

2024 Johnson City General Election

Voter Guide

501(c)(3) - compliant
and nonpartisan

Johnson City Commissioner

November 2024 General Election | 11/5/2024



www.ChurchVoterGuidesNETN.org

**YOUR VOTE
MATTERS**

11/5/2024

Online Voter Registration/Record Updating available until 10/7/2024 at: <https://sos.tn.gov/elections>

Contact Church Voter Guides at: Admin@ChurchVoterGuidesNETN.org | Updated 10/4/2024

For other Voter Guides and more information, please go to our website: www.ChurchVoterGuidesNETN.org

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

The Voter Guide Information contained in this document is provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. This Voter Guide is 501(c)(3) compliant and officially non-partisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate.

Johnson City 2024 General Election Voter Guide for Johnson City Commissioner

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Introduction to the Voter Guide

Church Voter Guides NETN is an independent, grassroots nonprofit organization. We serve the public by providing objective research and education on matters specifically of interest to Christians, primarily through the production and distribution of 501 (c)(3)-compliant, nonpartisan voter guides.

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Church Voter Guides initially started in Colorado Springs in April of 2021 and was adopted by Chattanooga / Hamilton County in 2022. Church Voter Guides NETN is brand new to Northeast Tennessee in time for the November General Election 2024. This new Voter Guide is being distributed electronically only, through our interactive website, by downloadable and printable PDF files, and on handheld devices. We have produced one Voter Guide for each Contested race in Washington and Sullivan Counties. We eventually plan to cover races in all 7 counties in Northeast Tennessee. Our Voter Guides are being promoted through a wide-ranging network of area churches, faith-based non-profit organizations, mainstream and social media, and other means.

The purpose of our Voter Guides is to educate and inform voters of each candidate's positions on a variety of policy issues that they are likely to address if elected. As a Voter Guide designed to be distributed through Churches, we ask the candidates questions on topics that are of utmost interest to the Christian voter

How to Get the Most Benefit from this Voter Guide

The core information in this Voter Guide comes directly from the County General Elections candidates themselves. We asked them questions, they answered (with a 120 word limit), and we have published their responses here. In order to understand and utilize this information to the fullest, so that you may vote in the most informed way, we suggest the following:

1. Pray and ask the Almighty for discernment. The Kingdom of God is all about truth, while politics is a system fraught with compromise. Make sure you consider the candidates' answers with a Heavenly mindset.
2. Ask yourself, "Did the candidate actually answer the question, or rather side-step it, or give a fluff, wishy-washy, and/or 'political' type answer that leaves you not really knowing where he/she truly stands on the issue?"
3. Learn more about the candidates running for Johnson City Commissioner including their positions on issues we did not cover in our questionnaire, by visiting their official campaign websites (if they have one.) The website URL for each candidate is listed in the Voter Guide.
4. Educate yourself more about the Christian/Biblical perspective regarding many of the subjects covered in our Voter Guide by reading topical articles on other websites.
5. Use search engines to find additional information about each candidate, including written articles and videos, other voter guides, and even voting records for those who have served in public office before. You may even want to watch online recordings of the local Johnson City Commissioner meetings to see how incumbents conduct themselves and vote.
6. Reach out to the candidates themselves through the provided email addresses and other means, in order to ask them questions of personal importance to you. Please make sure to show great respect toward each candidate and his/her time, especially to those with whom you disagree. Running for office is hard, stressful, time consuming work, and these are your fellow citizens who have lives, families, jobs...and feelings (just like you!)

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What makes a Voter Guide 501 (c)(3) - Compliant and Nonpartisan?

Federal tax law permits nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations to develop and distribute materials about political candidates' positions on issues, in order to educate voters impartially and on a nonpartisan basis; meaning that it is free from party affiliation, bias, or designation. The IRS states that 501 (c)(3) organizations may conduct any range of activities to promote voter participation and educate voters so long as it is nonpartisan. But, 501(c)(3) organizations are explicitly prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for public office.

Some of the activities 501(c)(3) nonprofits *MAY* perform: Conduct or promote voter registration; educate voters on the voting process; distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, and **voter guides**; organize "get-out-the-vote" activities; encourage and help people to vote; educate the candidates on issues important to their organization; and continue to do issue advocacy during an election.

So, first and foremost: **Church Voter Guides** does **NOT** endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Second, all of our staff and volunteers are required to act in a nonpartisan manner when working for or representing the organization and the creation of the Voter Guide.

Third, we do not edit, revise, or editorialize candidate responses to our Questionnaire. We do not even correct typos. **Candidate answers are published verbatim**, ensuring that their responses accurately represent their positions and perspectives on these issues. We then simply share this information through the Voter Guide, and you decide whom you believe to be the best candidate.

To be fair and impartial, we reached out by email, text, and phone when determined necessary, to all registered candidates running for Johnson City Commissioner inviting them to answer our questionnaire. Candidate information is presented in alphabetical order by **last name**. If a Candidate did not respond at all, or did not choose to participate, or did not choose to respond to certain answers in the questionnaire, then it is noted where applicable. If there were not enough candidates running, then we did not produce a Voter Guide for that seat.

Join Our Growing Grassroots Coalition of Citizens, Churches/Nonprofit Organizations, and Media Partners Committed to Promoting the Voter Guide throughout Our Region

Let's get the word out!

It's simple. Just share our website URL all around the Northeast Tennessee region:

www.ChurchVoterGuidesNETN.org

Tell your friends and neighbors, post on social media, and ask your Pastors to promote it to your congregation (we'll even provide you /them with the announcement info and the slide deck.)

Please contact us for any reason. We'd love to collaborate with you.

Admin@ChurchVoterGuidesNETN.org

The "Small Print": The information contained in this document is being provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501(c)(3)-compliant and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate

Independent Survey by



Johnson City
2024 General Election Voter Guide
for Johnson City Commissioner

Johnson City
Commissioner

Independent Survey by



Johnson City Commissioner | Survey Questions Index

- 1) **Political Leanings:** As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?
- 2) **Your Experience and Vision:** What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?
- 3) **Moral Values:** Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.
- 4) **Defending Constitutional Liberties:** Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?
- 5) **Utilities/Infrastructure:** As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Brightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?
- 6) **Crime and Police:** Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?
- 7) **Protecting the Most Vulnerable:** As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?
- 8) **Business/jobs:** What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?
- 9) **Affordable Housing:** As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?
- 10) **Homelessness/Vagrancy:** How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?
- 11) **Impact of Drug Use on Our Community:** Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

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12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

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Johnson City Commissioner

(In alphabetical order)



John C. Baker



Joseph Coates



Greg Cox



Jay Emberton

Independent Survey by



Johnson City Commissioner

(In alphabetical order)



Todd Fowler



Jacob Luallen



Rev. Aaron T. Murphy



Dr JD Bo Westmoreland

Independent Survey by



Johnson City Commissioner

(In alphabetical order)



Joe Wise

Independent Survey by





John C. Baker

We made multiple attempts to communicate with John C. Baker; however, the Candidate did not complete the survey by the submission deadline.

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Joseph Coates

Candidate Information

Party:	Non-partisan
Email Address:	joseph@theologica.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Project Manager
Number of years as a resident of Johnson City:	Lifelong (minus 8 years of missionary service in China)
Campaign Website:	Coates2024.com

1) Political Leanings: As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?

I am a fiscal conservative, focusing on reducing the deficit and lowering taxes to foster economic growth. My active involvement in Highland Baptist Church is an important part of my commitment to conservative values. As a member of the East Tennessee Republican Club, I connect with others who share my dedication to conservative principles. By prioritizing responsible financial management and community engagement, I aim to ensure a bright future for Johnson City.

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2) Your Experience and Vision: What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?

I bring a diverse background that combines community involvement, professional experience, and a commitment to public service. My role on the board of the Academy of Strings has allowed me to engage with the community, promoting arts education and fostering youth development. Additionally, my experience as a project manager overseeing multimillion-dollar projects has equipped me with strong organizational and financial management skills, essential for effective governance. As a Commissioner, my vision is to enhance Johnson City's quality of life through responsible fiscal policies and community engagement. During my first year in office, I aim to initiate discussions on budget transparency, identify opportunities for tax relief, and support initiatives that promote local businesses.

3) Moral Values: Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.

The law can be summarized by two commands: Love God and Love your neighbor as yourself. Loving God involves valuing His truth and justice, while a love for God among officials often leads to better laws. However, moral principles like the Ten Commandments can influence any government through God's common grace. Loving one's neighbor is essential for a just society, encouraging actions that consider others' well-being. Laws reflecting this love promote fairness and support, addressing community needs. It's crucial for local governments to listen to their communities rather than focusing on ideals that don't represent their desires.

4) Defending Constitutional Liberties: Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?

Now that we have the benefit of hindsight regarding COVID-19, it's about time to review our local response and implement ordinance-level safeguards for future pandemics. One effective measure against governmental overreach is the nullification bills proposed in Nashville, which the city commission can support through non-binding resolutions. Additionally, the concept of "sanctuary cities" offers another approach to protect clearly defined constitutional liberties. While I am against making Johnson City a sanctuary for drugs and illegal immigration, I am open to exploring this option as a way to prevent specific encroachments on our constitutional rights.

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5) Utilities/Infrastructure: As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Brightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?

(1) Nuclear is a great renewable energy source, but that's more of a TVA decision. We need to be cautious about solar panels and other projects that could "greenwash" our city by making it look environmentally friendly while providing little more than a costly show of support for renewable energy sources. (2) To answer a later question, it might be a good idea to avoid tying up our electrical grid mining bitcoin. (3) Water is a critical infrastructure need for Johnson City. The water department has been well funded in recent years and I would like to see this trend continue. (4) Bitcoin mining is a blight that doesn't create jobs... just a bunch of noise and electricity use.

6) Crime and Police: Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?

To ensure the Johnson City Police Department effectively addresses rising crime rates, we must prioritize essential city services in our budget. This includes enhancing recruitment efforts with targeted campaigns and partnerships with ETSU and local colleges to attract diverse candidates. We should also invest in officer wellness programs and ongoing training to boost morale and improve community relations. Continuing to upgrade technology and resources will enhance response times and efficiency as well.

7) Protecting the Most Vulnerable: As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?

I am interested in seeing a baby box be installed in the Johnson City area. Engaging with faith-based groups is essential in efforts to protect the lives of the unborn and to combat human trafficking. These organizations often have deep community connections and can mobilize resources for outreach, education, and support services. As for the elderly, we need to freeze property tax increases that disproportionately affect the elderly living on fixed incomes. Additionally, we should promote more healthcare options by passing resolutions to eliminate the certificate of need system, breaking the Ballad monopoly and encouraging greater competition in our healthcare market.

8) Business/jobs: What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?

I have worked on the Johnson City Industrial Development Board to bring more jobs to the city. We currently need to expand industrial jobs. With the growth of higher-paying industrial jobs, other service sector jobs will be created as well. Unfortunately, the city is currently focusing on shopping and tourism. This focus needs to shift. This can be addressed with zoning decisions, strategic plans with the city planner, and TIF/PILOT incentives targeted at growing our industrial sector.

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9) Affordable Housing: As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?

We need continued investment in our roads to distribute the impact of population growth. The city's current plan emphasizes the use of HOAs to create cookie-cutter communities, which threatens the variety that makes Johnson City a nice place to own a home. HOA costs are also quietly raising the cost of housing in our area. We need to make all HOA agreements a matter of public record. This will let us track the impact of HOAs and protect residents. For future development, we should focus on encouraging a mix of housing types, including affordable options, that reflect the diversity of our residents. Promoting infill development and revitalizing existing neighborhoods can help maintain our community's character while accommodating new residents.

10) Homelessness/Vagrancy: How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?

We need to consider the potential ramifications of making the entirety of Johnson City walkable, as increased walkability can inadvertently attract homeless individuals seeking access to services. It may be necessary to relocate some homeless aid services. However, I strongly oppose the current city plan that weaponizes our code enforcement to target and close "undesirable" ministries such as the Haven of Mercy. My father helped oppose the city's attempts to close the Haven of Mercy, and I oppose any unconstitutional policies that violate Johnson City residents fifth amendment rights against takings. Relocating services will require a partnership with existing faith based aid organizations and a significant investment on the part of the city.

11) Impact of Drug Use on Our Community: Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

This is a complex issue requiring more than 120 words, but in short, more drugs are not the answer to the drug problem. While Methadone can be a useful tool in treating individuals, we must focus on a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, education, and support. What we can't do is simply prescribe a substitute drug and count people as cured. Expanding access to addiction treatment services is crucial, as is increasing funding for mental health resources to address the underlying issues that often lead to substance abuse.

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12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

I'm very active in my local church, Highland Baptist Church. I teach an adult Sunday School class every week and provide pulpit supply services when our pastor is unable to attend. I would like to encourage the faith community to be more engaged in local community events such as the meet the mountains and blue plum festivals.

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Greg Cox

Candidate Information

Party:	Non-partisan
Email Address:	gcgcox@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Real Estate
Number of years as a resident of Johnson City:	42 years with the exception of 6 years for College Education and post college training.
Campaign Website:	gregcoxjc.com

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1) Political Leanings: As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?

As a candidate, I consider myself fiscally conservative and a firm believer in capitalism, where the government's role is to support the people, not control them. I value personal responsibility, limited government, and adherence to the Constitution, which I see as essential to preserving American values. Socially, I recognize the importance of respecting individual rights and freedoms, and, I find comfort in my own deep personal Christian beliefs and choose to share those beliefs by loving and appreciating my entire community. My approach is focused on promoting economic growth and maintaining a fair, accountable government while ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to thrive.

2) Your Experience and Vision: What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?

I have used my Industrial Engineering degree to gain a diverse set of skills, which uniquely qualifies to be a Commissioner. Experience in Real Estate, land development requiring new public infrastructure, renovating historic structures, repurposing dilapidated structures into multi-use properties, and construction, has earned me experience as a consumer. Serving multiple terms on the City Planning Commission, Development Authority, and Historic Zoning, provided me with experience administratively. My background in creating and operating hospitality businesses has given me hands-on experience with branding, banking, staffing, management, and operations. I aim to foster responsible growth while preserving our city's character. Initially I aim to streamline development processes, strengthen local businesses, and enhance community engagement to ensure Johnson City thrives economically and culturally.

3) Moral Values: Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.

I believe that the moral principles found in the Ten Commandments, ARE the foundation of the Constitution. (One Nation Under God) The concepts of fairness, justice, and respect for others are key to both moral and legal frameworks. The golden rule encapsulates the essence of the second table of the Ten Commandments as well. While government laws can be secular and apply to diverse communities, they often reflect God's universal principles of right and wrong. My view is that these shared values promote a just society where people respect one another's rights and work together for good.

Independent Survey by



4) Defending Constitutional Liberties: Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?

I believe the government exists to serve and protect the people, not to control them. We all have the right to make our own decisions, for better or worse. My role as Commissioner encourage those freedoms for Johnson City residents. While the government is important for protection, public works, and disaster assistance, it should never interfere with personal liberties such as free speech, religious exercise, or medical autonomy. I'll work to maintain that balance on the local level.

5) Utilities/Infrastructure: As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Brightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?

1.) I will rely on experts to guide decisions on shifting to renewable energy, considering factors like cost, efficiency, and feasibility. 2.) Brightridge is a strong organization, and as Commissioner, I will support its efforts in collaboration with TVA to address energy needs and protect our electrical grid. 3.) While Johnson City's water supply is outstanding, I will work to identify and address any weaknesses to ensure we meet future demands as the city grows. 4.) I believe decisions about a supercomputing (bitcoin) facility or any other private company should be left to the free market for those decisions.

6) Crime and Police: Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?

I believe morale and culture are key to addressing recruitment and retention issues within the Johnson City Police Department. As Commissioner, I will focus on fostering a strong, supportive culture where officers know how much our community appreciates and relies on them. Ensuring they have the proper tools, training, and resources is crucial to their success. A positive department culture can help improve recruitment, boost morale, and address gaps in other areas. By working closely with law enforcement, I aim to improve response times and ensure our citizens feel safe and protected from rising crime.

Independent Survey by



7) Protecting the Most Vulnerable: As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?

As a City Commissioner, I believe my role is to foster a positive culture and set the tone for our community by promoting strong values and public awareness. While the City Commission has limited direct control over these issues, we can create an environment of zero tolerance for criminals, particularly those who prey on the vulnerable, like the unborn, trafficked individuals, and the elderly. By encouraging awareness and supporting a strong, well-equipped police force, we can better protect our most vulnerable citizens and ensure they are cared for and safe.

8) Business/jobs: What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?

I believe the City Commission should focus on growing the quality of jobs we already have and filling those needs with current citizens before focusing on recruitment. We need to ensure we're producing high-quality nurses and teachers, as they are vital to our community and have significant impacts. Johnson City already offers excellent educational opportunities—let's build a culture that encourages our best and brightest to stay here for both education and careers. By fostering this environment, we can attract businesses and create a thriving community that supports local talent.

9) Affordable Housing: As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?

This issue is a huge passion of mine and involves many moving parts. To provide affordable housing while retaining our city's unique character, we should focus on repurposing existing and underperforming properties. Create mixed-use developments that build off current infrastructure which can significantly reduce cost. Looking at our zoning requirements and allowing more flexibility and reducing initial subdivision requirements for new projects. This needs to be a focus of our community and will be a focus of mine as a Commissioner.

10) Homelessness/Vagrancy: How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?

The Commission must tackle the rising homeless population. Many local organizations have good intentions, yet not achieving the desired results. It's essential to unite stakeholders and set aside ego to develop a cohesive strategy for a common goal. While assisting the less fortunate, we must also hold accountable those who engage in criminal behavior. Creating temporary and permanent housing solutions can provide stability. Conversations about homelessness fosters understanding and encourages residents to contribute solutions. By prioritizing prevention, support, and community involvement, the City Commission can effectively address homelessness while ensuring the safety and well-being of our residents. We do not need to make the problem worse by incentivizing or attracting the homeless lifestyle.

Independent Survey by



11) Impact of Drug Use on Our Community: Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

The opioid and fentanyl crisis is a significant problem, and while I don't have all the answers, it will be a key focus during my time as a commissioner. This issue connects with many of my passions and goals for our community. I believe we need a strict, zero-tolerance approach toward those who commit drug-related crimes while also providing vital services for individuals struggling with mental and physical health issues. It's crucial to create a supportive environment that addresses the root causes of drug use and abuse, especially to protect our youth from its negative impacts. By combining strong law enforcement with comprehensive support services, we can work towards a healthier, safer community for all residents.

12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

Growing up here and I spent significant time in a variety of congregations, with Munsey Memorial Methodist being the foundation of my family for seven generations, but currently Redeemer Community church is our home. In high school, I participated in several local youth programs and Bible studies and was actively involved in Young Life. After college, I worked for a year with Christian staff at a for-profit family vacation ranch, which provided valuable experience in serving others through faith in a business context. My diverse church experiences have shaped my beliefs and fostered a love for different Christian perspectives. As a City Commissioner, I plan to engage with the faith community by listening to their needs and collaborating with them to serve our constituents effectively.

Independent Survey by





Jay Emberton

We made multiple attempts to communicate with Jay Emberton; however, the Candidate did not complete the survey by the submission deadline.

Independent Survey by





Todd Fowler

Candidate Information

Party:	Non-partisan
Email Address:	fowlerta@yahoo.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Physician
Number of years as a resident of Johnson City:	31
Campaign Website:	votetoddowler.com

1) Political Leanings: As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?

I am a Christian conservative. I am the state executive committee committeeman for the Tennessee State Republican party.

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2) Your Experience and Vision: What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?

I have been on the Johnson City City Commission for 8 years. I have been Mayor for the last 2 years. I would like to continue the projects we have started and will continue to work on helping the homeless in Johnson City.

3) Moral Values: Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.

I believe the Bible is the written word of God. I believe all of our decisions should be made according to the principles in the Bible, including the Ten Commandments .

4) Defending Constitutional Liberties: Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?

I believe in small government. They should not be overreaching to involve our day-to-day living. I will plan on standing up against mandates that go against our constitutional and God given rights.

5) Utilities/Infrastructure: As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Bhrightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?

We should add in as many renewable energy sources as we can, but we cannot be fully dependent on these as a city. Bhrightridge is doing a great job of protecting our electric grid and are working with the TVA to ensure this. Our current water and sewer division is doing an excellent job of preparing for the future. A bitcoin facility could come into our area in the future as long as they do not break any of our laws as far as city noise ordinances. They should be located in an industrial area also. I would not actively recruit them.

6) Crime and Police: Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?

I have helped increase the number of Police officers in the City of Johnson City and we are fully staffed at the present time. I will make sure that the police have what they need to protect us. That includes increasing the amount of police presence in our downtown.

Independent Survey by



7) Protecting the Most Vulnerable: As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?

I think communication is the most important thing for all you mentioned above. If we do not know something is going on, we have a hard time doing something about it. If something illegal is going on in the City, I will push for our court systems to prosecute to the fullest extent.

8) Business/jobs: What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?

I am currently helping to bring/recruit certain businesses that would benefit are citizens and possibly bring people from the area coming here to shop/enjoy what they would bring. We do need more entertainment type businesses in Johnson City. I think we are doing a good job of recruiting people to Johnson City who can work from home, with good salaries, and enjoy our outdoor activities.

9) Affordable Housing: As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?

We are working on trying to provide more affordable housing. It is hard to build affordable housing at the present time because the price is so high because of inflation and supply chain problems that continue.

10) Homelessness/Vagrancy: How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?

We have formed a homelessness task force and hired two coordinators to help. We will continue to ask for ideas from the public to help us, but we are starting to make a dent in it.

11) Impact of Drug Use on Our Community: Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

We have a drug task force within the police department. They are actively seeking to break up the supply chain of drugs to our area and arrest those involved. We need more information send out to our young people about the risk of fentanyl being placed in drugs unbeknownst to them.

Independent Survey by



12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

I am active in my church in Johnson City and I am forthcoming publicly about being a Christian. I will not be ashamed of my faith and encourage others to do the same.

Independent Survey by





Jacob Luallen

We made multiple attempts to communicate with Jacob Luallen; however, the Candidate did not complete the survey by the submission deadline.

Independent Survey by





Rev. Aaron T. Murphy

Candidate Information

Party:	Non-partisan
Email Address:	voteforaarontmurphy@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Pastor/ Executive Director
Number of years as a resident of Johnson City:	20
Campaign Website:	VoteForAaronTMurphy.com

1) Political Leanings: As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?

I am a God-fearing Bible believing minister and doer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every decision I make both socially and fiscally is made from a Biblical framework. I support responsible budgeting, accountable spending and sustainable growth.

Independent Survey by



2) Your Experience and Vision: What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?

I bring a diverse set of leadership experiences to the City Commission that would overall benefit the advancement of Johnson City. My leadership experience in business, non-profit, government, and faith communities better position the commission to overcome faced challenges. My vision for our city is to provide a desirable quality of life for its current residents while implementing plans for its future for smart and sustainable economic growth.

3) Moral Values: Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.

Social and ethical behavior is where the ten commandments and governmental laws, ordinances and regulations often intersect. The ten commandments and governmental regulations protect life, property and provide moral and ethical guidelines. The ten commandments also deal with one's internal character and the condition of an individual's heart. It is important for government to have a sound moral compass to be transparent in their dealings and to follow a guide that assists in law creation, regulations and ordinances that protect its citizens lives and possessions.

4) Defending Constitutional Liberties: Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?

As a City Commissioner, it is my duty to protect the rights of Johnson City residents. Two things I will always defend is the Bible first and the constitution. It is important that God remain involved in what we do as a country and to also safeguard our freedoms from unnecessary measures and restrictions.

5) Utilities/Infrastructure: As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Brightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?

As a City Commissioner, I plan to conduct an audit and/or comprehensive study of existing energy uses, water sources and patterns of use. Such an audit/ study would require follow up on partnership opportunities with Brightridge, TVA and other local and/or state agencies for renewable energy and water expansion projects. I would also like to provide educational outlets for our residents concerning these matters to raise awareness. I support investments towards the upgrade and expansion of our electrical grid and water systems for sustainable growth. More Bitcoin facilities are not a priority.

Independent Survey by



6) Crime and Police: Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?

I am proud to mention the Johnson City Police Department has been fully staffed multiple times over the past couple of years. We have worked hard to improve culture and staff wages of the organization resulting in better morale and recruitment. More police officers and upgraded equipment were added to this upcoming budget session to help improve response times and improve safety of citizens of Johnson City. Resources are necessary in ensuring officers are safe and protected in their roles of providing safety and protection to Johnson City residents. Supporting budget requests from our Police Department while being fiscally responsible is a balance that must be maintained to ensure the safety and security of Johnson City.

7) Protecting the Most Vulnerable: As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?

For eleven consecutive years, I have been committed to the front lines of Johnson City, TN protecting the most vulnerable in our city through the mission of Good Samaritan Ministries in combating poverty and changing lives for the glory of Jesus Christ. This is a Christian duty and fundamental responsibility for all God's people. Jesus spent his time in ministry on earth protecting the helpless and being a voice for the voiceless and we should take up our cross and follow Him in the same manner. It is important to raise awareness, provide educational training and support for expecting parents, at risk youth and elderly citizens. Strengthening existing community outreach programs to assist in these needs is a priority.

8) Business/jobs: What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?

The City Commission needs to continue supporting business incubator opportunities which provide mentorship, collaboration and resources for new business startups while addressing our greater need for workforce development. It is also important to maintain our grassroots small businesses and support our local entrepreneurs. I would like to see more stable industries relocate to our city which will in turn provide more jobs for our residents.

9) Affordable Housing: As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?

Affordable housing is not only a local community need but a need for our country at large. I believe that a balanced approach to affordable housing should be implemented through public-private partnerships, infill development, support for first time homebuyers, and/or incentivizing developers to include affordable units in their upcoming projects. The preservation of green spaces, parks and recreation are important to providing a desired quality of life for current and future residents of Johnson City.

Independent Survey by



10) Homelessness/Vagrancy: How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?

The City Commission can approve the city management to provide homeless coordinators to canvas the neighborhoods to locate our homeless neighbors and connect them to needed hand-up service providers. These service providers will assist these neighbors with food, housing, life skills, job training and more. Area churches will adopt individuals and families for long-term holistic community support. The city will provide quarterly success metrics to the community.

11) Impact of Drug Use on Our Community: Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

I have witnessed many individuals fall victim to the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. This reality has broken up lots of homes, leaving children in a family member's or state's custody. I am currently in partnerships with local recovery, crisis intervention and mental health support services that are geared towards helping those in need foster a sober and healthier lifestyle. Ongoing drug education programs are also needed in schools to help educate youth and at-risk populations about the dangers of drug use. We can launch community wide awareness campaigns to help support this cause while ensuring our law enforcement has the resources and training needed to properly handle drug related incidents and provide family support programs for families affected by addiction.

12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

My current involvement with the local faith community has enabled my personally knowing over 85% of the pastors of our city. In 2020, I called our city to prayer and unity in the midst of a pandemic and protests. Pastors of our city looked to me to provide them and our city direction during that time and continue to do so when it comes to community matters and service. Most recently, many pastors and lay members have contacted me concerning opportunities to aide flood victims. I will continue to be a resource and provide direction to assist others in helping our neighbors in need. I will continue to be God's vessel and a voice for our city.

Independent Survey by





Dr JD Bo Westmoreland

Candidate Information

Party:	Non-partisan
Email Address:	Docbo@jcwgdg.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Dentist
Number of years as a resident of Johnson City:	more than 25
Campaign Website:	NA

1) Political Leanings: As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?

First and foremost, I am of the Christian faith; grew up in church. I am a very CONSERVATIVE person, always have been, and I run my practice/business accordingly and in harmony with that mindset. I have to make decisions NOT related to healthcare every day, such as payroll, taxes and equipment. I would apply the same conservatism to your tax dollars if fortunate to be elected

Independent Survey by



2) Your Experience and Vision: What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?

I am a native "Tri-Citian", as are my parents and THEIR parents. My sons stayed here after college and are raising their families here. I understand our region. I have always been in positions of leadership in some form. Student council in high school, class officer 4 years in Dental school and Professional Dental Fraternity President. Director of the Remote Area Medical; owner for 26 years of Westmoreland Dental Group. Founded and ran several youth Travel Baseball organizations. My vision is a safe and well-run city and I would love to make a serious dent in the drug and homeless problem that is currently plaguing our city and also cut wasteful spending.

3) Moral Values: Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.

I have said for most of my adult life that if we just follow that "little life guide" called the 10 commandments then everything would go so much better! If you study American history you will find that the American experiment was set up according to the founding fathers "for a just and moral people". "IN GOD WE TRUST" is on every piece of our currency. I feel most laws simply enforce God's rules for life but GOVT definitely oversteps its bounds at times. The constitution and the 10 Commandments can go hand-in-hand, but government should never infringe upon basic human rights and liberties.

4) Defending Constitutional Liberties: Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?

The pandemic/Covid truly brought out some unfortunate occurrences and ways of thinking among a lot of people. As stated above, I run my own dental healthcare practice, and I never mandated that my staff get vaccinated or wore masks outside of the office, etc.. people's basic rights CANNOT BE INFRINGED UPON, Regardless of what politicians say. As a commissioner I'm only allowed one vote but I will always fight for people and their Bill of Rights. Society can't function without following the constitution.

Independent Survey by



5) Utilities/Infrastructure: As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Brightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?

It seems like a very expensive project for limited returns at this time. I would need data and look at return on investment potential. I have numerous patients that work at Brightridge, including in upper management and can probably form a very good working relationship with these people to get the best result. As far as the water, I have a lot of patients that work for the city of Johnson City in the water department, and I have already been discussing infrastructure studies and potential upgrades. I do not know enough about bitcoin to speak intelligently; it is loud and requires a lot of energy, so I do not support that, unless data proves to me otherwise.

6) Crime and Police: Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?

We need to enforce the laws that are on the books. The most important thing that government does is keep their citizens safe and right now Johnson City is a microcosm of what is happening nationwide. This needs to be addressed thoroughly by recruitment of great candidates but needs to start while people are in high school educating them to the benefits of being a police officer. Pay and benefits need to be extremely competitive and be on the higher end of our state average. Morale could be improved by constant communication and support from the city leaders. Response time would have to be studied and look for any and all inefficiencies and work to improve.

7) Protecting the Most Vulnerable: As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?

The latter two are Addressed by having great police candidates with great pay/benefits and great morale as discussed above, but also communication with the residents of the city. We all have to be involved and look out for each other. That's what makes the TRI CITIES great. As far as the unborn, I am extremely pro-life and totally against abortion, except in very extenuating circumstances (rape etc) and also to a very limited time frame early in a pregnancy. This is non -negotiable with me ..

8) Business/jobs: What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?

As a commissioner, I want growth but would want to be very careful about growth without a very specific plan, because we have grown too fast at the moment and our infrastructure and financial system is paying the price. I am very pro business ; we need tax incentives /breaks to make it attractive for chains and " mom and pops " as well .. MANUFACTURING would be huge as we have the land for it and it would create 1000's of jobs and help our economy.

Independent Survey by



9) Affordable Housing: As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?

The housing crisis is directly a result of the horrible Blue State policies and liberalism and invasion of peoples rights that have driven them to move here. Commissioners would have very limited if any ability to control interest rates and such as much of this is controlled by the Fed, but we could give tax breaks to local builders? As far as the homeless, there are over 100 homes that are condemned in the city proper and we could hire people that are looking for work to go clean these up and make them livable. It would be a win-win situation because people would have work and homeless people would have shelter .

10) Homelessness/Vagrancy: How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?

Serious problems take serious solutions and no one wants to do anything except talk about it. Unfortunately, we have To take action and enforce the laws on the books, more aggressively. If we do not ,businesses downtown will continue to suffer and the problem will also only get worse as the vagrants take over. We cannot let this happen happen to our city. I think it would be wise to study how other cities that have been overwhelmed address their issue but the bottom line is we have to take action now.

11) Impact of Drug Use on Our Community: Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

The Drug problem has been around forever, but we need to step up our efforts and it all starts with very young people and I remember a long time ago, we had the DARE program And police officers went into elementary schools. I think it would be great to start that again at all the elementary schools and middle schools and even have some in high school if possible .Johnson City is on a major interstate corridor and we need to be sure that our police task force is properly funded and trained to combat this as they are our First line of defense and safety

12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

I have been in church all my life and I was a member of first Christian on MountCastle for 15 years. I am now at Grace Fellowship over by ETSU. During my time at First Christian, I was very involved in the workings of the church and I was on several committees. As commissioner I would lead by example and promote my faith and my new church.

Independent Survey by





Joe Wise

Candidate Information

Party:	Non-partisan
Email Address:	jwise@johnsoncitytn.org
Occupation/Vocation:	Business Owner
Number of years as a resident of Johnson City:	30+
Campaign Website:	JoeWise.org

Independent Survey by



1) Political Leanings: As a candidate in the Johnson City nonpartisan municipal election, you are not officially associated with any specific political party. How would you describe your political leanings (socially, fiscally, etc.) and why do you define yourself in this way?

As a City Commissioner serving in this nonpartisan capacity, I bring a conservative perspective grounded in Republican principles. Socially, I believe in upholding traditional values while ensuring the government respects individual freedoms. I support policies that empower people to make decisions that impact their lives without excessive government interference. Fiscally, I am committed to responsible, conservative budgeting. I believe in responsible government spending on essential services like public safety, infrastructure, and education while fostering an environment where businesses can thrive and create jobs. I believe conservative principles, focused on personal responsibility, fiscal discipline, and limited government, are key to ensuring a prosperous Johnson City. I aim to apply these values in a solutions-oriented way that benefits all residents.

2) Your Experience and Vision: What experience (personal, professional, other) would you bring to your role as a Commissioner that will benefit our city? What is your vision for being a Commissioner, and what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office?

I bring broad experience to my service on the Commission. My background includes working for a large multinational corporation in the USA and Canada, which gave me a perspective on leadership, organizational management, and navigating diverse regulatory environments. Additionally, my roles as an administrator at Milligan College and as a business owner have expanded my skills in managing resources, strategic planning, and problem-solving. As Commissioner, I seek to ensure continued economic growth and improve the quality of life for all residents. I plan to build on our progress, focusing on infrastructure improvements and ensuring our public safety services are fully equipped to meet community needs. My goal is that Johnson City be a place where people can prosper and thrive.

3) Moral Values: Could you share your viewpoint on how the moral principles of the Ten Commandments intersect or diverge from the principles underlying governmental laws, ordinances, and regulations? Please elaborate on your viewpoint and reasoning.

The Ten Commandments provide the foundation for the laws that govern our society. Core values such as honoring one's word, respecting life, and protecting others' property are essential to maintaining order within a community. These principles encourage individuals to act responsibly and with integrity, and they are mirrored in many laws designed to protect our citizens and promote fairness. While not all laws directly stem from religious teachings, the underlying values of honesty, respect for others, and accountability align closely with the principles laid out in the Ten Commandments. As a public servant, I believe these moral guidelines help inform our approach to governance, focusing on fostering a community that values personal responsibility, integrity, and respect for one another.

Independent Survey by



4) Defending Constitutional Liberties: Many Americans believe that the government at every level is not securing their Creator-given rights, but rather encroaching on them. Established freedoms, including that of speech, peaceable assembly, exercise of religion, medical autonomy, and commerce are often negatively impacted by state and federal regulations, and were greatly infringed upon by COVID mandates. As a Commissioner, how will you protect Johnson City residents from current and future unconstitutional government overreach?

It's important to recognize that, as a City Commissioner, my role is defined by the authority granted in the city charter. The authority of the City Commission is limited, so we must ensure that we operate within boundaries while respecting constitutional rights. As a Commissioner, I intend to honor the freedoms of Johnson City residents by adhering to the charter and ensuring any regulations or ordinances passed are necessary, measured, and entirely within the scope of our authority. By maintaining transparency and accountability, I work to ensure our local government remains focused on serving the community's best interests, respecting both the rights of individuals and the proper role of government as outlined in our city's governing documents.

5) Utilities/Infrastructure: As a Commissioner, what is your plan to (1) shift Johnson City toward renewable energy sources, (2) work with Brightridge and TVA to address energy need increases as well as protecting our electrical grid, (3) address the future water needs of Johnson City as our city continues to grow in population? Additionally, would you support bringing into Johnson City/Washington County another supercomputing (bitcoin) facility?

As Commissioner, I will prioritize the security of Johnson City's energy grid by working with public utilities to ensure it remains reliable and protected, especially as demand grows. We must also provide a safe and reliable water supply, and I will support infrastructure upgrades to meet future needs while maintaining water quality. Regarding a Bitcoin facility, I do not support recruiting such an operation to Johnson City. However, the city cannot entirely prohibit such developments, so it's essential to strike a balance by thoroughly understanding the potential impact on our energy grid, environment, and community. My focus is on safeguarding Johnson City's long-term sustainability and security. Ultimately, my focus is on protecting residents' quality of life through responsible planning.

6) Crime and Police: Nationwide crime rates are rising, while Police Department recruitment is down. As a Commissioner, what will you do to ensure citizens are protected from crime, including improving recruitment, morale, and response time within the Johnson City Police Department?

As Commissioner, I have prioritized public safety by ensuring the Johnson City Police Department has the resources needed to protect our community. While the JCPD has not faced recruitment challenges, I will support ongoing efforts to maintain competitive salaries, benefits, and incentives to attract and retain top recruits. Enhancing officer morale is also important, and I will advocate for ongoing training, health resources, and recognition programs to honor our officers' service and ensure they are adequately prepared. To maintain our efficient response times, I will continue to support investment in technology, increased staffing where needed, and efficient resource management. My goal is to ensure the JCPD remains fully equipped to keep Johnson City safe and responsive to our community's needs.

Independent Survey by



7) Protecting the Most Vulnerable: As a Commissioner, how will you ensure the protection of the most vulnerable in our city, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, and the elderly?

As a Commissioner, I am committed to protecting the most vulnerable in Johnson City. Our ongoing support for the Family Justice Center is a key part of that commitment. The Center provides a centralized location where victims of family violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse can access critical services to ensure their safety and well-being. Additionally, we have strengthened law enforcement by adding more than 20 sworn officers and creating a Special Victims Unit focused on investigating particularly heinous crimes, including sexual assault and human trafficking. I will continue to support these efforts, working to safeguard the elderly and those affected by violence or exploitation. I aim to ensure Johnson City remains a place where everyone is protected and supported.

8) Business/jobs: What specifically should the City Commission do, if anything, to bring more businesses/jobs to Johnson City? What sector(s) would you most like to see relocate here?

The City Commission is focused on creating an environment that attracts businesses and promotes job growth by maintaining vital infrastructure, streamlining regulatory processes, and offering competitive incentives for companies to relocate or expand their existing operations in Johnson City. Collaboration with local economic development organizations is key to targeting industries that align with our community's strengths. I would like to see growth in healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing sectors. These industries provide high-quality jobs and complement Johnson City's existing strengths, such as our medical facilities and educational institutions. By focusing on sectors promoting long-term, sustainable growth, we can ensure Johnson City remains a place where our children and grandchildren can build their homes, prosper, and thrive for generations to come.

9) Affordable Housing: As more and more people move to Northeast Tennessee/the Tri-Cities area in general, what can be done to provide affordable housing while also retaining our city's unique character and environment that have made it such a popular place to live?

As more people move to the Tri-Cities, it's crucial to strike a balance between providing affordable housing and preserving Johnson City's unique character. The City Commission can encourage responsible growth by promoting mixed-use developments and incentivizing builders to include affordable housing options in their plans. Additionally, we can explore creative zoning solutions that allow for higher-density housing in appropriate areas while protecting established neighborhoods and green spaces. Maintaining our city's character means ensuring that new developments complement our local culture and environment. By prioritizing smart, sustainable growth, we can provide housing that meets the needs of new residents without compromising what makes Johnson City a special place to live. This will help ensure long-term prosperity while preserving our community's charm.

Independent Survey by



10) Homelessness/Vagrancy: How can the City Commission address the increase in the homeless/vagrant population in our city in ways that best serve all Johnson City residents?

The City Commission seeks to address the homeless population through its ongoing initiative to improve coordination of services across local nonprofits, shelters, and faith-based organizations. By working to ensure access to mental health care, substance abuse treatment, job training, and other critical services, we can help individuals transition from homelessness to becoming productive, independent contributors to our community. Expanding partnerships for transitional and affordable housing will further support this goal. Our focus should remain on helping individuals regain stability and independence while ensuring our public spaces remain safe and accessible for all residents. By emphasizing rehabilitation and reintegration, we can create long-term solutions that benefit both the homeless population and the broader Johnson City community.

11) Impact of Drug Use on Our Community: Our area has been negatively highlighted regarding the Opioid/Fentanyl crisis. What do you believe should be done to protect our city and its residents, and especially our youth, from the negative physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic impacts of drug use and abuse?

The opioid and fentanyl crisis is a critical issue, and protecting Johnson City from its harmful impacts requires a multi-faceted approach. First, we must continue supporting law enforcement efforts to combat drug trafficking and hold those responsible for distributing these dangerous substances accountable. In addition, expanding prevention and education programs in schools is essential to help our youth fully understand the risks of drug use and abuse. We should leverage existing partnerships with various service providers to increase access to treatment and recovery programs. Providing comprehensive support for those affected by substance abuse is crucial to addressing the crisis's impacts. By focusing on prevention, enforcement, and recovery, we can protect our community and foster a community where everyone can thrive.

12) Engagement with the Faith Community: Johnson City has a large, diverse, and well-established religious community, consisting predominantly of those practicing some form of Christianity, and is home to hundreds of local churches and international parachurch ministries. What is your current engagement with the local faith community, and how do you plan to interact with and represent your constituents in your role as a City Commissioner?

As a committed Christian and active member of Grandview Christian Church, I am actively involved in and supportive of various ministries throughout Johnson City. I believe our local faith community and other faith-based organizations play a crucial role in addressing our residents' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. I have seen their positive impact in providing support services, mentoring, and outreach to those in need. As a City Commissioner, I will continue engaging with the faith community by building on these relationships and ensuring their contributions are recognized and valued. My goal is to represent all of Johnson City's residents while continuing to work alongside ministries and churches to promote a robust and compassionate community where everyone can prosper.

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