

# Election Questions and Answers: Before the Ballot Box

We at the standard believe the key to making stronger communities starts with informed voters. To assist in providing equal opportunities and consistency, we presented each candidate with identical questions for each position. These questions were formed in a way to allow readers to hear directly from the candidates while being able to fairly compare responses side by side before election day.

## Mayor Position

Tom Nesvold

### Why are you running for mayor, and what motivated you to seek the position?

To try to serve the community, and backing from several community members.

### What do you believe are the city's greatest strengths today?

Being resilient, and being able to adapt and move forward when issues arise.

### What are the biggest challenges facing the city in the coming years?

Probably the city dump issue and the ongoing issues with repairs to the streets. Mostly check what can be done to help our community to continue to run smoothly.

### What experiences or background have best prepared you to serve as mayor?

32 years teaching, dealing with the public along with negotiating contracts.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving as mayor?

Listen and try to find a solution that best fits the community as a whole.

### What current city issues, projects, or initiatives do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

I'll have to collect information and see which are the most pressing.

### What areas or projects should be priorities for the city over the next three to five years?

I'll have to collect information and see which are the most pressing.

### How important is communication between city leadership and residents?

Very. 2-way communication is key to finding a solution that all can live with.

### How would you approach disagreements or difficult decisions while working with council members and city staff?

Collect all facts and data before any opinions or decisions are made.

### What would you like voters to know about you as they cast their ballots?

I am a long time community member and have served on the country club board, along with the park board. I'll be fair and try to do what's best for our community.

## Westhope City Council

Robin Tolstad

### Why are you running for city council?

I'm running for City Council because I care about our small town community and I want to help keep it a great place to live and raise a family. I believe in practical decisions, supporting the people and businesses of our town, and making sure our residents have a voice in the future of our town.

### What do you believe are the city's greatest strengths?

Our city's greatest strengths include caring neighbors who support each other, work hard and believe in our community.

### What are the biggest challenges facing the city in the coming years?

City challenges include balancing growth and improvements while keeping our small town values and services affordable.

### What experiences or background have best prepared

### you to serve on the city council?

My experiences working with people, handling responsibilities, being a business owner in the community, and volunteering my services have all shown me the importance of making fair, practical decisions.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving on the city council?

Responsibilities include listening to the people, making informed decisions, managing city resources responsibly and working together to support the needs and future of our community

### What current city issues, projects or initiatives do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

City streets and infrastructure, public safety and planning for future improvements and using tax payer dollars wisely.

### What areas should be priorities for the city over the next three to five years?

Keeping city services strong, safe and affordable.

### How important is communication between the city and the community?

Communication is key!! Residents should feel informed, heard and comfortable sharing their feelings and concerns with city leaders.

### How would you approach disagreements or difficult decisions while working with other city council members?

With an open mind. Thoughts and ideas need to be heard and considered while boundaries are respected.

### What would you like voters to know about you as they cast their ballots?

I am a third generation Westopian. This town is my home. The future of it is the future of not only my family, but it is the future of other families and their generations to come.

Kevin Millett

### Why are you running for city council?

I am running because I care about the future of our community. I want to help make practical decisions that benefit the community as a whole and continue improving transparency and accountability.

### What do you believe are the city's greatest strengths?

We still have a strong small-town community where people know their neighbors, support local businesses, and take pride in where they live.

### What are the biggest challenges facing the city in the coming years?

One of the biggest challenges will be economic development, maintaining infrastructure, and keeping city services going while managing costs responsibly. Another big challenge is making sure the community stays informed and understands where tax dollars are going. I believe people want to know that city funds are being managed responsibly, that there is proper oversight, and that decisions are being made openly and carefully.

### What experiences or background have best prepared you to serve on the city council?

I think running a business has prepared me a lot because you learn how to manage money, solve problems, and make decisions that affect other people. Being on council for the last four years has also taught me a lot about how the city actually operates behind the scenes. Along with that, just having common sense and being willing to listen and ask questions goes a long way.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving on the city council?

I believe the most important responsibilities are maintaining city infrastructure and services, representing the people fairly, spending money responsibly, and making decisions that are best for the town long term. It is also important to make sure the

community has trust in local government through openness and accountability.

### What current city issues, projects or initiatives do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

I think transparency with the public is a big one. People want to know what is going on, where tax dollars are going, and why decisions are being made. I also think we need to stay focused on infrastructure and keeping the town maintained without overspending.

### What areas should be priorities for the city over the next three to five years?

Maintaining streets, sidewalks, curbs, and city services should be a priority, along with keeping the town a good place for families and businesses. I also think we need to keep looking for opportunities that help the city remain strong for future generations.

### How important is communication between the city and the community?

I think it is extremely important. Residents should feel like they can come to City Hall, ask questions, bring up concerns, and be treated fairly and respectfully. Communication also means the public record should reflect what was actually discussed at meetings, so residents can trust that the minutes are accurate and that city business is being handled openly.

### How would you approach disagreements or difficult decisions while working with other city council members?

I believe disagreements should stay respectful and focused on facts and what is best for the community. Not everyone will always agree, but listening to different perspectives and staying professional is important in making good decisions.

### What would you like voters to know about you as they cast their ballots?

I want voters to know that I genuinely care about this community. I am not running for personal gain, a title, or attention. As a local business owner, speaking up and asking tough questions is not always the easiest thing to do, but I believe the community deserves honesty, fairness, and accountability. I will do my best to get the facts, listen to people, and make decisions based on what I believe is right for the town.

Ken Radtke

### Why are you running for city council?

To be a voice for the people of Westhope.

### What do you believe are the city's greatest strengths?

The ability to come together in the event that it has to small town values.

### What are the biggest challenges facing the city in the coming years?

Maintaining roads, sewer and water systems, dump grounds

### What experiences or background have best prepared you to serve on the city council?

Business owner for 26 years in town, grew up here and have been on the council for 8 years.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving on the city council?

Overseeing the city with employees and having some common sense on issues that might come up.

### What current city issues, projects or initiatives do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

Probably a few streets in town. Building a new dump ground.

### What areas should be priorities for the city over the next three to five years?

Maintaining what we have, a town of 400 people we have to preserve what we have.

### How important is communication between the city and the community?

If anyone has a question on anything, ask. I'm always available.

### How would you approach disagreements or difficult decisions while working with other city council members?

I do what's best for the city, and the people of Westhope.

### What would you like voters to know about you as they cast their ballots?

I've lived here a better part of my life and know mostly everyone and they know me so get out and vote!

## Westhope Park Board

Travis Fritel

### Why are you running for the park board?

To ensure our children have safe areas to play in the city of Westhope.

### What do you believe are the community's greatest strengths when it comes to parks and recreation?

The new playground and a great pool that has managers, lifeguards, and support staff that want to be there and care about the community using the pool.

### What challenges or needs do you see for the park board in the coming years?

More seating at the pool.

### What experiences or background have best prepared you to serve on the park board?

I have an accounting degree and have been a business owner for 8 years, and that has helped me understand budgets, needs, and how to prioritize the needs. I also have young children and see the energy that needs a place to be released.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving on the park board?

Making sure that we're using the Park Board funds in the best way to serve the community.

### What current park or recreation issues, projects, or initiatives do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

Extending the seating at the pool and a large fence project for the basketball court.

### What areas or projects should be priorities for the park board over the next several years?

Making the pool more family friendly and ensuring needed pool updates are able to be done.

### How important are parks, recreation programs, and community spaces to a small community?

I feel it is very important to have the parks and recreational programs such as summer baseball to keep the kids together in the summer and give them a place to go.

### How would you approach disagreements or difficult decisions while working with other board members?

Communication is always the best solution. Most disagreements come down to a lack of information.

### What would you like voters to know about you as they cast their ballots?

I have three boys under six that are the most important thing to me and I'm only a part of the Park Board to make sure there are opportunities and events for young kids like my own.

Benjiman Cartwright

### Why are you running for the park board?

I have been part of the park board since around 2011, and would enjoy to continue to provide my help and input to the park district.

### What do you believe are the community's greatest strengths when it comes to parks and recreation?

Our community support. We have amazing support and that allowed us to have a new pool built when it was needed.

### What challenges or needs do

### you see for the park board in the coming years?

The cost of implementing new things. We use a tax levy to help offset some of the operational costs and we have been very conscious on how we spend the public money. When new equipment costs have ballooned to what they are, we have to put long term plans for saving and fundraising to complete projects.

### What experiences or background have best prepared you to serve on the park board?

My ability to see problems and come up with solutions to fix them, that has been a big help in keeping our expenses lower.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving on the park board?

Having an open mind and listening to the input the public gives us. We are here to serve the whole community. With improvements over the years, we do a lot of planning on what we feel would be the most utilized things, and that comes with the help from public input.

### What current park or recreation issues, projects, or initiatives do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

As most may know, Westhope City has a 1 cent sales tax that is designated for parks and recreation. We recently submitted a request for monies to use to complete the basketball/multipurpose court project with a fence surrounding it, in ground tennis and pickleball nets as well as lighting. Also on this years project is as an extension on the south side of the pool deck to expand seating. These both come from direct feedback from the community on what would be the best thing to use these funds on. We have strategically used this tax fund as a savings account, saving for multiple years to fund these larger projects. This allows us to keep the property tax low, using that to cover the operating expenses and not use that to build on the infrastructure. The other project we would like to complete this summer is the siding on the building from the hail storm.

### What areas or projects should be priorities for the park board over the next several years?

Our playground equipment will need to have portions replaced as it ages, this will be discussed and will work on a replacement schedule for things moving forward. I feel that having everything on a schedule will allow the board to make responsible decisions as needed in the future.

### How important are parks, recreation programs, and community spaces to a small community?

I think the park is a large part of any community. I have heard from people as they are looking to relocate that one of the first things they look at is the parks, and if they have children, they look at the pool.

### How would you approach disagreements or difficult decisions while working with other board members?

The hardest thing to remember is that everyone has their own opinion. The best thing I believe to do is to listen and work to find a common ground everyone can agree on.

### What would you like voters to know about you as they cast their ballots?

Thank you for the years of allowing me to be part of the park board. I would enjoy to continue to serve the community.

## Westhope Public School

Kylee Brodehl

### Why are you running for the school board, and what do you hope to contribute if elected?

I attended Westhope Public School from Kindergarten through 12th grade, and now my own children attend WPS as well. That gives me a deep

personal connection to our school and community. I want to help ensure Westhope Public School continues to thrive for future generations by supporting decisions that benefit our students, staff, and community.

### What do you believe are the biggest strengths of the school district today?

One of the greatest strengths of our district is the strong connection between the school and the community. Our school district has a dedicated team of educators and administration that provides students with quality education and valuable learning opportunities.

### What are the greatest challenges facing the district over the next several years?

One of the biggest challenges facing any school board today is balancing financial responsibility while continuing to provide students with the best possible educational experience. Retaining quality teachers and staff, managing resources wisely, and maintaining a positive learning environment are all critical to the long-term success of our district.

### What experiences or background have best prepared you to serve on the school board?

My experience as an HR & Accounting Director has prepared me well for school board service. In my role, I regularly work through complex situations, evaluate different perspectives, stay current on changing regulations, and make responsible financial decisions. Those experiences have taught me the importance of communication, teamwork, and finding solutions that serve the greater good.

### What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of serving on the school board?

I believe it is important for school board members to be approachable, open-minded, and willing to listen to feedback. Strong leadership comes from working together respectfully while always keeping students at the center of every decision. I also believe board members have a responsibility to provide thoughtful financial oversight and help guide the district in a positive direction.

### What current issues, projects, or initiatives within the district do you believe deserve the most attention moving forward?

If elected, one of my first priorities would be to learn more about the district's current goals, challenges, and opportunities. A strong school district is incredibly important for the future of our community. I want to help support continued success while making fiscally responsible decisions that benefit both current and future students. There are already many great things happening within our school, and I would be proud to help build on that momentum.

### What areas should be priorities for the district over the next three to five years?

Looking ahead, I would like to explore ways to improve infrastructure and maintain important district assets while being mindful of the budget. Safe, efficient, and well-maintained facilities play an important role in supporting students, staff, and daily operations. Investing wisely today helps strengthen the district for years to come.

### How important is communication between the school board and the community?

Open, respectful, and honest communication between the school board and community is extremely important. Trust and transparency help build strong relationships. Parents, community members, and local businesses all play an important role in the success of our district, and I believe listening to different perspectives leads to better decisions for the future.