

Q&A WITH CROOKSTON MAYOR DALE STAINBROOK

MAYOR



Tell Us About Yourself

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I grew up in Crookston. I went through school in Crookston and then left for college and then graduated from Mount St Benedict. Went to a couple trade schools, lived on the east coast, and bounced all over the place moving in and out of Crookston six times before settling down again, realizing out of all the places I lived that Crookston is a great place to call home.



I have been married to my wife Pam for over 30 years and have two sons, multiple grandchildren, and one great grandchild. I have been in Crookston government for 17 years starting as a city council member.

Positives Happening In Crookston?



When I first got on council, I never thought that the Fairfax walking and bike trail would happen, but I am happy to see that not only that project happened, but that it's well used. Gaining access to the river along the Gentilly Bridge has been great, hoping to improve access along Highway 9 and 2 to make it easier to use.

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Another positive is all the work that has been done at Castle Park with the Crookston Early Childhood Initiative with their storytime walks, play structures and events hosted out there. I am also excited about the upcoming Highway 2 Redevelopment project to reshape downtown and get more people to our downtown.

Projects That Are Active / Need More Attention?

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I have always been about encouraging and funding an active economic development authority and supporting their projects. Needing more housing options is a priority of mine. How can we make housing more affordable and what options are available?



Childcare is a need in our area as well, and I'm excited to see movement with the EDA and their childcare initiative. One last hope I have is seeing if the city can acquire the Diocese property for housing development and offer incentives to builders.

Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER MORGAN HIBMA

AT-LARGE MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

01

I have been on council since 2023 and I will be representing Crookston at-large till 2028. My husband and I moved to Crookston in 2016 for my husband's job. In addition to council I am the marketing director over at Rydell. We have one son who is learning to skate and loves being on the ice, so we're at the sports center a lot. My focus on council is to make Crookston a place where families want to live and grow and addressing issues related. As a family we love camping and I have a life goal of visiting all national parks and monuments.



Your Ward / City Priorities?



I want to see Crookston continue to build towards a city that families want to live in, so my priorities are around that. Looking at new housing options and maintaining current housing, addressing daycare limitations, pushing for job growth, and growing activities for families and residents to enjoy.

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What Is Your City Budget Philosophy?

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A city needs water, sewer, emergency services, and functioning roads to be able to go to work as well as appointments to provide for themselves and their families. Everything else is ancillary. There is a big list of wants that we want to fulfill, but we need to make sure needs are taken care of through our Capital Improvement Projects. The goal is to have funds for those wants, but basics have to be met first.



Recent Accomplishments?



I am proud that we finally upgraded our garbage services for our residents. I'm excited about the conversations around childcare. There are a lot of organizations working on childcare. I am also happy that we have a great interim City Administrator who has lived here his whole life and is doing a great job leading our city while we search for a new administrator.

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What Do You Hope To Accomplish?

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Housing needs to be developed along with growing industry and jobs. Addressing daycare needs so our families are not having to make hard choices. I also want to see more child activities on the weekends, possibly through an extension at the Crookston Sports Center.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER WENDY AULT

AT-LARGE MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

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I have lived here for almost 12 years. I have a large family with four kids and a 7 month old golden sheppard. I have been an HR professional most of my adult life. My favorite Crookston activities are to get active by enjoying our many parks and walking paths.



Your Goals For The City?



In the short term I want to make sure that our core city positions, such as city administrator and finance director, get filled. I also want the council to address our financial situation as a city more aggressively. Long term I want to stabilize childcare and look at alternative and low cost housing options.

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What Is Your City Budget Philosophy?

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I consider myself fiscally responsible. Everyone has an opinion on how money should be spent, we try to address the wants, and decisions are based on the impact on all residents. Everyone on the council is passionate about different things, and we need to work together to address all residents.



Positives Since Being On Council?



The Waste Management collection services have been a big improvement. The work that is being done with the Active Transportation Planning Committee to make improvements on walking and biking in our community has been great. I'm also excited about the Highway 2 Reconstruction in the Summer of 2027.

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Current Priorities For The City?

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My priorities are on childcare, housing, and jobs as they all go hand in hand with each other. I want to support these projects where I can, expand these areas, and encourage people to go after their passions.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH SHOSTELL

WARD 1 MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

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I have served on the Crookston City Council for less than one year and bring a strong background in science, with training as a biologist and more than 35 years of experience in higher education. I have lived in Crookston for the past 12 years and am an active member of the community, regularly spending mornings at the Crookston Community Swimming Pool. Crookston is a community I value deeply, and my decision to serve on City Council reflects a genuine commitment to civic engagement and to preserving and strengthening the qualities that make our city a great place to live.



Positives In Ward 1?



I am continuing to learn about my ward and how city operations function. It is encouraging to see residents recognize that they have a voice on the City Council through my role, and I regularly receive phone calls and emails each week regarding issues of importance to them. These conversations reflect a strong sense of curiosity and engagement among residents. A constructive and ongoing dialogue is developing, and this open communication is both welcomed and valued.

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Current Projects & Priorities?

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Based on communication with ward residents to date, several key priorities have emerged, including access to clean drinking water free of lead, effective snow removal, emergency flood funding, downtown renovation, adequate advertising for community clean-up weeks, and keeping the swimming pool functional and open. Equally important is ensuring that residents feel their voices are heard at the city level. One resident shared a past experience of addressing the City Council regarding a home-related issue but never receiving follow-up communication, which led to hesitation about further engagement with City Administration. As a result, a central priority is fostering trust and helping residents feel comfortable and confident engaging successfully with City Administration.



What Do You Hope To Accomplish?



Success is measured, in part, by effective communication, and concerns should be viewed in the context of the city as a whole rather than limited to a single ward. An important goal is to encourage residents to feel energized by new ideas, actively involved in civic matters, and confident that their voices are heard, thereby fostering broader participation in city initiatives.

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How Do You Set Priorities?

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Decisions should be guided by data, ensuring that all relevant information is considered before establishing priorities or taking action. Setting priorities is similar to managing a household budget: first, assessing available resources, then identifying the most pressing needs, and finally determining how to address them. When funds are insufficient, alternative funding sources are explored. In addition, a proactive approach to maintaining city infrastructure and assets is essential to sustaining the long-term well-being of the community.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER HENRY FISCHER

WARD 2 MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

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I have lived in Crookston my whole life before moving to Minneapolis to attend the University of Minnesota for political science. My wife and I lived in Minneapolis for 12 years and then we moved back to Crookston in 2020, buying a house four away from my parents. I joined city council in 2022 to represent my ward.



Ward 2 / City Priorities



In Ward 2, there isn't a lot of major problems. Mainly normal maintenance such as Memorial Dr having main breaks and patch work being done. Excited about the Highway 2 Reconstruction as well as the addition of the railroad spur in the industrial park, both bringing economic impact to Crookston.

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Goals For The City?

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In the short term, we need to know what our reserves are at to make more accurate decisions for the 2027 budget. Other goals I would like to see better utilization of the Crookston Sports Center outside of just ice sports as well as better utilization of our downtown spaces outside of Ox Cart Days.



What Is Your Budget Philosophy?



Right now, holding patterns are important. Without updated information on our city financials, we need to be conservative. Otherwise we fall into spending too much and the state has to take over. We're not near that, but we need to be proactive.

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How Do You Set Priorities?

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My priorities are based on what will benefit the most people in Crookston. We need more daycare to attract young families to grown here. With that we need additional housing and more more activities for families.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER CLAYTON BRIGGS

WARD 3 MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

01

I have lived in Ward 3 most of my life. I am a former Crookston police officer and have spent 16 years in law enforcement starting with the Polk County Sheriffs Office in addition to working full time with the PD as well as working as an EMT. In my free time, I like building classic cars.



Successes In Ward 3



One of my favorite successes is helping establish the north end fire station. I was originally going to buy the building to start a motorhome and camper repair business. But before buying, when I started on council I realized this would make a great fire station. So, I coordinated with the administrator at the time and the the volunteer fire department and I pulled my offer so they could buy the building.

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Goals For The City?

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In the short term, we need to get the city budget in line so that we are in the green and the finances are up to date. Longer term plan we need to determine a plan for the swimming pool, putting money away so that when we have the information needed to take action steps, we are ready to go.



What Is Your Budget Philosophy?



In prior years, we had to increase taxes to get close to break even on the budget. So, spending comes down to community impact. But, we need to be reasonable. Police and fire are towards the top of my priority list.

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How Do You Set Priorities?

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Every few years, I identify 10-12 people in my ward to make a committee that helps identify ward priorities to take to council. But, I also look at the city as a whole when setting priorities.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER DONALD CAVALIER

WARD 4 MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

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I have lived in Crookston most of my life, going on 77 years. I have been in education most of my life, working for 40+ years as Director of Counseling and other departments. I have been on the council since 2016.



Positives In Ward 4



The Highway 2 Reconstruction happening in Summer of 2027 will have a big impact on Ward 4, bringing an all new look to the downtown. Other positives include the recent small cities development grand for redeveloping homes in Ward 4.

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How Do You Coordinate With Other Council Members?

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Most conversations about priorities are upcoming agenda items are discussed one-on-one with council members to determine if we align. But, most of the conversations happens during city council meetings. The council if really cooperative with each other now, so positive discussions can be had..



What Is Your Budget Philosophy?



My philosophy is based on top needs of the city. If we don't have money, not all wants are going to be met. We need to take care of needs first, and wants are decided on if the city has available funds and if Ward 4 wants it.

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How Do You Set Priorities?

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We have a Ward 4 Committee and us in addition to ward residents meet 3-5 times a year to discuss priorities for Ward 4. We take into account our residents input but also think about what will impact all residents.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER DEREK BREKKEN

WARD 5 MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

01

I joined council in 2024 because I wanted to see change in the city I call home. I farm in Crookston with my Dad and my Uncle. I have two boys who play sports, so when I'm not farming, I am busy with hockey at the Crookston Sports Center.



Recent City Successes



I am excited about the Highway 2 Reconstruction project, I am hoping it will bring more opportunity and safety to our downtown in addition to shaking up the look with new planters, benches, lighting, and making the downtown more usable and fun.

02

What Are You Hoping To Accomplish

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I wanted to be on council because I had an interest in politics, and I was tired of seeing the same things happen and I wanted to make a positive change. I want to get staff vacancies filled, find a long term solution for the pool, and help residents of Ward 5 with their day-to-day problems. I also want to see an upward trend in population.



What Is Your Budget Philosophy?



We need to be conservative with our spending. Look at all needs first and then decide what wants we can do after that.

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How Do You Set Priorities?

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It comes down to if the community needs it such as fire and police. Infrastructure needs are top of my priority list as well.



Q&A WITH COUNCIL MEMBER DYLANE KLATT

WARD 6 MEMBER



Tell Us About Yourself

01

I have lived in Crookston since 2004. I have three children that went to school in Crookston. I really like the school system in town and the city as a whole, and I joined council because I always wanted to help.



Recent City Successes



The Waste Management garbage update was a big success to modernize our garbage collection. I was also a big advocate for a marketing director and I am happy that the city has one as a part of the admin team for the city. I'm also glad that we are working better together as a council.

02

Goals For The City

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We need to fill the finance director position as well as the city administrator role. When we do fill the administrator role, we need to work with them to make it a smooth transition. Other goals include stabilizing child care and building up our reserves.



What Is Your Budget Philosophy?



We need to get back to investing in things that keep our city running and we need to draw a line on spending in different areas. We need to be fiscally responsible because we don't have a lot of room for fluff in the city budget.

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How Do You Coordinate With Other Council Members?

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We want to make sure we are following all rules when communicating with one another. But, I will reach out to get feedback from other members and talk after council meetings in the chamber. I like different opinions than mine because maybe mine are not always the best. It's good to get different perspectives.

