shared services or consolidation would improve service or reduce duplication? Why or why not?)

I definitely think we should explore ways to reduce duplication in services and the first place is to start it likely the 911 system. Other areas of working together could bring more people and money to the community. For example, we need to cooperate with Murray State and try to have events off campus to capture as much revenue as possible. In general, collaboration, when it makes sense, it’s good for all parties.

Candidates without a submitted survey

Survey invitations were sent to the email addresses provided by candidates when filing with the Calloway County Clerk. Those who didn't submit a response:

Linda Cherry*

Wesley Bolin*

Sue Hood

MURRAY-CALLOWAY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

An Informed Community. A Stronger Murray.

The Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce is committed to representing the interests of our business community through meaningful advocacy, collaboration, and civic engagement.

Through our Advocacy Committee, we work to elevate the voice of local businesses, build relationships with elected officials, and encourage thoughtful conversations about the issues shaping Murray and Calloway County's future.

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