



Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
City Commission Candidate Questionnaire

1. Do you support the proposed 32nd Street alignment of the South Lawrence Trafficway?

Mike Amyx Yes
Price Banks No
James Bush Yes
Dennis Constance No
Aron Cromwell No
Lance Johnson Yes
Tom Johnson No
Gwen Klingenberg No

2. Should the city continue to fund the partnership between the city, county and Lawrence Chamber of Commerce for Economic Development?

Mike Amyx Yes
Price Banks Yes
James Bush Yes
Dennis Constance No
Aron Cromwell Yes
Lance Johnson Yes
Tom Johnson Yes
Gwen Klingenberg Yes

3. Do you favor tax incentives to attract new business/industry and to retain existing business and industry in Lawrence?

Mike Amyx Yes
Price Banks Yes
James Bush Yes
Dennis Constance answered Yes & No
Aron Cromwell Yes
Lance Johnson Yes
Tom Johnson Yes
Gwen Klingenberg Yes



4. Do you think Lawrence should grow in population and land area?

Mike Amyx Yes
Price Banks Yes
James Bush Yes
Dennis Constance Did not answer Yes or No
Aron Cromwell Yes
Lance Johnson Yes
Tom Johnson Yes
Gwen Klingenberg answered Yes & No

5. Currently City Commissioners are elected citywide and are responsible to all city residents. Do you favor continuing this system or changing to City Commissioners being elected by geographic wards based on population?

Mike Amyx Yes
Price Banks Yes
James Bush Yes
Dennis Constance Yes
Aron Cromwell Yes
Lance Johnson Yes
Tom Johnson Yes
Gwen Klingenberg Undecided

6. Assuming a 10% budget shortfall in available city revenue rank from 1 to 8 (with 1 being first and 8 last) where you would look for making up the deficit.

Mike Amyx

- 8 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 7 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 6 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 4 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 4 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 4 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 4 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 5 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

Price Banks

- 8 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 6 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 7 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 5 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 2 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 4 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 1 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 3 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

James Bush

- 7 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 8 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 5 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 6 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 2 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 4 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 1 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 3 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

Dennis Constance

- 3 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 6 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 4 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 7 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 5 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 1 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 2 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 8 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

Aron Cromwell

- 4 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 7 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 5 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 8 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 3 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 6 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 2 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 1 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

Lance Johnson

- 5 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 8 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 4 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 6 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 1 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 3 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 2 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 7 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

Tom Johnson

- 5 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 7 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 3 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 6 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 2 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 1 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 4 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 8 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

Gwen Klingenberg

- 6 a. Raise city property taxes or sales taxes.
- 1-5 b. Cut core services i.e.; police, fire, sanitation, etc.
- 1-5 c. Cut infrastructure maintenance.
- 8 d. Cut social services i.e.; health department, social agencies, etc.
- 1-5 e. Cut planning/development review/community development
- 1-5 f. Cut Park and Recreation Department funding.
- 1-5 g. Cut Administration support i.e. City Manager's office, clerk, finance HR, etc.
- 7 h. Across the board equal percentage cuts to all budgets in city government.

7. Would you, as a commissioner, be pro-active in job creation for the city of Lawrence? If so, explain how.

Mike Amyx

During my 14 years as an elected official, I have been involved in recruiting all types of businesses and providing business parks for them. Now, the city should institute a local-preference purchasing policy by buying locally whenever local business bids are within a certain percentage of the total cost.

Price Banks

Yes. We need to concentrate on small businesses, develop stronger relationships with KU. We need to actively involve entrepreneurs in town who have demonstrated the ability to grow businesses from within the community.

We also need to improve quality of life, and reduce the obstructions that occur during the approval processes.

James Bush

I am running for city commission because this is a critical time for our city – minimal job growth since 2001, a budget crisis, and issues that require sensible approaches, consensus building, and visionary leadership. During the next four years, I want bring an aggressive focus on job growth and job creation, and an expanded tax base through a comprehensive economic development strategy that encompasses public transportation, the environment, workforce investments, investment in early childhood education and daycare, job creation and business retention.

Dennis Constance

Yes. I would seek ways to expand on research done at KU. I would also seek to develop green jobs and encourage all jobs to pay at least a living wage. A healthy economy is one where the people have real buying power.

Aron Cromwell

Very proactive. I want the job creation focus changed to match the new economy-small business and entrepreneurs, tourism, and retirement. I have new ideas to promote all three without giving up on larger business.

Lance Johnson

Yes. I believe strongly in job creation (economic development). It is one of the foundations of any healthy community. It is the main reason I am running. I have proposed a 5-point plan for the job creation and I will be focused every day as a city commissioner on growing jobs.

Tom Johnson

I would reinvigorate our economic development task force, tying in Chamber, Downtown Lawrence, Inc., University of Kansas, development advocates, and other community members to explore and recommend action for job creation.

Gwen Klingenberg

Pro-active. I have been studying best practices in other communities and I see many ways to encourage job growth. I am particularly eager to find ways to promote “green collar” jobs in the environmental sector and living wage jobs.

8. Do you think Lawrence should make a priority of creating primarily “white collar” jobs versus basic jobs? If so, explain why.

Mike Amyx

No. It is important to have a well rounded base of employment for all workers. Not everyone is eligible for white collar jobs and we need to continue to provide an atmosphere that will lead to prosperity for all.

Price Banks

Yes. Our strength lies in developing local jobs based upon our amenities, including KU and some of our previous efforts. Basic manufacturing has not been our success story and is not our legacy. Let’s look to the creativity that defines Lawrence, and exploit it for future job development.

James Bush

No, I would not favor creating primarily “white collar” jobs versus basic jobs. Instead, I favor an emphasis on a wide variety of jobs for a wide variety of people because that represents sustainable growth. We cannot “cherry pick” the kinds of jobs or industries to develop. Lawrence graduates approximately 5000 students each year – from Lawrence High, Free State High, KU, and Haskell. Most of these students will need to look outside of Lawrence to find employment. We lose a very special resource when these graduates leave town to find employment elsewhere.

Dennis Constance

No. Diversity is the key to strength and resilience.

Aron Cromwell

A good mix is necessary to provide jobs for the largest number of people. I would like a concerted effort to attract white collar jobs as blue and service ones usually are a byproduct.

Lance Johnson

No. I think we need both. I want to provide opportunity for everyone living and working in our community. Focusing on just one type of job limits these opportunities.

Tom Johnson

There should be an equitable balance of 'white collar' jobs combined with decent paying jobs in our service, retail, and related commercial sectors. Keeping job diversity in Lawrence, coupled with affordable housing, services, and associated costs of living will keep sustainable growth in focus for Lawrence.

Gwen Klingenberg

The issue for me isn't collar color but the pay and the contribution the job makes to the community. We need jobs that pay people well enough to live in Lawrence and contribute to the local tax base. Manufacturing jobs are usually good in this respect; warehouse jobs, less so.

9. Do you think Lawrence has a non-positive image outside our community in the area of economic development and the planning process? If so what would you propose to change that image?

Mike Amyx

Lawrence has battled that misnomer for decades. We need to educate everybody about the value of businesses proposing to come to Lawrence. We need to pay attention to concerns but vote for what is best for Lawrence.

Price Banks

We can restore some of our economic development luster if we fix broken infrastructure.

We need to streamline the planning process. When an application is submitted for any planning or development project, a City employee should be assigned to track it from initiation to completion, and to troubleshoot the process.

James Bush

Unfortunately, I believe Lawrence has a less than positive image outside our community in the area of economic development. I propose we make every effort to change this image by putting out the welcome mat to businesses and site selection groups. I believe we need to call on economic development leaders – including elected officials, Chamber leaders, and community leaders – to change our tone. Third, we need to treat existing businesses & industry better – aid them in their expansion and thank them for staying with us. Fourth, processes and codes need to be corrected for greater efficiency, predictability, and speed.

Dennis Constance

No. Lawrence is inherently an attractive place for people to live and businesses to locate. A “simplified” development and planning process might seem to be an edge, but we should set high standards. The best prospects will not be scared away by it, but will in fact recognize it as an asset.

Aron Cromwell

No I do not but I do think it will if we keep saying it does. We do need to be fair in the development/economic development process and stop giving some projects precedence, exemptions, etc while making others jump through new hoops.

Lance Johnson

Yes. This is number one on my 5-point plan. We need to take to politics out of the process and staff level. Politics can happen at the commission level, but we as commissioners need to trust the process, and if this followed, be prepared to approve projects.

Tom Johnson

I believe that outside interests may sometimes find our development process cumbersome. I would revamp online presence for City Hall, as well as laying out all steps required to form a business in Lawrence, apply for future zoning and development, and manage expectations of outside interests to mirror Lawrence's master plan for growth.

Gwen Klingenberg

To improve our mixed image I would work to support local business first and new business second. And I would follow the example of communities that restrict the Planning Commission to people without a profit stake in planning, and I favor having a neighborhood board to advise the Planning Commission.

10. What is your top priority if you are elected to the Lawrence City Commission?

Mike Amyx

Very simple, a balanced budget without raising the mill levy.

Price Banks

Efficiency in City Government.

James Bush

My top priority is economic development through job creation, job growth, business attraction and business retention in an effort to expand the tax base. We must encourage businesses to expand in Lawrence and re-double our efforts to attract new businesses to Lawrence. In these tough economic times, that must be our number one goal. In addition, we should support as yet modest efforts by the Chamber of Commerce and Public Library to create “incubators” for local entrepreneurs to start businesses in Lawrence. Investing in our workforce is a priority of mine and should be a priority of our city commission.

Dennis Constance

Managed growth and strong neighborhoods.



Aron Cromwell

To protect and strengthen the financial well-being of Lawrence's individuals, families, businesses, and city services.

Lance Johnson

Job Creation. We need our leaders at the city, county, chamber, KU, etc. focused on economic development. I have a 5-point plan that puts Lawrence in a position to create jobs.

Tom Johnson

Maintaining Lawrence's innate identity as a progressive, exciting, and community-based municipality in the face of hard economic choices. Ultimately the city's future hinges on the availability of decent-paying jobs, the success of our schools and universities, keeping up with the needs of all residents, no matter what their income bracket, and attracting more businesses and people to Lawrence, whether through growing the tax base by adding people to our mix, or attracting new companies and employees to our city.

Gwen Klingenberg

Listen to the community. Help local business. Promote affordable housing and good jobs so that everyone who works here can afford to live here. Improve transit, including regional transit, to help people get to work, health care, and all the attractions that make Lawrence a wonderful place to live.

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