

Gardner Mayor/City Council 2021

Response ID:9 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Mark Baldwin

2. Candidate for Ward # (if applicable)

N/A

3. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 31115 W 172nd Ter
City/State/Zip : Gardner

4. Phone Number

9135381878

5. Email Address

mark.a.baldwin@gmail.com

6. Campaign Website

<https://www.facebook.com/MarkBaldwinforCityCouncil>

2. Candidate Background

7. Occupation/Work History (last 5 years - 25 words or less)

Senior Software Engineer @ Garmin
Gardner City Council

8. If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization, please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held.

N/A

9. Other recent political/community experience (50 words or less)

Divine Mercy Parish finance council
Divine Mercy Parish security team
Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Knight
Knights of Columbus past treasurer (15 years)

3. Issues and Policy

10. As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues? (100 words or less)

1. Continuing responsible growth to the south
2. Limiting government overreach/involvement
3. Maintaining infrastructure

11. What are your views on the services and value the City's citizens receive for their local tax dollars? (100 words or less)

In general, Gardner residents are getting a high value for the services they pay for. We really are. I say that because our police

department does a fantastic job, our parks and recreation department does a great job (programming, events), our public works crew does excellent work, and our utilities are top-notch (good rates coupled with amazing service). Do we have streets and curbs that need work? Yes, and we need to address that sooner than later. Do we need to add more parks? Probably and that's being looked at very soon.

12. What changes, if any, would you like to see to the City budget? (100 words or less)

I'd like to cut any program/line item that is a nicety and not something the government needs to provide. Don't construe that to mean I don't think supporting Project Graduation is a bad thing but I don't believe it's government's place. Parents, neighbors, businesses can (and do) support causes like that but I don't believe it's right to have the government force you to pay for it. It's real easy to say it's just a few cents or a dollar here and there but that's not the point. You should make the choice and not the government.

13. What role, if any, do you believe the City should play in economic development to bring jobs and capital investment to the community? (100 words or less)

Questions 15 and partially 16 I provided more specific details but in general, the city should be welcoming to business, work with existing businesses to help them be more successful, and not forget about all the residents when considering a new development project.

14. How do you plan to communicate effectively with the businesses and citizens of the community? (100 words or less)

I have been and will continue to be available to anyone. I can be reached by email, phone, if you see me out and about, or at a council meeting. I'm willing to meet with citizens to discuss their concerns. I like the interaction as I get to hear what you really are worried about. I might not be able to give you the answer you want but I'll take any concern you have under advisement and will provide you any information I can.

15. As the City considers future development and redevelopment projects, describe your views on how the City should best manage and balance growth? (100 words or less)

The city needs to be open to development which means being in discussions with Southwest JoCo EDC, the Gardner Chamber of Commerce, and other entities to help put the word out Gardner is open to business. Rooftops drive business and business drives rooftops so we must be willing to work with developers on projects. That being said, we can't give away the farm on every or even a single project, we need to have our Land Development Code evolve but not change on every developer's whim, and the growth has to be reasonable for the intended area.

16. What is your philosophy on the role the City should play in terms of metro-area issues? (100 words or less)

Gardner needs to be engaged and work in partnership with the metro-area communities to create win-win scenarios and guard against missing opportunities specific for Gardner.

17. What do you believe the takeaways for the City should be, if any, from the COVID-19 pandemic experience? (100 words or less)

1. Continue to examine our processes, employee duties, and technology to streamline the business as much as possible.
2. Stay out of citizen's business. Government shouldn't be mandating much of anything let alone your health decisions. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is our first charter.
3. Viruses and bacteria spread every second of the day in every part of the world. Personal responsibility is what we need more of not putting "stock" into any government to "save" the day.

18. What do you believe are the greatest challenges the City faces over the next ten years and how would you address them? (100 words or less)

Infrastructure - we need to continue identifying deficiencies, determine reasonable funding mechanisms (and not rob Peter to pay Paul to complete the projects), and manage them without undue delay.

Growth - we need to continue to grow which needs to be responsible (a mix of land use that meets a long-term master plan) and guard against other community encroachment.

Taxes - we need to actively look at items to see if there are ways to reduce or eliminate them without reducing service to our citizens.

19. Why are you seeking this public office? (100 words or less)

Quite simply because too many people that run for public office either are just upset about a single issue or are about power and prestige rather than being mindful of each and every decision. I take no vote lightly and make a point of voicing concerns as I see them. Every city needs an entire council of defenders of our rights as well as a council to limit government reach/interference in our lives. That responsibility is not for light-of-heart and those defenders need to be able to justify their actions. I have and will continue to do that.

20. What do you believe makes you uniquely qualified to serve in this position and most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (100 words or less)

I, by profession as an engineer, solve problems. I look at a problem, listen to all options, provide input to solicit information or feedback on a potential solution, and then make a decision. I'm not interested in petty games or being characterless. I have no problem providing alternatives to preconceived narratives. I sometimes come across a little harsh but it's not to demean another but because the merit of an idea isn't logical. I'll listen to you, digest your input, and provide a justified answer. I can't make 25,000 people happy but I will look out for all 25,000.
