



Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce
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Spring 2019 Candidate Questionnaire Eau Claire City Council President General Election: April 2

What's it about: Last June, Council President Kerry Kinkaid resigned and Andrew Werthmann assumed her role, becoming the Acting President of the City Council. Now, Council rules require that an election be held to fill the remainder of Kinkaid's term—one year, or, until April 2020.

Election Day: Tuesday, April 2, 2019. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Early voting: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays through Fri, March 29 at the Elections Office located through the alleyway behind 203 S. Farwell Street.

Who can vote: The election is open to all eligible voters who live in the City of Eau Claire. The seat is determined based on vote totals in the entire city.

Where you vote and who is on your ballot:

- Go to myvote.wi.gov Enter your voting address to learn which races are on your ballot and where to vote.

About this questionnaire:

The Good Government Council (GGC) is a committee of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce dedicated to encouraging voter participation and providing members of the business community with non-biased information about candidates' positions on important issues. Although the Chamber is active in policy issues, it is non-partisan and does not endorse political candidates.

Candidates:

Terry Weld: At-Large City Council Representative

Andrew Werthmann: Acting President of the City Council and Representative of District 5

Candidate Questions:

1. What are your background and qualifications for this position, and why are you a candidate?
2. How do you define the role of the City Council President and your approach to serving in this office if elected?
3. Some issues that the City Council has debated within the past year have been criticized as topics more appropriate to be dealt with on a state or national level. Others agree that Council members should spend time on any issue they believe is important to the community. What is your view on determining which issues are appropriate for the Council's time and attention?
4. What is the role of the City Council in addressing the housing shortage in Eau Claire?

Q1. What are your background and qualifications for this position, and why are you a candidate?

Terry Weld: Eau Claire has been my home for over 45 years. This is where I raised my family, owned and operated a successful business and where I learned the importance of “giving back” to my community.

Throughout my years as a business owner and employer I was engaged in the city. I led efforts outside my work to provide Thanksgiving meals to anyone without a place to be. I served on numerous boards and commissions, where I learned a great deal about people’s needs in Eau Claire. And, as President of the Children’s Museum of Eau Claire founding Board of Directors, I experienced first-hand the importance of bringing together partners like neighborhoods, businesses, and government to help create an incredible and sustainable treasure for our community.

In 2011 I was appointed to the Eau Claire Plan Commission and in 2014 became Plan Commission Chair, a position I held until 2017. During those six years, we oversaw some of the greatest developmental growth in Eau Claire’s history. I am proud that I led the Plan Commission during every important vote on the Confluence Project and related downtown re-development.

In 2017, I was honored to be appointed to the Eau Claire City Council and in April of 2018 I was elected as an At-Large Council Member. During my two years as a Council Member I served on the Transit Commission, Waterways and Parks, Revolving Loan Board and then again on the Plan Commission.

I am a candidate for City Council President because I have a great deal of passion and respect for this great city and know that I will lead it in a fashion that is balanced and representative of the entire community.

Andrew Werthmann: I’m the longest serving Council member, having served for ten years starting in April of 2009. I am also the current City Council Vice-President and have served as the acting Council President since the resignation of former Council President Kerry Kincaid last summer.

Professionally, I work as a federal policy consultant to The Pew Charitable Trusts. I’m primarily focused on issues including federal flood insurance, protection of our National Parks, overuse of antibiotics, and private-sector partnerships to expand domestic clean energy production.

I see my biggest qualifications to be my record and results. When I was first elected to Council, Eau Claire’s unemployment was above 8.8%, well above the state and federal average. Today unemployment is just 2.2%, below state and national averages. We’ve lead a change in economic thinking and investment that’s added hundreds of millions of dollars to our city’s property values, providing meaningful economic growth.

Q2. How do you define the role of the City Council President and your approach to serving in this office if elected?

Terry Weld: Eau Claire’s City Council is defined and intended to be a non-partisan governing body. But the Council has recently strayed from its non-partisan position. As City Council President, I will work hard to return the Council to a non-partisan, decision-making council. I believe the Council President should lead the Council, not steer it. I believe it is important to be an independent and free thinking local leader, removed from political platforms. I believe in common sense, supporting those you have entrusted, leading by example and at no time, will I put my initiatives and agendas before the people or the Council.

City Council represents a community of 70,000 residents that all have needs and want their voice to be heard. I will continue to encourage the principle of representation that is balanced and offer compromise when necessary to ensure that. I will lead with inclusiveness and promote more public/ private partnerships. I will strengthen the City’s relationships with neighborhood associations and business districts. They have invested so much in this city and should be a part of the planning and discussions that shape Eau Claire.

I will lead with compassion and confidence and work hard to maintain your trust in our City Council. I believe we must be fiscally responsible and appreciate every dollar earned and maximize every dollar spent. As the Council President I will lead Council through a budget process that is respectful and mindful of the needs of the community.

Andrew Werthmann: At its core, local government must listen and respond to the needs of the public. That's why making local government more open and transparent was one of my top priorities when I became acting President.

I'm proud we added an open Public Comment Period to all Council meetings, allowing folks of any political leaning to bring any of their concerns directly to City Council.

We held our first ever public listening session. Over 100 folks from all backgrounds came to share their life experiences and the need to take bold action on affordable housing.

And we're investing more in our neighborhoods because crime is lower when folks know their neighbors. We helped start 3 new neighborhood associations. And with help from former City Manager Mike Huggins, we're implementing a Participatory Budgeting process - making it easier for neighborhoods and residents to have more of a say in the budget process.

Q3. Some issues that the City Council has debated within the past year have been criticized as topics more appropriate to be dealt with on a state or national level. Others agree that Council members should spend time on any issue they believe is important to the community. What is your view on determining which issues are appropriate for the Council's time and attention?

Terry Weld: I believe that the initiatives Council takes up should be driven by what the citizens in Eau Claire want. I will work with the City's expert staff to create the best operational response to meet those needs. I will always work to reflect all Eau Claire's needs and never divide our community into political corners.

I agree that we have a moral responsibility to be conscious of what is happening in the State of Wisconsin, in the United States, and in the world. We are not only citizens of this city, but of this country and many national initiatives have a direct or indirect impact on our community. But, it is important to me to understand and respect the functions of other levels of government - as democracy intends. While I will do all I can to work together with the state and national government, I believe it is important that we in local government entrust our elected officials in Madison and Washington D.C. to be leaders, and hold them accountable when they are not.

Andrew Werthmann: I'm proud the City of Eau Claire is a member of the Chamber and to be your partner in advocating for our community. In particular, I want to thank the Chamber for all the hard work in putting on the Chippewa Valley Rally, bringing business leaders, elected officials, and community nonprofits together to directly lobby in Madison on issues vital to our region's growth and prosperity.

Whether it's the Confluence Project, the new science building at UWEC, legislation to allow growth through TIF projects, or attempting to connect Eau Claire and the Twin Cities through high speed rail, the Chamber has consistently been our partner advocating in Madison and Washington when state and federal policies or inaction would stifle our economic and cultural success.

Just as it's the Chamber's role to advocate for member businesses, it must be the Council's role to advocate for the needs of all our residents.

Q4. What is the role of the City Council in addressing the housing shortage in Eau Claire?

Terry Weld: Every day for the past 18 years I have worked as a realtor to help people in Eau Claire find a home. As a real estate agent, property manager and landlord, I have a wide range of experience in this challenging effort. I will rely on that knowledge and expertise to lead us through the housing shortage we are currently experiencing in the city. I will work

to incorporate the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force recommendations and action plan into our city planning and encourage responsible development that will meet the housing needs of all citizens in Eau Claire.

To further address the challenge of housing affordability I will strive in the following ways. I will work hard to create more employment opportunities and higher wages, in part, through the city's new economic development initiatives around workforce development. I will also support the ongoing and responsible revitalization of downtown and surrounding districts, especially working toward fewer vacant buildings. And, as a public sector leader, I will aim to produce balance in the built environment, in which business development fills current voids in a proportionate distribution to the city's residential population.

Andrew Werthmann: Affordable Housing is one of the largest challenges our community faces. Right now, 46% of our friends and neighbors are just one accident or medical bill away from not making rent. We have 300 Eau Claire school children who are homeless. Public safety is one of the primary roles of our City, and we know no one can truly feel safe without a stable and affordable place to live.

We have an unsustainable demand for affordable apartments and homes. And this problem will only get worse if we do not take quick and meaningful action. Every day we wait to act is another day someone could be out in the cold.

We must make developing affordable housing easier by easing zoning and setback requirements. I also support establishing a permanent Affordable Housing commission to help developers apply for grants and ensure every development that can includes affordable housing units.