



The Good Government Council (GGC), a committee of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, was formed to act as a focal point for voluntary policy involvement by the business community and other interested individuals in the Eau Claire area. One of the main objectives of the GGC is to learn about candidates' positions on various issues and inform and educate our members. The Chamber does not endorse candidates. For more information about the Chamber and its Governmental Affairs programs, contact Scott Rogers: rogers@eauclairechamber.org or 715-834-1204.

We have provided candidates the opportunity to fill out the below questionnaire to share their thoughts on some issues with the area business community. Here are the responses as we received them from each of the candidates. Candidates are arranged by district and then alphabetically. We encourage you to pass on this communication to anyone interested in learning more about the candidates and their position on issues. There are four contested districts and one contested at-large seat. All incumbents are running for re-election.

Eau Claire City Council Candidate Questionnaire Spring Election, 2018

*For this election, **every ballot will have the At Large** contest. You will also have the district in which you live. **To see which district you live in, [click here](#)**. In District 5, incumbent Andrew Werthmann is unopposed and did not submit answers for this questionnaire.*

1. What are your background and qualifications for this position, and why are you a candidate?

At-Large

Zachary Meives: I was born and raised in Eau Claire, where I still live. I went to CVTC, and graduated with a degree in Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement. My experience with communication, law, ethics, and growing up in the social media age allow me to get the point across to a vast audience, and reach out to the public. I decided to run as a candidate to help Eau Claire prosper; both in the people and in the businesses.

Terry Weld (Incumbent): I am currently an At-Large City Council Member serving a one year term that I was appointed to by the City Council in April of 2017. I am also currently a Commissioner for the Water Ways and Parks Commission and the Transit Commission. Along with a Board Member of the City Revolving Loan Board. Prior to my Council experience, I served as Chairperson of the Plan Commission for three years and as a Commissioner for three additional years. I have enjoyed this past year serving the City of Eau Claire as a Council Member. Something I look forward to every day. I continue to learn the processes of city governing and appreciate the importance of experience and the time it takes to be a productive Council Member. I work hard at being active in our community, listening and understanding their needs and hope to continue with that hard work moving Eau Claire forward.

District 1

Emily Berge: As a Licensed Professional Counselor, my background is in working with people. I know how to actively listen and seek understanding. I feel very comfortable in the listening role. This is very valuable when responding to constituents on the northside, during city council meetings, working with community stakeholders and in many other instances. As I have been out talking with people, I am hearing that people are not feeling listened to by our elected officials. I feel like I have the experience and skills to be that change. Along with my individual counseling work, I have experience in working with dyads and groups both in my office and onsite at places of businesses. I have worked with couples, families, groups, students, supervisors and employees. Often in these cases there is conflict and/or disagreement. I know how to bridge that gap and encourage working positive relationships. Again, through my conversations with community stakeholders, I am hearing a desire for more relationship building and connections. There are groups of people who are feeling ignored by the city. I have already started reaching out to different community stakeholders and I will continue to do so. I co-own a small business which is also a valuable component. I have the leadership, organizational, and financial skills to start a business and sustain a business. I have been an active participant in our community. I have served in Americorps in downtown Eau Claire between my undergraduate and graduate schooling, I have been involved in my church, I have volunteered for my kids' sports and schools, and I was a volunteer coach for a local women's running group. I want to take my public service to the next level of representing the northside of Eau Claire at City Council.

Tim Tewalt (Incumbent): My training and vocation is one of solving problems. Working at CVTC, I teach maintenance and troubleshooting equipment in the Industrial Mechanics Department. The relationship with students from all ages and economic backgrounds has been one of my professional highlights. Being able to see them through training and bettering their livelihood is exciting. I was appointed to the Eau Claire City Council to serve District One in June 2015 due to the unexpected vacancy created with unfortunate passing of longtime leader and Councilman Dave Duax. I considered this a time to give back to the city that I have grown to love and appreciate since moving to Eau Claire in 1991. Having served almost 3 years, I'm well equipped to understand the issues, work with residents and the city staff to continue the great growth and continue to serve.

District 2

Emily Anderson: I grew up in Eau Claire, attending Manz, South and Memorial. I'm grateful to have grown up in a community that invested in me by providing wonderful public education and opportunities to develop my talents. I left Eau Claire after high school to pursue education and jobs, and returned in 2015 to be closer to family. Today I'm a professional writer and editor, with a PhD in English, so I bring strong research, critical thinking and communication skills to the City Council. I'm skilled at examining a wide range of viewpoints and evaluating the evidence to make fair decisions. I often marvel at the fact that my grandmother only had access to an eighth grade education. I've had the opportunity to pursue my career goals because my city invested in me. I'm running for city council because I want to grow Eau Claire's legacy of investing in its people.

David Klinkhammer (Incumbent): I've been a resident of Eau Claire since enrolling at UWEC in 1962 and graduated with a bachelors degree. I've served on the City Council for 11 years. I'm retired with 25 years of managerial experience. I am a candidate for the City Council because of my strong desire to continue in the role I've enjoyed and have been entrusted with by the voters of the 2nd District.

District 3

Jeremy Gragert: I have lived in Eau Claire for 16 years - from the Eastside Hill, to the UW-Eau Claire dorms, to my home of 8 years in the Third Ward. As a longtime advocate for a better Eau Claire, I want to work with residents of District 3 so that together we can create a safe, affordable, and vibrant city for everyone. For my job as an independent contractor for Clean Wisconsin, I coordinate a statewide network of organizations working on clean energy. I was an Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce member last year when I worked full time for the Chippewa Valley Museum in Carson Park. I serve on the governance

board for the Chippewa Valley Montessori Charter School, and I am the project leader for the Chippewa Valley Bike Map. I am a UW-Eau Claire graduate (2005) and was a Blugold athlete.

Kathy Mitchell (Incumbent): I moved to Eau Claire with my family in 1978. We bought a home in the Third Ward where we have lived ever since. I have a PhD in Anthropology and worked for 22 years in administration at UW-Eau Claire. I understand how a large organization works, and this background is very helpful when setting policy for another large organization. I served as chair of the Plan Commission in the 1990's and president of the Police and Fire Commission for 10 years after that. I was appointed to the Council in 2011. As a Council member I serve on the Plan Commission, Board of Health, and the Appointments Committee. The Council has elected me Vice President for the past 4 years. I am running for re-election because community service is important. I have done a good job representing District 3 and the city as a whole. Serving on the Council is hard work, and it takes time to gain the experience necessary to be an effective legislator. I want to continue putting that experience into practice.

District 4

Jill Christopherson: Eau Claire has been my home for more than 30 years now; I say that I grew up here. I decided to run for City Council because it is important and meaningful work, timed ideally for my retirement last June. My training and experience have created a broad view of this community. My graduate degree in Counseling from UW-Stout hones my skill for deep listening and put me in contact with people whose life's success faced serious challenges. Working for the Private Industry council for seven years, two of those as Training Coordinator and retiring from First Congregational UCC after 16 years as Director of Religious Education developed my leadership, accountability and budgetary responsibilities. I served as citizen representative on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council supporting our Eau Claire County justice system in a shift to evidence based interventions. I was also a citizen representative on the board for the Coordinated Services in our County Department of Human Services. This integrated and highly effective program supported families with children who were at risk of entering the juvenile justice system because of mental health and behavior issues. What I have is a lot of experience working to make systems function effectively and more importantly to have systems that help us to function effectively as a community. That is the skill that I will bring to the City Council representing District 4.

Bob Van Haden (Incumbent): With strong financial skills, experience in municipal budgeting and business negotiations, as a Certified Public Accountant partner of 33 years with Wipfli Ullrich Bertelson, it was important to listen, research and make sound decisions in creating and building the health care division. Those who know me best say I'm fair, good-natured, and hardworking. As a strong community proponent, it's been my privilege serving District 4 over the past 15 years, elected 6 times. During this time, I helped write the original city Comprehensive Plan and gained experience while serving on the majority of the City commissions and committees making Eau Claire greater. Prior to council service, my wife Penny and I established the Buffington Neighborhood Association where 305 trees were saved, traffic calming ideas implemented, had input into the restored Rod 'n' Gun Park and are initial members of Half Moon Lake Implementation Task Force. Over decades we helped better our community: secured district-wide quality education programs and school buildings, helped with funding drives to get the Chippewa Valley Museum built, organized a referendum for city swimming pool, and supported Eau Claire Regional Arts Center (State Theatre). I seek reelection to continue being the voice of District 4 and in providing constituents any needed assistance, to make policy decisions ensuring citizens receive quality services while holding-the-line on taxes, and to assure that Eau Claire is a fine place to live, work and play.

2. What can the City Council do to promote economic development, business maintenance and commercial growth in the city?

At-Large

Zachary Meives: I believe that city council can work with business owners to set expectations for continued partnership and growth in the community. I believe a laissez-faire approach would be best, and that businesses will do best without strict over-regulation hampering them. Open communication is key, and partnerships would be welcomed between public and private entities for the benefit of the city.

Terry Weld (Incumbent): I think that DECI and the Economic Development staff, the City Staff and the City Council have done a great job over the past 5 years revitalizing downtown and increasing commercial growth throughout the city. I hope that we can continue to be aggressive in recruiting new businesses and be creative, yet responsible with our incentives. Taking into consideration job creation, competitive wages and a variety of business models along with a commitment for community involvement from the future employers. As a Council and a Community, our role is also to provide the infrastructure to support this continued growth, to insure healthy and diverse housing, cultural attractions, safe and active neighborhoods and the labor force to support it all.

District 1

Emily Berge: The City Council can help create a place where people want to live. When people are deciding if they want to stay after graduating, to choose Eau Claire over another city to take a job, or to come back home to start a business; they are going to decide if they want to live in Eau Claire. They are going to ask about the schools, crime rates, public transportation, things to do, family friendly amenities and programs. The City Council can decide if they want to invest resources in these areas. People also want to feel connected to their community; these are the people who are going to stay. The city can build strong neighborhoods throughout Eau Claire and encourage participation within our city.

Tim Tewalt (Incumbent): The city's Economic Development Center has been actively connecting with companies and developers and facilitating future expansion and development and I am certain this will continue. With the resources provided by the Chippewa Valley Technical College and UW-Eau Claire, Eau Claire is an attractive choice.

District 2

Emily Anderson: The City Council can be an engine of economic development. In today's digital economy, workers and businesses are increasingly flexible about where they are located. I strongly support our city's comprehensive plan which includes strategies for enhancing quality of life and the creative economy to make Eau Claire attractive to entrepreneurs, businesses and highly skilled workers. We can also promote home ownership and affordable housing to make Eau Claire a more appealing choice for workers than high-cost areas such as Madison or the Twin Cities. We can partner with the business community to provide supports for workers, such as transportation and childcare, that reduce absenteeism and turnover.

David Klinkhammer (Incumbent): The Council can continue to adequately fund and effectively assist in coordinating solid economic development efforts. We, as a Council, must continue to make sound decisions which strengthen Eau Claire as a place where businesses can thrive and where people want to live.

District 3

Jeremy Gragert: A year out of college, in 2007, I served on the Downtown Eau Claire, Inc. board of directors, and worked hard to bring our downtown back to life. We have turned a corner where our downtown is now recognized as a success story, but we need to keep the momentum going. District 3 includes West Clairemont Avenue and South Hastings Way, both of which have seen some challenges for commercial business in recent years, including the loss of major grocery stores. I will work hard to reach out to existing businesses and make sure that city economic development resources are directed to where the needs are, and in a way that the surrounding neighborhoods may also benefit. Both UW-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College are headquartered in District 3, and together with neighboring medical institutions, must be recognized as anchors of opportunity for business growth in the area.

Kathy Mitchell (Incumbent): We need to continue to provide adequate funding for our economic development department, and give staff the tools they need to promote growth and development. The recent economic summit is working toward a regional model, and the city will participate in that effort. It will be important to stay involved with Momentum West in order to capitalize on opportunities in the wider region. The Confluence project has spurred development that we could only have imagined. People are excited and proud and anxious to see what will happen next. The new \$5,000,000 TIGER grant will extend development to the Farwell Street area and add to that excitement. We are working hard

to make the Gateway Industrial Park readily available for new business, and staff is also working to improve our ability to attract big box distribution sites.

District 4

Jill Christopherson: City Council members have a crucial role to play in helping our community build a common vision of our future in which we work together. We must earn community trust and bring the public's voice to the table of government and interpret the work of the city back to its citizens. I believe we have outstanding leadership in Eau Claire, in our city staff, the Chamber and in our business community. We have seen many exciting examples recently of collaboration and mutual investment that benefit everyone. The economic tools (TID and joint financing packages) that support development are being used creatively and with fiscal responsibility. City Council does and must continue to regularly evaluate our city's plans to make sure that we are using resources wisely. In doing that, we would foster open and productive conversations that represent our citizens' voices.

Bob Van Haden (Incumbent): It is critical for the council to continue promoting the development of the Cannery and Phoenix Park Districts and continue improving our Industrial Parks. For start-up operations, which would provide good-paying jobs, search out opportunities that guarantee low interest loans. For the generation of new jobs and maintenance of existing jobs, continue the loan forgiveness program. To generate funds to assist new companies in locating here, instruct our city development staff to work with appropriate federal and state agencies. For current programs, including our new Loan Program, continue adding monies to our commercial development funds. Visionaries recognize it is vital we develop a stronger business climate to support both existing and new businesses.

3. What role, if any, should the city have in setting a minimum wage that applies to employees of city contractors and recipients of economic development assistance?

At-Large

Zachary Meives: I think the wage is best set at market value, and should abide by federal minimum wage at the very least. As for EDA recipients, I don't believe the city government should be in the habit of loaning money as the city is not a bank. Perhaps if contracts were made, and interests were collected that idea would sound more fruitful to me.

Terry Weld (Incumbent): My first reaction would be that rather than the City setting employee wages of private businesses, the decision on who we award the contracts or assistance to could be based partly on what wages they will pay their employees per the bid submitted. It is a difficult topic and as Eau Claire continues to grow economically, so does the cost to live here. These employees that have helped build and shape it to the successes we have achieved should at least be able to afford to live here as well.

District 1

Emily Berge: Building a strong economy for our city, businesses and residents is of utmost importance. As a small business owner, I especially appreciate a healthy economy. I'll bring a leadership that examines how to move our city forward by examining options that are a good fit for Eau Claire. I'm interested in learning the perspectives of the Chamber's Good Government Council on this and other important public policy proposals. I strive to be available to listen and learn. In fact, feel free to contact me anytime at 715 575 9795. As a small business owner, I understand that small businesses could struggle with a city imposed minimum wage. Though I do think this conversation is worth having. As with most things, this is not a black and white issue.

Tim Tewalt (Incumbent): The goals of the living wage concept is a better life for individuals. I believe that a better life comes through being able to earn an income above either the minimum wage or any proposed living wage. Personal income is increased with skills and training. Our state and local taxes already support our technical schools and universities, workforce development and other agencies that are well equipped to assist individuals in earning a wage far above any proposed living wage. This is a complicated issue with many sides to consider. The city pays all of its full time and most of the part time workers far above any living wage. By law the city is limited to only its operations. This means only people who work for the city in a limited part-time or if expanded to contractors, it covers them only

during a contact service with the city. However, it does not address the vast majority of citizens. This is a state issue makes it fair to all citizens and would have a true impact.

District 2

Emily Anderson: One of the greatest threats to our city's economy is declining economic mobility, which is impacting people on national, state and local levels. I hear from constituents that low wages and the high cost of living are making people, especially young workers, feel as though they are moving backward. If we don't have a strong, prosperous middle class, our economy will falter. The National League of Cities identifies four strategies to create economic mobility. These include strengthening the connection between employers and job seekers; expanding services, such as transportation and childcare access, to support workers; enacting local legislation to support equity and fairness in access to opportunities; and finally, positioning city government as a model employer that values workers and treats them fairly. I support all of these measures.

David Klinkhammer (Incumbent): I feel minimum wage legislation is best dealt with on a state wide basis by the State Legislature. We have seen City wages increase as market conditions and available work force factors have had an impact. Regarding recipients of economic development assistance, if the number of jobs created and the their respective wage scale don't justify the level of assistance requested then it hardly makes sense to grant it.

District 3

Jeremy Gragert: Eau Claire is known for low wages, and it needs to be addressed whether a business is looking to attract top creative talent or trying to hire cashiers for the holidays. Higher wages and benefits are part of how we achieve economic development and economic opportunity for everyone, and help lift people out of poverty. All workers deserve to be paid a fair wage for the job, and the city should set a standard with its own employees, as well as with its contractors. The quality of city services is important to me, and when we make sure our workers have their needs met, it shows in the quality of their work every day. Economic development assistance gets trickier, but with that and how higher wage standards could impact the private sector, I am always open to listening to the perspectives of the business community and economic experts.

Kathy Mitchell (Incumbent): The city needs to recruit and retain the highest quality employees. In order to do that, we need to provide good working conditions, quality equipment, and competitive pay. The levy limits imposed on cities provide very little flexibility for raising wages. However, I think the city should take a leadership role by providing competitive wages for city employees. That is one way we can have an influence on wages in the local labor market. The recent gains in new construction offer the possibility to raise the levy a bit. We should use what flexibility we have to increase wages. The Council has not yet decided about a living wage for employees of city contractors or recipients of economic development assistance.

District 4

Jill Christopherson: The city government works together with our community to build and maintain a strong economy that is right for Eau Claire. I support a living wage that forms the basis for a growing economy in which families can be self-sufficient. We are not a strong economy when more than half our citizens work two or more jobs in order to pay for rent and food. If elected to the Council, I would seek out all of the resources and information to expand our imagination of what works for Eau Claire's employers and our labor force. My experience as a manager and director of programs and budgets has been during challenging and changing times. I take seriously the need for businesses and governments to control costs and function efficiently. At the same time, our labor force has to be compensated fairly.

Bob Van Haden (Incumbent): We need to continue working on attracting businesses that will employ talented people, pay a living wage and good employee benefits. The Eau Claire City Government should lead all businesses by example in paying their employees a living wage; providing quality benefits; furnishing safe, efficient, creative and productive working conditions; and treating their employees fairly. When an increase in the minimum wage is proposed it should be at the federal or state level; it would be unfair to place the businesses in the City of Eau Claire at an economic disadvantage with other communities.

4. What do you believe citizens of Eau Claire would identify as the top three priorities for their City Council?

At-Large

Zachary Meives: I believe the top three issues people would be concerned with are jobs, education, and growth as a whole.

Terry Weld (Incumbent): 1. Fiscally responsible – A priority that always seems to be on the minds of citizens. I sincerely feel that Eau Claire and this Council has been prudent and responsible with spending and continues to make the best use of our resources. 2. To be forward thinking but also respectful of our growth, compassionate and proactive in how we plan and prepare for it – We are growing by leaps and bounds, and it is important to everyone that we be conscious of the paths we take. 3. Continued Economic Development – Job growth, Services, Housing and Infrastructure all depend on our active pursuit of Economic Development.

District 1

Emily Berge: First of all, thank you for asking this question. I have worked very hard over the last several months seeking out the perspectives of city residents, community stakeholders, public safety workers, and various city leaders. I have focused on the needs of the Northside Eau Claire since that is the area I hope to represent. From these conversations and experiences, I would say the top 3 priorities are: 1. Day to day quality of life issues - trains disrupting their life, snow removal process hindering them from getting out of their driveways or streets, and the quality of the infrastructure on the north side of Eau Claire. 2. People want a safe and clean city. There is an alarming amount of meth usage in Eau Claire. I saw this first hand when I did my ride-alongs with the Eau Claire Police Dept. this past month. Alcohol and drug abuse leads to abused and neglected children, unsafe driving conditions, increased theft and many other negative consequences. 3. People are not feeling heard by their elected officials. They feel disconnected from the decisions that are being made and yet the outcomes are impacting their lives. This is despite the citizens being on top of the city's organizational chart. A priority would be increasing transparency and collaboration.

Tim Tewalt (Incumbent): 1) To provide services that affect their daily life, including safety, recreation, maintenance, fire and police services while continuing to hold the line on expenses and taxes. 2) To attract and hold all generations of citizens to Eau Claire. 3) To grow not only businesses, but workers to those businesses.

District 2

Emily Anderson: When I talk to people, I hear them say that they want a strong, inter-generational community, where both seniors and young families can thrive--where people don't have to have Skype-only relationships with parents and grandparents. I hear constituents saying they want our investments in infrastructure to pay off for more people, and lead to living-wage jobs and new, successful small businesses. And again and again, constituents tell me they want to feel like they have a voice in their community, and that the city council listens to them. Listening and communication are key strengths I bring to the city council, and I will use them to help us all work together to achieve these shared goals.

David Klinkhammer (Incumbent): 1: Provide services in the most satisfying and cost effective means possible. 2: Respond to citizen's issues as timely as possible and conduct City business in an inclusive and transparent manner. 3: Keep Eau Claire a safe vibrant and welcoming community where people want to live work and play.

District 3

Jeremy Gragert: #1: Affordable homes. As a growing city, Eau Claire is attracting entrepreneurs, retirees, students, families, and young professionals perhaps now more than ever. It is increasing demand for quality housing for people with a variety of needs. #2: Inclusive government that engages the public. I have a strong track record of helping people get involved in community decisions, so that citizen voices and new ideas can influence priorities. In 2015, I served on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Plan, and ideas within the plan need to come forward in a way that engages stakeholders. #3: 100% renewable energy by the year 2050. In 2014, I helped create the city's Sustainability Advisory

Committee, which recently assisted the City Council in rolling out this energy goal for both municipal operations and the community. This is a business opportunity, and a way to make energy and transportation cleaner and more affordable.

Kathy Mitchell (Incumbent): (1) offer transparent and honest government that treats people fairly and spends their taxes wisely; (2) continue to provide the infrastructure to support a quality of life that will attract businesses and young talent; (3) find ways to increase the housing stock in the city for low-income people, first-time home buyers, and all other people who want to purchase a home.

District 4

Jill Christopherson: Eau Claire citizens want a city council that is committed to working hard to support the creative and responsible growth of our community and to tackle the problems we face together. One issue I think concerns the public is making sure our government WORKS. That is, that we treat each other respectfully even when we disagree, that we are honest in our communications with one another and in our economic transactions, that we safeguard the public trust and the taxpayer's money. Historically, we have done pretty well. Recently, we have seen some troubling exceptions. I promise to work hard to hold the public trust, to be a person of honor and integrity and to take seriously the job of safeguarding our public funds. 2: Affordable housing also concerns me. Paying more than 30% of monthly income on housing is not sustainable, yet more than half of Eau Claire residents do just that. We have a very tight housing market, something like a 3% vacancy rate, which makes it hard for low income renters to find places to live. Last year more than 200 people were evicted from their homes. And the quality of our housing stock is below that of other communities in Wisconsin. This new Rental Registration program will probably help with that, but I'd like to see grants or other creative ways for us to begin refurbishing some of our older housing stock in the downtown area. It could be turned into subsidized housing or affordable housing for Eau Claire residents. 3: Substance abuse in Eau Claire has caught national attention. In 2017, Eau Claire was named the 2nd drunkest city in American, and that is not a title that we should strive to keep. When I read in the paper that someone was arrested for the 8th drunk driving offense, or that an intoxicated person has fallen off a balcony or drowned in the river, I think to myself—we have to do better than that. Our binge drinking rates are too high. Same with the recent issues we've seen with meth and opiate addiction. Whether it is prevention or policies or access to treatment, we need to work together to build a safer community for everyone in terms of alcohol and drug use.

Bob Van Haden (Incumbent): (1) That the elected officials and city administration value the ideas and opinions of the Citizens and neighborhoods to work through the community issues together. With Citizen input and buy-in, the ordinances will reflect the value of the citizens. An increase in communication through social media will make many citizens aware of what is being proposed and strengthen their engagement on a timely basis. (2) To provide excellent City services: police, fire, transit, parks and recreation, snow plowing, street maintenance, etc. and by holding-the-line on property taxes. Then, more young families and singles are able to purchase homes while their parents and grandparents can remain – if desired – in their respective homes. (3) To complete the current projects: new Transit Center - implement reduced need-based transit rates; Cannery District - develop affordable housing, businesses and parks; links to Pedestrian and Bicyclist Trail System; Hay Market Plaza; Event Center.