

Mayor and/or City Council 2021

Response ID:17 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Bob Pape

2. Candidate for Ward # (if applicable)

All Wards

3. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 6536 Burnham

City/State/Zip : Merriam

4. Phone Number

9133840746

5. Email Address

bpape@kc.rr.com

6. Campaign Website

BobPapeMerriam.com

2. Candidate Background

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

I retired in 2014 as the Merriam Fire Chief and have served as Ward 4 City Council member since 2015.

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.

I have been involved with Northeast Chamber of Commerce as a representative of the City of Merriam and I graduated from its leadership program in 2020. I am a Past President of Merriam Kiwanis and currently I am a member of Johnson County Kiwanis. I was also the Fire Chief in Merriam.

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

I am the Merriam Ward 4 City Council member and I also serve as the Council President. I am a member of Johnson County Kiwanis.

3. Issues and Policy

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

I think that the safety of our community has to be a top priority. We need quality Police, Fire and EMS protection. I also think we need to hold the line on taxes. We have not raised the Mill rate for over 10 years and I think it is important to keep our spending in check. Transparency in all that we do has got to be a top priority for all city employees and city officials.

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

I think we provide quality services at an extremely affordable price. Over 50% of our revenue is provided through sales tax.

Considering we have a "pull factor" of four to one ensures that we can keep property tax lower for our residents and business. We provide Fire, Police, EMS, streets, curbs, gutters, storm sewers, community center, pool, parks, streamway trails, home and business grants and a host of other amenities and services The average homeowner of a \$200,000 home gets all of this for \$53 per month.

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

I think that we always need to be looking at ways to provide better services in an economically viable manner. I would like us to investigate ways that we can assist our senior citizens and lower income residents so that they can stay in Merriam.

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)

I think the City has a large role in bringing jobs and business to the community. Our city took actions that brought many of our car dealerships and IKEA to Merriam. Commercial development provides over 50% of our revenue. We are currently exploring the development of the K-Mart property and potential addition of a grocery store. These have been a concern of our residents for many years.

14. 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)

We need to identify areas within our City that need development or redevelopment. Currently shawnee mission parkway, downtown Merriam and the Bass property located at 49th and Knox are areas we need to focus our efforts. There are ways to entice these developments through Tax Increment Financing. We need to perform a cost/benefit analysis of each project to determine its viability.

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

No city is an island. We must work closely with other neighboring cities for the benefit of all residents in the Metro area, For example, a metro bus system provides residents to freely move throughout the Metro area. No individual city could fulfill this function. We are currently working with the Mid America Regional Council, Overland Park and Kansas City Kansas to develop the Merriam Drive corridor from 55th street to Southwest boulevard. This roadway traverses all three communities.

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

I think we learned to creatively reduce our expenditures when it became clear that sales revenues were not going to meet our budget projections. We learned that public safety became a priority over sales tax revenue. We learned that we could continue to conduct city business by working from home and through Zoom technology. Flexibility and thinking out of the box became the norm.

17. 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)

Our city is landlocked and as a result, one of our biggest challenges is to continue to provide services without having to raise the Mill rate. We are also plagued with an ongoing flooding issue in our downtown. This area needs to be redeveloped, but we are hampered until it is removed from the floodplain. We are working with the Corp of Engineers and County to develop a solution. We also need to improve walk and bike ability throughout the Community. We are conducting a study to determine how to accomplish it.

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

I have served the Community for 44 years and have a strong desire to see it continue to improve. Our Current Mayor Ken Sissom had decided that he was ready to pursue other interest and he did not seek re-election. I believe that I have the education, background and leadership skills that will make me a great Mayor.

19. 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 served in numerous leadership positions during my 38 years on the Merriam Fire Department. I worked closely with both residents and the business community. I served as President of Merriam Kiwanis for several years. I obtained a Bachelor degree in Personnel Administration and a Masters Degree in Public Administration at the University of Kansas. I believe I possess both the education and experience to fulfill the duties of Mayor.