



City of Lawrence

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CITY CLERK'S
OFFICE

LAWRENCE CITY COMMISSION VACANCY APPLICATION

Thank you for your interest in serving your City in this capacity. Information including process to fill the vacancy, key dates and additional details are available on the City's website: www.lawrenceks.org/vacancy.

Instructions: Please complete this brief form and other required items listed on the checklist to help provide sufficient information to the City Commission, which will fill the vacancy. Completed applications must be received by the City Clerk's office no later than Wednesday, September 9, 2015 at 5 pm in order to be considered. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Process: Applications will be reviewed by an advisory committee appointed by the City Commission. The committee will forward a list of no more than six candidates to the City Commission, selected from the pool of qualified applicants. The City Commission will then select an individual to fill the City Commission vacancy from qualified applicants, including but not limited to the six candidates provided by the advisory committee. Applicants will be required to participate in the advisory committee and City Commission process.

Eligibility: To be eligible, applicants must be a U.S. Citizen, at least 18 years old, a qualified elector of the City of Lawrence, and a resident living inside the Lawrence city limits at the time of appointment and during the term duration.

Public Information: Any and all information provided as part of this process, including but not limited to the application and supporting documentation, is public information and will be made openly available on the city website. The process will be entirely public, including any interviews held with applicants.

Name: Joe O'Brien

Address: 456 Rock Fence Place, Lawrence, KS 66049

Phone number: 785-749-5152 **E-mail:** joeobrien429@gmail.com

Occupation: University faculty

How long have you lived in Lawrence? January, 1992

Tell us about yourself. Please describe, in 200 words or less, your reasons for seeking a position on the Lawrence City Commission, and why you believe you can represent the citizens of Lawrence as a member of the City Commission.

During my first 20 years in Lawrence I focused on raising my son and meeting the responsibilities of my job with occasional ventures into community involvement. Ironically, part of my job required me to stay abreast of local and statewide civic and political matters, which continually piqued my interest in one day becoming more engaged. With my son now employed as a civil engineer, I feel fortunate to receive this opportunity to possibly more fully serve those in Lawrence and repay the community for all that my son and I were fortunate to receive for 20 years. Rather than believe, I hope that I am able to represent my fellow citizens of Lawrence, which I realize will require me to remain open and responsive to all those in the community and to determine ways to best make myself available to them regarding matters before the commission.

Education/Experience. Please provide a brief summary of your education, and any training or experience that you possess which would be beneficial to the City Commission position.

I received a B.A. in history and a B.S. in Education, a master's and doctoral degree from the University of Virginia.

Work History. Please provide a brief summary of your work history.

I taught middle-secondary social studies for five years in Virginia; I was employed by the University of Virginia for three years while in a doctoral program; I served as the executive director of a non-profit institute, which was housed in Virginia Commonwealth University, that provided professional development in law-related education for 8 years; and, I have served as faculty member in middle-secondary social studies since arriving at the University of Kansas in 1992.

Public Offices Held. Please provide a brief summary of elected service or service as a member of a public board/commission/committee/task force. Please list city, state and dates of service.

In the mid to late 1990's I served on a statewide curriculum writing committee for the Kansas Department of Education. While directing the non-profit I worked with a host of public agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice and the Virginia Department of Correctional Education. I also served on a parents' group for Deerfield Elementary School and routinely volunteered there for several years while my son attended the school

Community Involvement. Please provide a brief summary of your involvement in service to your community.

I view myself as belonging to a personal and professional community. With the former, my experiences range from serving on a home owners' association and a citizens' advisory group while living in Henrico County Virginia to serving on the Americana Music Academy's board since shortly after its inception in 2002. Within my professional community I have served on numerous committees and executive boards for numerous statewide and national professional organizations and non-profit organizations. I also have made presentations at public hearings in venues as diverse as the Lawrence City Commission, the Kansas Board of Education and the Virginia legislature, as well as worked with groups like the Virginia Supreme Court and the United Nations on programming for youth and adults.

Top Issues. Please describe, in 500 words or less, what you believe are the top issues affecting the City of Lawrence.

1. Address public safety and maintaining infrastructure within larger context of best managing Lawrence's future growth: Ensuring public safety and providing and maintaining an physical infrastructure both are the most critical responsibilities of a local government and are the foundation of a city's existence, let alone its future growth. Thus, I was a little surprised how the *Comprehensive Plan Update* operated on the assumption that there was no need either to acknowledge the importance of public safety or to assume there was little to no need to consider how *Horizon 2020* addresses public safety. The fact that a new law enforcement center was dependent upon funding from a sales tax increase suggests otherwise. While supportive of the report's values, operationalizing them depends upon a safe community capable of meeting basic needs.
2. Ways to best address affordable quality housing for all incomes, ones that best meet varying ages, needs and interests. I strongly endorse the report's commitment to ensuring quality housing for all income groups. In so doing, I think that the city must consider ways to cultivate and sustain diversity within neighborhoods. I also would endorse exploring ways to integrate complementary issues, such as opportunities for small independent retail and diversity within neighborhoods.
3. How to accommodate open, livable and sustainable development in urban growth areas while maintaining larger sense of community with an increasingly commuter citizenry. I agree with the need to reassess the identified urban growth areas and to consider them in light of current and future potential growth. *Horizon 2020* hardly addresses Lawrence's growth as a bedroom community, and the corresponding implications for services, Lawrence's approach to neighborhoods, and the larger community involvement. Neighborhoods and community groups are the social foundation for the city as a whole, so ensuing their continued cultural and social vibrancy and their civic engagement is critical.
4. Ensuring Lawrence continues as an economically attractive environment for business development and growth, while remaining consistent with the community's values and providing for range of employment opportunities. I think that Lawrence must consider ways to strike a balance between providing suitable incentives for businesses, while ensuring favorable salary and work conditions for employees. While I agree with the Chamber's recommendation to consider sites for possible new industrial sites and possible consideration of economic incentives to attract new business, I also realize there are many non-economic incentives that serve to attract investors. I think that the city needs to make more judicious use of tax incentives. At the same time, I support the development of technical training services, such as those now offered by USD's College and Career Center so as to offer the city's youth and prospective businesses with a varied and skilled workforce.

Your Approach to Governing. Please provide, in 500 words or less, a summary of your approach to handling issues that would come before you as a member of the Lawrence City Commission, and your approach to working with other City Commissioners on these issues.

First, I would need to remain open and sensitive to individuals and groups within Lawrence, as well as to the community at large. This would require seeking out citizen input, fostering a variety of ways to engage with individuals and groups, garnering support for key community issues, and advising people both of my thinking and that of my fellow commissioners. Local governance is an interactive process, dependent on the willingness of people to become civically engaged, and a process where the city commission is an intermediary between the people and those that deliver city services.

Second, I think that the city manager is a critical part of local governance so I would trust what the person brings to the commission, but make sure to educate myself well enough to pose relevant, informed questions. I am all too aware that cutting "administrative costs" often is a priority when there is a need to balance a budget. Needless to say, this can create a certain amount of tension between staff and elected officials. A commissioner needs to recognize the importance of city employees to addressing community issues and to cultivate an environment where they are best able to fulfill their responsibilities.

Third, the issues that I identified earlier are complex and critical, which require thoughtful, deliberative and decisive consideration and action. This would require me to approach the issues with an open mind, to remain willing to listen and learn, to ensure the involvement of diverse voices, to engage with city staff and fellow commissioners, and to recognize the gravity of making and acting on a decision. At times, this might mean remaining responsive to the community's interests and needs, while at other times charting a new path and facilitating the community's movement.

Fourth, as a new person on the commission, I would need to spend time familiarizing myself with the commission's recent work, as well as with individual commissioners and relevant city staff. Governance is a people process, so it is incumbent upon me to establish personal and professional relations with those dedicated to furthering the community's interests.

Finally, I have had a wide range of working with people in multiple settings from storytelling in preschool and retirement communities, to adolescents in diversion programs and juvenile detention, to professional development for law enforcement, attorneys, judges and preK-university educators, and to community outreach for a host of groups. In many of these setting I was asked to discern how to best enable those involved to further their personal and collective interests. I have been fortunate to have my work in doing so to be recognized on numerous occasions by several organizations through the receipt of teaching and professional service awards.

Your Approach to Land-Use Planning. Please provide, in 500 words or less, a summary of your approach to handling issues that would come before you as a member of the Lawrence City Commission, and your approach to working with other City Commissioners on these issues.

Collaboration, collegiality and compromise best describe what I envision as essential to a thoughtful, economically sound, environmentally sensitive, and people-centric approach to land use planning. When I first visited Lawrence in 1991 I was struck by the diverse, rich use of public and private spaces, such as the land devoted to public parks, the obvious efforts to ensure a vibrant economic and historic downtown, and the presence of two universities. The diversity of land use has increased with time, such as the growth of business parks, the impending completion of South Lawrence Trafficway, and the development of several large retail areas. Such diversity is one of the community's strength but also poses a challenge.

Collaboration, while beginning with the partnership between the city and Douglas County as represented on the Planning Commission, depends upon the involvement of all parties with an interest in Lawrence's growth. Facilitating the involvement of those like the school district, the two universities, neighborhood groups, and business interests in collegial and productive deliberations about land use is a key responsibility of the City Commission. The Chamber of Commerce's suggestion to integrate land use planning with business retention and expansion planning illustrates one way for the commission to engage in such deliberation. Such involvement though necessitates enabling all parties to compromise as appropriate, which I envision as critical to matters such as the arts' corridor, affordable housing for all income levels and a technological infrastructure. I hope that we would agree that the community is the only desired "winner."

A thoughtful approach entails one grounded in principles, such as those expressed in the latest comprehensive plan, which helps to ensure trust between the city government, its planning partners and the community. An economically sound approach supports matters such as varying income levels, differing business interests, and a range of land use purposes. An environmentally sensitive approach requires remaining mindful of the abundant, yet limited, natural resources in the city and county. Finally, when all is said and done, I would need to remain mindful of how decisions affect people's present and future lives. Throughout my time in preparing young adults to become teachers, I always kept what I wanted for my son in mind. I would bring the same mentality to the commission – what kind of community would I want for my son and his possible future family.

I envision these approaches as vital as the community confronts the challenge of striking a balance between building in, building out and building up. I think that retail development illustrates this challenge, given the interest in building in at places like 6th and Wakarusa and South Iowa, building up in certain areas of the downtown, and potentially building out on the east K-10 corridor near the Trafficway. In turn, in deciding whether to build in, up or out for housing, I am mindful of the *Comprehensive Plan Update's* recommendations regarding ensuring the unique features of the city related to culture, the environment and the historic center of Lawrence.

Application Materials Checklist. All applicants must complete the following forms and return application materials to the City Clerk's Office, 3rd Floor of City Hall, 6 E. 6th Street, no later than **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, 2015** to be considered for the vacancy.

- Complete Lawrence City Commission Vacancy Application
- Statement of Substantial Interest for Local Office
- Three Letters of Recommendation

Statement of Verification

I hereby certify that I am qualified to serve as a member of the Lawrence City Commission. I am a U.S. Citizen, am 18 years of age or older, am a qualified elector of the City of Lawrence, and a resident living inside the Lawrence city limits. I understand that my application and materials will be a public record.



Signature



Date

STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL INTERESTS FOR LOCAL OFFICE

INSTRUCTIONS. This statement must be completed by each person required to do so by K.S.A. 75-4301a. Upon completion, mail or hand deliver your completed statement to the office where you filed your declaration of candidacy. If appointed to fill a vacancy in a local elective office, file this form where your predecessor filed for office.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

A. IDENTIFICATION:

O'Brien, Joseph E.

Last Name	First Name	MI
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N/A

Spouse's Name

456 Rock Fence Place, Lawrence, 66049

Number & Street Name, Apartment Number, Rural Route, or P.O. Box Number/ City, State, Zip Code

Home Phone – 785-749-5152

Business Phone 785-864-9663

B. OFFICE SOUGHT, HELD OR APPOINTED TO:

List Name of Office

Position – City Commission District

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Date received (Official use only)

C. OWNERSHIP INTERESTS: List any corporation, partnership, proprietorship, trust, joint venture and every other business interest, including land used for income, and specific stocks, mutual funds or retirement accounts in which either you or your spouse has owned within the preceding 12 months a legal or equitable interest exceeding \$5,000 or 5%, whichever is less. Please attach additional pages if necessary to complete this section.
 If you have nothing to reprint in Section "C", check here ___.

BUSINESS NAME AND ADDRESS	D	TYPE OF BUSINESS	DESCRIPTION or INTERESTS HELD	HELD BY WHOM
1. TIAA-CREFF P.O. Box 1259 Charlotte, NC		Financial investment firm	Retirement accounts	Me
2. Security Benefit; 1 Security Benefit Plaza, Topeka, KS		Financial investment firm	Retire acct/mutual fund	Me
3. Franklin-Templeton; 500 Yonge St., North York, Ontario		Same as above	Same as above	Me
4. Hartford; 1 Hartford Plaza, Hartford, CN		Same as above	Same as above	Me
5. Voya Financial; 230 Park Avenue, New York City, NY		Same as above	Same as above	Me
6. Morgan Stanley; 1585 Broadway Avenue, New York City, NY		Same as above	Same as above	Me
7. U.S. Bank		Same as above	Same as above	Me
8. VALICS; 1050 N. Western St., Amarillo, TX		Same as above	Same as above	Me
9.				
10.				

D. GIFTS IN THE FORM OF GOODS OR SERVICES: List any person, business or combination of businesses from which you or your spouse either individually or collectively, have received in the preceding 12 months, without reasonable and valuable consideration, goods or services having an aggregate value of \$500 or more.
 If you have nothing to report in Section "D", check here ___.

NAME OF PERSON OR BUSINESS FROM WHOM GIFT RECEIVED	ADDRESS	RECEIVED BY:
1.		
2.		
3.		

E. RECEIPT OF COMPENSATION: List all places of employment in the last calendar year, and any other businesses from which you or your spouse received \$2,000 or more in compensation (salary, thing of value, or economic benefit conferred on you or your spouse in return for services rendered, or to be rendered), which was reportable as taxable income on your federal income tax returns.

1. YOUR PLACE(S) OF EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER BUSINESS IN THE PRECEDING CALENDAR YEAR.

If you have nothing to report in Section "E"1, check here ____.

NAME OF BUSINESS	ADDRESS	TYPE OF BUSINESS
1. University of Kansas	1450 Jayhawk Blvd., Lawrence, KS	university
2.		

2. SPOUSE'S PLACE(S) OF EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER BUSINESS IN THE PRECEDING CALENDAR YEAR.

If you have nothing to report in Section "E"2, check here x ____.

NAME OF BUSINESS	ADDRESS	TYPE OF BUSINESS
1. N/A		
2.		

F. OFFICER OR DIRECTOR OF AN ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS: List any organization or business in which you or your spouse hold a position as officer, director, associate, partner or proprietor at the time of filing, irrespective of the amount of compensation received for holding such position. Please insert additional pages if necessary to complete this section.

If you have nothing to report in Section "F", check here ____.

BUSINESS NAME AND ADDRESS	POSITION HELD	HELD BY WHOM
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

G. RECEIPT OF FEES AND COMMISSIONS: List each client or customer who paid fees or commissions to a business or combination of businesses from which fees or commissions you or your spouse received an aggregate of \$2,000 or more in the preceding calendar year. *The phrase "client or customer" relates only to businesses or the combination of businesses.* In the case of a partnership, it is the partner's proportionate share of the business, and hence of the fee, which is significant, without regard to the expenses of the partnership. An individual who receives a salary as opposed to portions of fees or commissions is generally not required to report under this provision. Please insert additional pages if necessary to complete this section.
 If you have nothing to report in Section "G", check here x .

NAME OF CLIENT / CUSTOMER	ADDRESS	RECEIVED BY
1.		
2.		
3.		
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12.		

H. DECLARATION:

I, Joseph D. Brun, declare that this statement of substantial interests (including any accompanying pages and statements) has been examined by me and to the best of my knowledge and belief is a true, correct and complete statement of all of my substantial interests and other matters required by law. I understand that the intentional failure to file this statement as required by law or intentionally filing a false statement is a class B misdemeanor.

9-9-15
Date


Signature of Person Making Statement

NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL PAGES

September 8, 2015

Ms. Tracy Murray
1421 W. 2nd Terrace
Lawrence, KS 66044

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to recommend Dr. Joe O'Brien to fill the vacant seat on the city commission.

I first met Dr. O'Brien in 1997. I was earning my Bachelor's degree in secondary education with a focus on social studies and Dr. O'Brien was my advisor. I also had the pleasure of taking several courses taught by Dr. O'Brien. Dr. O'Brien's dedication to instructing future educators on the importance of civic engagement, and deep understanding of government at all levels, was apparent and appreciated by his students. Not only did he inspire his students to become engaged and involved in civic life, he instilled in them a desire to inspire their future students to do the same. He guided us to create meaningful and interactive lessons that would encourage young people to be a part of their communities and appreciate the positive impact they could have through this involvement. Much of what I know about how local and state government functions comes from lessons and conversations with Dr. O'Brien.

Dr. O'Brien not only teaches civic engagement in the classroom, he demonstrates it in his daily life as well. On a local level he has served on boards of non-profit organizations. This was a role he played when Americana Music Academy was first taking shape. He has also worked with organizations including the Virginia Supreme Court and the United Nations to help develop educational programming for youth and adults.

Under Dr. O'Brien's guidance I finished both my Bachelor's degree and my Master's degree in Secondary Education. I am currently in my 15th year of teaching at Lawrence High School, and my sixth year as department chair for the social studies department. In the time I have taught at LHS at least seven colleague have been former students of Dr. O'Brien. Among those colleagues there are coaches, civic teachers, government teachers, Advanced Placement teachers, and even a City Commissioner. If you asked any of them to list three of their major influences on their teaching career, everyone would include Dr. O'Brien on that list.

Dr. O'Brien's dedication to civic duty is far-reaching, and it is apparent in his interactions with his current and former students. It is also apparent in his own engagement with civic work, both at a local and national level, and it is apparent in the legacy he has created in his former students, as they pass that passion for knowledge and engagement in civic life on to their students. It is for these reasons that I believe Dr. O'Brien would make an outstanding city commissioner.

Sincerely,



Tracy E. Murray

Lawrence High School

Social Studies Department Chair

History Teacher

tmurray@usd497.org

Work: 785-832-5050 ext. 2705

Home: 785-979-2811

775 North St.
Lawrence KS. 66044
785-764-0699

September 7, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this recommendation for Joe O'Brien for consideration for the Lawrence City Commission based upon my experiences with him at the University of Kansas and as a fellow educator. Dr. O'Brien has been an active member of the Lawrence community for over two decades and is very aware of the importance of civic engagement and possesses the decision making skills that are needed for a position on the City Commission.

In particular, he has served on the Board of Directors for Americana Music Academy, the Social Studies statewide curriculum development committee and has also served on the Board of Directors for a national educational non-profit organization for many years. These positions have provided him with the experience and leadership skills necessary to make important decisions that will affect a large number of people and to consider a variety of different solutions to problems. In my experience with Dr. O'Brien, he has demonstrated the ability to critically evaluate a number of variables within a given situation, to work through complexities and develop working solutions to problems in a manner that is effective yet considerate of the lives that will be effected by those decisions.

Through his teaching at KU, he has had a tremendous influence on the lives of a number of young teachers throughout the state. His gifts and talents as an educator will benefit the Lawrence City Commission when it is necessary to build relationships with community organizations, businesses and neighborhoods. Dr. O'Brien is well versed in the workings of state and local politics and is incredibly dedicated to every commitment that he makes, he will be a trusted public servant and individual who will bring integrity to our city government. Without any hesitation, I highly recommend Joe O'Brien for the Lawrence City Commission.

Sincerely,



Fran Bartlett
Social Science Instructor
Lawrence High School

September 7, 2015

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing this letter of recommendation in support of Joseph (Joe) O'Brien's application to fill the vacancy on the Lawrence City Commission and it gives me great pleasure to do so. I have known Joe for the past eight years as I have been pursuing a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Kansas. During this time my relationship with Joe has moved from a teacher-student relationship to one that is personal in nature and one that I cherish.

Having worked with Joe on several research endeavors, he has always taken the time to study the issue/problem and worked on finding a reasonable solution with his colleagues. I have never seen Joe become contentious and even when he has been deeply opposed to an idea maintain a level of professionalism that has gained him the respect of those who might be opposed to his views. In this regards, not only does Joe have a deep respect for the ideas of others, but also not willing to compromise his own principles.

As an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas, Joe works with pre-service and current social studies educators as they take on the civic mission of the social studies curriculum. Joe has a deep understanding and passion for the political process and civic engagement both historically and contemporary. Because of this Joe brings a depth of knowledge and passion that few possess.

In short, Joe would be a welcomed addition to the Lawrence City Commission in that he would work well with others to find viable solutions for our city and that he possesses a deep passion for political and civic engagement. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me at 785-766-7799.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Barker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

TOM BARKER