

Mayor and/or City Council 2021

Response ID:15 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

David Watkins

2. Candidate for Ward # (if applicable)

Fairway Ward 3

3. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 6142 Lockton Lane

City/State/Zip : Fairway, KS 66205

4. Phone Number

816-410-4666

5. Email Address

dwatkins@swansonbernard.com

6. Campaign Website

2. Candidate Background

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

Attorney with Swanson Bernard LLC

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.

Through the city council I am affiliated with the NEJC chamber and have attended chamber events. I have not held a leadership position with the chamber.

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

Current Fairway City Council (Council president; current admin committee chair; former public works chair; comprehensive plan committee); Reinhardt Estates HOA (former president); ALS Association Mid America Chapter (current board member, former president); ALS Association (national board of representatives, former vice chair governance committee).

3. Issues and Policy

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

Maintaining or expanding Fairway's high level of services at a non-burdensome tax level (including addressing looming storm water related issues); keeping Fairway a welcoming and desirable community in which to live for all of our current and future residents (which includes maintaining our strong property values and addressing residential redevelopment issues); finding a permanent solution for the Shawnee Indian Mission that will assure its future.

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

Fairway residents receive tremendous value for the taxes we pay. In the last 6 years we have expanded services and

programs but not increased our tax rate. Our city tax rate is also one of the lowest in the area and I would like to keep it that way.

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

Our budget approach is conservative and fiscally responsible and I would not change it. We need to fill a couple of vacant sales tax locations to allow us to add additional services where appropriate. This will allow us to keep our property tax rate flat, or perhaps even reduced if property values continue to rise. Overall we balance the allocation of our revenues very well between all of our city departments.

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)

Fairway is small and primarily residential, and it is essentially fully developed. However, for our existing office park and business areas we need to assess, on a case by case basis, when tax incentives should be used to promote their redevelopment. But those potential tax incentives must not harm Fairway's tax revenues. They need to be neutral or positive.

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)

As noted above Fairway is small and essentially fully developed. I do not believe that Fairway should change any of its single family residential areas to any form of commercial zoning to promote "development." One of our primary challenges is managing residential redevelopment in a manner that preserves the attractive nature and character of our city for its residents and future residents. We should be open to changing the nature (zoning) of our office park and shops to allow for possible new uses that are consistent with the overall character of the city (for example, mixed use developments).

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

Given our size and the nature of our city, I do not believe our focus should be on metro-wide issues. We have enough issues of our own to address! However we can have an influence on other metro areas, and that influence should be through leading by example (for example, the non-discrimination resolution and then ordinance that we recently implemented). Another example is our leading edge police department that was the first to have body cams in Johnson County.

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

We were relatively unaffected by the pandemic from a revenue perspective, and in hindsight we could have continued with all planned expenditures without utilizing any reserves. This tells me we need to maintain our conservative budgeting philosophy so that we continue to have a strong financial base from which to operate even in the face of potential uncertainty. Our response to the pandemic also reinforced my belief that we are fortunate to have tremendous staff who are creative and flexible and have our residents best interests at heart in all they do.

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)

Maintaining Fairway's desirability as a place you want to live and its character/charm is always a challenge that needs to be met, especially with the amount of residential redevelopment that is occurring. Storm water management will be a big challenge, as will maintaining our urban forest. We may need to start setting aside funds to replace our storm water system and replace a large number of trees that could reach the end of their life expectancy at about the same time. And we need to do all this without unduly burdening our residents with higher taxes.

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

I have been active in Fairway through either the Reinhardt Estates homes association or the city council for many years, as I believe it is important to give back to the community. I have found my two terms on the council to be very rewarding as we have faced a number of challenging issues and addressed them creatively and successfully. I would like to continue the positive direction we are experiencing.

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 have been a resident of Fairway for 33 years and as noted above have been active in the local and broader community for essentially my entire adult life. I know our city and its residents well. I believe my background and experience allows me to bring creative solutions to the issues we face, and to do so in a fiscally responsible manner. I am able to work cooperatively with our residents, the council and our staff to find approaches that can move us forward even when there is not unanimity of opinion on how to proceed.