



# 2025 VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE

SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL &  
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## BE AN INFORMED VOTER ON APRIL 8

Learn more about the candidates running for Springfield City Council and Springfield Public Schools Board of Education.

**SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S CANDIDATES:**



*Paid for by Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
Matt Morrow, President • PO Box 1687, Springfield MO 65801*

# A MESSAGE FROM BOB HELM



## SHAPING SPRINGFIELD'S FUTURE: A GUIDE TO THE APRIL 8 ELECTION

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to strengthening public education and ensuring strong local governance—both essential to our workforce and economic vitality. The April 8 election presents a pivotal opportunity to elect leaders who will shape Springfield's future.

For over 20 years, the Chamber has championed academically excellent schools that are accountable, safe, and future-focused. Our Education Platform, established in 1999, continues to guide our priorities with an emphasis on workforce readiness, fiscal responsibility, and talent development. As Missouri's largest accredited district, Springfield Public Schools (SPS) prepares nearly 25,000 students for the evolving demands of college and careers.

Through our Local Policy Agenda, we also support policies that drive economic growth, enhance infrastructure, ensure public safety, and uphold fiscal responsibility. Decisions made by the Springfield City Council directly affect our business climate, and strong local leadership is critical to fostering a regulatory environment that encourages business investment and regional collaboration.

Strong governance of our school district and city is essential to meeting the competitive demands of today's economy while preserving the high quality of life that makes Springfield a great place to live, work, and learn.

To support informed decision-making, the Chamber's Voter Education Task Force—composed of dedicated business leaders—has developed resources to evaluate all candidates for the SPS Board of Education and Springfield City Council. This task force designed a survey to offer insights into each candidate's experience, qualifications, and vision, helping Chamber members assess candidates through a business lens.

We appreciate all SPS Board of Education and Springfield City Council candidates for their willingness to serve and thank those who participated in our survey and video interviews. Additionally, we recognize current board and council members for their dedication to these vital responsibilities.

We encourage you to review the resources provided, engage in the electoral process, and vote for candidates best equipped to lead SPS and the City of Springfield forward. A strong public school system and business-friendly local government are key to our community's growth—it's up to all of us to make informed choices that shape Springfield's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Robert J. Helm'.

**Bob Helm, Elliott, Robinson & Company, LLP CPAs**  
2025 Chairman of the Board  
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

# VOTER EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- David Hall, Missouri State University – Chairman
- Bryant Young, Insurors of the Ozarks – Vice Chairman
- Ann Marie Baker
- Trevor Crist, Nixon & Lindstrom Insurance
- Jason England, Arvest Bank
- Brad Erwin, Paragon Architecture
- Brian Hammons, Hammons Black Walnuts
- Sally Hargis, Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr Pepper Bottling Co.
- Dr. Beth Harville, Drury University
- Marca Hayter, Missouri State Teachers Association
- Natalie Murdock, Foundation for Springfield Public Schools
- Shari Reaves, O'Reilly Auto Parts
- Krisi Schell, SRC Holdings Corp.
- Jaimie Trussell, Council of Churches of the Ozarks
- Elizabeth Wenthe, SRC Holdings Corp.

# USING AND UNDERSTANDING THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to serve as a resource for Chamber members evaluating candidates for Springfield City Council and the Springfield R-12 Board of Education election on **April 8, 2025**.

## Candidate questionnaire:

The Chamber's Voter Education Task Force developed a candidate questionnaire that was sent to all certified candidates for both the Springfield City Council and Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Board of Education elections.

The questions for City Council candidates are based on the Chamber's board-approved Local Policy Agenda (pgs. 5-6), addressing governance, economic development, infrastructure, public safety, and other factors that influence Springfield's business climate and overall quality of life. The questions for Springfield Public Schools Board of Education candidates align with the Chamber's board-approved Education Platform (pg. 24), focusing on qualifications for school board governance and key issues relevant to the business community, particularly those affecting our future workforce and economic growth. Candidate responses are published as they were received.

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION

### Qualifications for Springfield City Council members:

City Council members must be a qualified and registered voter and have lived in the city for at least two years prior to the election. Those running for a zone seat must also have resided in their respective zone for at least one year before the election. The primary function of council is to establish policies, pass ordinances, approve the city budget, and provide oversight to ensure efficient and effective local governance that supports economic growth and community well-being.

On April 8, 2025, city voters will cast their votes for Mayor, General Seat A, and General Seat B, while those residing in Zone 1 and Zone 4 will also choose their respective City Council representatives.

### Current members of Springfield City Council:

Based on the City Charter, Springfield has eight City Council members, each elected to serve a four-year term on a non-partisan basis, along with a mayor, who is also elected for a four-year term.

- Mayor Ken McClure (*term ends in 2025*)
- General Seat A Councilmember Heather Hardinger (*term ends in 2025 — seeking re-election*)
- General Seat B Councilmember Craig Hosmer (*term ends in 2025 — seeking re-election*)
- General Seat C Councilmember Callie Carroll-Swofford (*term ends in 2027*)
- General Seat D Councilmember Derek Lee (*term ends in 2027*)
- Zone 1 Councilmember Monica Horton (*term ends in 2025 — seeking re-election*)
- Zone 2 Councilmember Abe McGull (*term ends in 2027*)
- Zone 3 Councilmember Brandon Jenson (*term ends in 2027*)
- Zone 4 Councilmember Matthew Simpson (*term ends in 2025 — seeking re-election*)

For more information about Springfield City Council, visit [springfieldmo.gov/145/City-Council](https://springfieldmo.gov/145/City-Council)

### Qualifications for Springfield Public Schools Board members:

School board members must be a resident of the school district, have resided within the state for one year at the time of election or appointment, and be at least 24 years of age. The term of a member is three years. The primary function of the board of education is to oversee the education of children in the community.

On April 8, 2025, voters residing within the Springfield Public Schools district will be asked to select two of the four certified candidates on the ballot.

### Current members of the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education:

- Danielle Kincaid, Board President (*term ends in 2027*)
- Judy Brunner, Board Vice President (*term ends in 2026*)
- Kelly Byrne (*term ends in 2025 — seeking re-election*)
- Steve Makoski (*term ends in 2025 — not seeking re-election*)
- Dr. Maryam Mohammadkhani (*term ends in 2027*)
- Susan Provance (*term ends in 2027*)
- Dr. Shurita Thomas-Tate (*term ends in 2026*)

For more information about the SPS board, visit [sps.org](https://sps.org)

# SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE RESPONSES

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS SECTION

**Springfield City Council Zone Map . . . . . pg. 4**  
**Springfield Chamber Local Policy Agenda . . . . . pgs. 5–6**

Used to guide local advocacy engagement and influenced the questions for Springfield City Council candidates

**Candidate Information and Questionnaire Responses . . . . . pgs. 7–20**

All Springfield City Council candidates on the April 2025 ballot received a questionnaire with four questions, with each response limited to 250 words. \*

Questions:

1. Describe your professional experience and other relevant qualifications that prepare you to effectively serve in this role.
2. Public-private partnerships are a key economic development tool mentioned in Forward SGF. What role should the city play in fostering these partnerships, and can you provide an example of an initiative you would support?
3. Springfield is expected to continue growing over the next two decades. How should the city balance responsible growth, housing development, and economic expansion while maintaining quality of life?
4. At the end of your term, what specific improvements or progress would you like to see in Springfield’s business climate, workforce development, and overall economic growth?

## Candidate Response Order (Alphabetical Within Each Respective Seat):

### Mayoral

Mary Collette . . . . . pgs. 7–8  
 Jeff Schrag . . . . . pgs. 9–10

### General Seat A

Heather Hardinger (*seeking re-election*) . . . . . pgs. 11 –12  
 Eric Pauly . . . . . pgs. 13 –14

### Zone 1

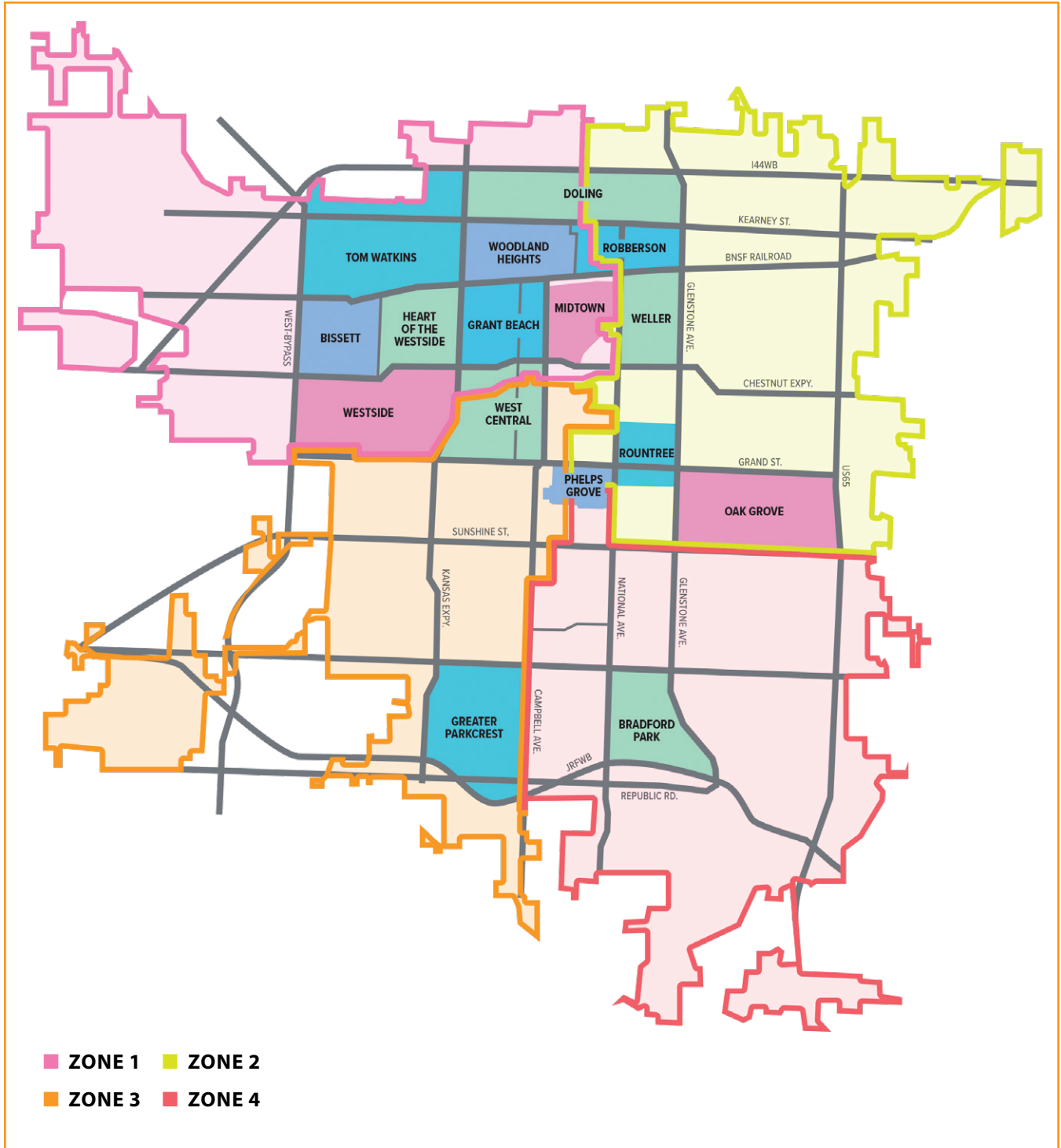
Monica Horton (*seeking re-election*) . . . . . pgs. 15 –16

### Zone 4

Bruce Adib-Yazdi . . . . . pgs. 17 –18  
 Matthew Simpson (*seeking re-election*) . . . . . pgs. 19 –20

\* Current General Seat B Councilmember Craig Hosmer, who is seeking re-election, did not submit responses to this questionnaire.

# SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL ZONE MAP



MAP PROVIDED BY CITY OF SPRINGFIELD

# THE LOCAL POLICY AGENDA: GUIDING CHAMBER ADVOCACY IN LOCAL POLITICS

## Policy positions related to economic development:

The Chamber supports policies and initiatives that encourage business growth, expansion and investment, and improve the business climate and quality of life in the Springfield area.

- **Small Business Support** - A thriving small business community is essential to Springfield's economic health, so local laws and regulations must consider both intended and unintended impacts on small business costs.
- **Business-Friendly Climate** - Springfield must prioritize exceptional customer service and streamline development processes to attract and retain business investment.
- **Pro-Growth** - Sustainable growth benefits the community, workforce, and quality of life, requiring well-planned infrastructure investments and a strategic annexation approach that includes both voluntary and involuntary annexation.
- **Infrastructure Investment** - As a regional economic hub, the Chamber supports continued multimodal transportation system improvements and investments to enhance the region's infrastructure. The Chamber also supports the completion of a sanitary sewer system to cover the entire City of Springfield in collaboration with regional communities.
- **Attracting Jobs and Business Investment** - Springfield must invest in broadband, economic incentives including tax increment financing and community improvement and transportation development districts, and strategic growth management to remain competitive in attracting businesses and workforce talent.
- **Public-Private Partnership** - Collaboration between public and private sectors is vital for economic growth, requiring ongoing commitment from local government leaders.

## Policy positions related to quality of life:

Quality of life is closely tied to growth and economic development. The Chamber supports initiatives across Southwest Missouri that enhance the region's appeal as a great place to live, ensuring it remains a driving force behind economic success.

- **Jobs Skills and Training** - Investing in early childhood education and job training is essential to developing a skilled workforce, connecting individuals to employment, and meeting local business needs.
- **Public Safety** - Properly funding public safety initiatives, including the police-fire pension system, crime reduction efforts, and recruitment and retention efforts for public safety officers, is crucial for protecting economic growth and quality of life.
- **Educational Attainment** - Springfield's economic success depends on maintaining strong higher education institutions and fostering collaboration between colleges, businesses, and public education.
- **Natural Resources** - Protecting the Ozarks' natural resources through collaboration, incentives, and sustainable practices benefits both the environment and economic development.
- **Placemaking** - Enhancing community livability through placemaking efforts will strengthen Springfield's ability to attract and retain workforce talent.

**Policy positions related to principles of governing necessary for effective and responsible leadership:**

The Chamber supports strong local governance by promoting regional collaboration, local decision-making authority, open communication, efficient administration, and accountability to ensure policies are effective, transparent, and beneficial to the community.

- **Regional Collaboration** - Effective communication and cooperation among political subdivisions such as the City of Springfield, Greene County and surrounding communities are essential to making informed decisions that consider their broader regional impact.
- **Local Control** - City and county governments should have the flexibility to make decisions locally, rather than being burdened by unfunded mandates from state and federal authorities.
- **Effective Communication** - When policy decisions affect particular community sectors, their representatives should be actively engaged in discussions to help shape sound public policy.
- **Functional Consolidation** - City and county officials should explore functional consolidation where appropriate to improve efficiency, streamline processes, and reduce administrative burdens for businesses and citizens.
- **Accountability** - Government credibility depends on transparency, clear communication of tax usage, built-in voter review mechanisms, and follow-up reporting to ensure commitments are fulfilled and promises to voters have been kept.

**Policy positions related to Springfield City Charter review:**

- The Chamber supports clarifying the City Charter residency requirements for City Council candidates, as well as provisions to allow the City Clerk to verify their eligibility.
- The Chamber supports clarifying and updating the conflict-of-interest provisions in the charter regarding elected officials, city staff and direct and indirect city contracts.
- The Chamber supports exploring financial compensation for City Council and the Mayor.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023)





**MAYORAL CANDIDATE**  
**MARY COLLETTE**

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- Owner, Historic Firehouse No. 2 (2000-present)
- Owner, Collette Parker Restoration, CPR for Historic Structures (1995-present)
- Owner, Collette Studios Creative Design & Production Services (1978-2010)

**EDUCATION**

- MSU, Springfield MO (1971-78) BFA Graphic Design, Photo Offset Printing, Photography
- Lee’s Summit Senior High (1969-1971)
- Lee’s Summit Junior High (1967-1970)

**COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

- At-Large City Council, General Seat A, two 4-year terms (2001-2009)
- Awarded McReynolds Award for Historic Preservation by the State of Missouri
- Recipient, Tracy Kimberlin’s Pinnacle Award for contribution to tourism by CVB, 2024

**CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

- Website: Collette4Mayor.com
- Email: mary@collette4mayor.com

**DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.**

Self-employed since 1978, I have the discipline and leadership skills and a deep respect for my fellow citizens that this position requires. I spent eight years on Springfield’s City Council, as at-large, General Seat A councilperson. I learned the mechanics of how our city and its departments function; I will hit the ground running as they say. In addition to my City Council experience, I served on the boards of Historic Midtown Neighborhood Association, Springfield Regional Arts Council, Urban Districts Alliance and SAAFhouse Spay & Neuter Clinic. I chaired the city’s first Historic District Review Board, now the Landmarks Board, and the City’s Animal Issues Task Force. I am current president of Commercial Club of Springfield where I have spent many years and volunteer hours revitalizing that once distressed historic district. My work on Historic C-Street has challenged my leadership skills as working with competing interests and different personalities requires diplomacy and cooperation. Writing CDBG grants for C-Street’s streetscape, negotiating with the city and the railroad to acquire and improve land for Frisco Lane and partnering with the city and state to secure funding to restore our Jefferson Avenue Footbridge are some community efforts I have spearheaded, preparing me to be an effective, productive mayor. My husband Paul Parker and I celebrate our 35th anniversary in April. We are partners in both Collette Parker Restoration (CPR for historic structures) and Historic Firehouse No2 Event Venue and in growing C-Street’s community of creative and passionate pioneers.



## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?**

Public-private partnerships offer an invaluable “multi-tool” in our city’s toolbox. They offer an opportunity for our city to get more bang for its buck especially on larger development projects where we can clearly articulate our broader goals for our community. If these projects have strong citizen input early on, they are more likely to fit our mechanical, social and cultural goals.

Implementing Forward SGF in a way that serves business interests and our citizens at the same time is a triple win. The city’s role would be to make certain the project fits within the Forward SGF vision while allowing enough flexibility for innovative and even playful elements. Depending on the form the public-private partnership takes, citizen involvement can be productive and fun.

A good example that I am very interested in exploring if elected is our public transit system. I don’t feel Springfield can reach her potential until we have an attractive and efficient transit system that works, serving our neighborhoods, workforce and our young people who are driving less.

I look at problems as opportunities, I am already researching ways entrepreneurs are providing informal public transportation to fit the needs of their communities. Certainly Uber and Lyft are excellent examples as are the funky Matatus busses in Nairobi Kenya and the colectivos in Buenos Aires and along the southern coast of Mexico. There are many models and many cities we can learn from if we keep an open mind and allow ourselves to think outside the box.

## **SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

While increased density is inevitable, focusing on sociality as impetus for construction and placemaking is not. I think it is incumbent on us to adopt a consistent growth pattern that allows for sensitive infill and consider new concepts emerging from “Soft Cities”. Cookie cutter developments and rows and rows of identical housing do nothing for the soul while mixed use developments cut down on vehicle use, encourage walking, biking and social interactions we need more of.

At a candidate forum, there was discussion of city-provided resources for neighborhoods to develop their own master plans and to consider where and how they would like to see development as the city works to increase density closer to its core. Neighborhoods offer opportunities to explore these options. There is going to be a learning curve as we ask neighborhoods to consider denser development on vacant or nuisance properties and around their parks. Developers would then have neighborhoods looking for developers to fulfill their vision to choose from.

Soft City concepts encourage adding density like tiny homes or cottages on larger lots, combining lots with homes along the edges with green space in the center, mixed use developments joined up, more like the streetscape on Historic C-Street. More of these mixed use neighborhood nodes like Cherry & Pickwick and Galloway are success stories that need to be repeated in our urban neighborhoods for starters but with citizens needs as the driving force.

## **AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD’S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

I believe if we put our faith in our citizens, our neighbors and give them more opportunities to grow their city, they will not disappoint. When citizens feel they have a city that values their neighborhoods as placemaking tools, and their needs as a focus of the city, they would be happy, healthy citizens who feel supported and appreciated. By keeping Sociality as a goal, Springfield would be blessed with a workforce that energizes the business climate. When neighbors know each other, they create neighborhood watches, both formal and informal and crime is reduced, especially petty theft and burglaries.

Naturally, improvements to our public transit system would position it as a tool for business attraction and retention, one where the workforce can easily navigate the city. Increased density through sensitive, citizen driven infill will have reduced vehicular use and increased walking, biking, motor biking and scootering.

I hope at the end of my 4-year term to see citizens more engaged in their neighborhoods and community and our city continuing to grow up, not out but also remain smaller scale but more dense. It is also my belief that this is the path to strong economic growth for our Springfield.



**MAYORAL CANDIDATE**  
**JEFF SCHRAG**

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- Small Business Owner: I have started and purchased several small businesses during my career in a variety of industries.
- Job Creator: Every business I have owned has added jobs to the local economy, developing my understanding of the ways in which local government can either encourage or obstruct job growth.
- Advocacy: As a small business owner, I have been a key advocate in Jefferson City for several industries which has resulted in a strong grasp of the overall legislative advocacy process at the State level.

**EDUCATION**

- Bachelor of Science, Journalism and Social Sciences; Kansas State University

**COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

- Community Leadership Service: Past Board Chairman of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and the Community Foundation of the Ozarks
- Statewide Leadership Service: Past President of Missouri Press Association and the Missouri Craft Brewers Guild
- Education and Nonprofit Leadership Service: Member of the Board of Governors of Missouri State University as well as many other volunteer boards, committees and local/municipal task forces

**CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

- Website: [jeffschragformayor.com](http://jeffschragformayor.com)

**DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.**

I believe my wide variety of experiences from volunteer leadership to successfully launching new businesses here will bring valuable perspective to this elected position. As I have rehabbed historic properties and constructed new buildings, I have gained a fundamental understanding of what it is like to work with local government and how it impacts economic growth at the micro level. I have been a landlord and a tenant and know the pressures of going back to the bank for additional funds in the middle of a project. As a job creator, I know the pressure to meet payroll expenses. Springfield is my home by choice, and I am truly invested in the success of our city so I know we must set a clear vision for the future. I have a wide circle of friends and colleagues and I aim to be Mayor for the entire city. I pride myself on my ability to get along with people from all walks of life. I have solid experience in a variety of industries and know how to learn on the job.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?**

As a community, we have examples of a number of successful public-private partnership initiatives such as industrial parks. At a high level, we've seen the benefits of approaching economic development in partnership as we have done through the Springfield Business Development Corporation for many years. I believe it is important to have clarity regarding the structure and scope of viable partnerships for our city and initiatives should be data driven. While I support public-private partnership in principle, the city needs to ensure a good return on investment for the taxpayer and ensure individual projects serve the broader community, meet predetermined objective criteria, and align with our approved plans/goals. My method of decision-making will be transparent, and I pledge to explore any of these that make their way to the council.

**SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

- By being "open for business" with clear plans, policies and stable processes;
- By fine-tuning housing priorities and then targeting areas where that growth is most welcomed. This will build trust. We must continue to seek and listen to input from related industry professionals and try to add value to each neighborhood;
- By empowering city staff to meet businesses where they are and thoughtfully ask them about future plans and needs;
- By communicating our goals so that businesses know where the city is going and how they can fit into that future;
- By fostering true partnership and trust with other local and regional economic development entities and doing the right things to fuel economic opportunity for our whole area. As the largest player, Springfield always wins when regional development occurs. With intentional effort, the impact of a win should be heightened for all partners when development happens within our city limits.

**AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD'S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

If I can make it easier and more timely to obtain a building permit and a certificate of occupancy in Springfield, I will consider my term a big success.

If the culture of the city's workforce is that of problem solvers instead of regulators, I will consider my term a big success.

If I can preside over smart annexation, I will consider my term a success.

If Springfield is seen as a competitive community for attracting and retaining businesses, residents and good jobs, I will consider my term a success.

If we have fully staffed public safety departments and people feel their neighborhoods are safer; if we make marked progress on prioritized goals of Forward SGF; if we continue to maintain quality streets, sidewalks, sewers, bridges and trails, I will consider my term a success.



## GENERAL SEAT A CANDIDATE **HEATHER HARDINGER**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Director of Consumer Experience at CoxHealth, leading systemwide efforts to enhance patient experience, language access, and cultural competency.
- Former workforce and economic development leader, supporting business growth, workforce training, and regional economic initiatives in SWMO.
- Current Springfield City Councilwoman, dedicated to responsible growth, infrastructure investment, and public-private partnerships.

### EDUCATION

- Master of Arts in Political Science with an emphasis on Public Policy.
- Bachelor of Arts in International/Multicultural Studies from Evangel University.
- Continuing education in community development, economic policy, and inclusive leadership.

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Chair, Community Involvement Committee, Springfield City Council.
- Advisory Board Member, Restore SGF and Springfield Sister Cities Association.
- Advisory Board Member, Inclusive Springfield.
- Former Vice Chair, Bread for the World Board of Directors, advocating for policy solutions to end hunger and poverty.

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Website: [heatherforcouncil.com](http://heatherforcouncil.com)
- Donate: [donorbox.org/electheatherhardinger](https://donorbox.org/electheatherhardinger)

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

I bring a unique blend of leadership in healthcare, economic development, and public service. As a City Councilwoman, I have worked to balance responsible growth with neighborhood needs while advocating for stronger investments in our city, including historic downtown, Commercial Street (C-Street), and Springfield's North Side. At CoxHealth, I lead patient experience operations and equity efforts, ensuring all individuals receive quality care. My past roles in workforce strategy and economic development have given me the experience to create policies that promote diversity, foster business growth and job creation while prioritizing community well-being.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?**

The city should act as a convener and facilitator, bringing together businesses, developers, and community organizations to drive strategic growth. I support initiatives like Restore SGF, which leverages private investment and public resources to revitalize historic neighborhoods and expand affordable housing options. Additionally, I would advocate for stronger investment in downtown Springfield and C-Street, ensuring that small businesses thrive through grants, incentive programs, and infrastructure improvements. Expanding partnerships to address grocery and childcare deserts, particularly in Zone 1, is another priority, ensuring residents have access to essential services.

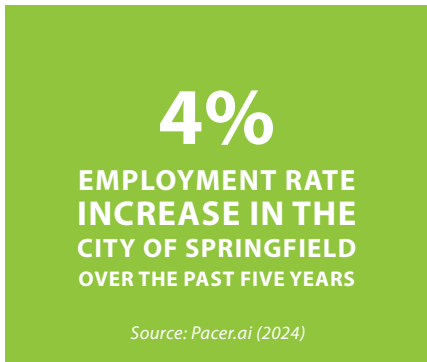
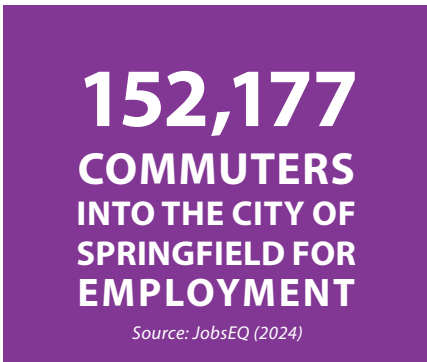
**SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

Sustainable growth requires a balanced approach that prioritizes affordability, infrastructure, and economic opportunity. We need to invest in mixed-use development that blends residential, commercial, and green space to create walkable, vibrant neighborhoods. Expanding workforce housing options, implementing a rental inspection program, and focusing on transit connectivity will help ensure that growth benefits all residents. Additionally, I am committed to a more concentrated effort to understand and address food (grocery) and childcare deserts in Zone 1 and citywide, ensuring all neighborhoods have the resources they need for a strong quality of life.

**AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD’S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

- **A stronger workforce pipeline** through expanded job training and apprenticeship programs in high-demand industries.
- **Increased small business support** through improved access to capital, streamlined permitting, and entrepreneurship hubs, particularly in downtown, C-Street, and the North Side.
- **Equitable economic development**, ensuring that investments in housing, infrastructure, and job creation benefit all neighborhoods, particularly historically underserved areas.
- **Expanded access to grocery stores and childcare**, working with businesses and community organizations to eliminate food and childcare deserts in Springfield.
- **Increased investment in affordable and workforce housing**, supporting initiatives like Restore SGF to preserve and revitalize older neighborhoods, advocating for policies that incentivize missing middle housing (duplexes, townhomes, and smaller-scale multifamily developments), and ensuring that growth includes housing options that meet the needs of working families and low-to-moderate-income residents.

SPRINGFIELD, MO  
FACTS





## GENERAL SEAT A CANDIDATE **ERIC PAULY**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 37 years in Information Technology including 27 years with O'Reilly Auto Parts
- Zenith Electronics
- Consumers Markets

### EDUCATION

- Classes on multiple aspects of computer hardware and software
- SMS, now MSU
- Springfield Public Schools

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Current Planning and Zoning Commissioner, 3 years
- Former President of the Phelps Neighborhood Association, 6 years
- Various City of Springfield Committees including 3/4-cent sales tax, housing study, blighted property study, Forward SGF, etc..

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Facebook: @paulyforcouncil

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

As a Planning and Zoning Commissioner we study the majority of the bills which come before City Council. P&Z takes a more focused yet much deeper look at these requests. Having an individual with the experience, who has worked this closely on the majority of information that City Council legislates will be extremely beneficial in understanding the mechanics of these bills and requests.

Serving as President of a long-established City recognized neighborhood association teaches one how to work with a large and diverse group for community betterment. This includes owner occupied homeowners, landlords, renters, and a diverse student population with a wide age range within this group. Listening to each individual is key, then working to find a path that all can agree with.

With a deep family history dating to 1868 and a born and raised Springfieldian, I have not only had the opportunity to watch our city grow, but have had the chance to live in all four zones of Springfield. This has given me the ability to experience the variety that Springfield and southwest Missouri has to offer. We have historically been known as a crossroads.

## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?**

When looking to foster the public-private growth partnerships, a higher emphasis needs to be given to local businesses to encourage development. Currently the city is very generous with tax abatement regardless of the developer or development. When a developer is located outside the city or even outside the state, we lose tax dollars. These tax dollars are better utilized when granting the more generous end of the abatement to our local developers. Construction crews tend to be local, materials tend to be sourced locally, and the developer can use the savings for additional, local projects.

To use retail sales as a benchmark example; 60 to 70 cents of every dollar spent with a local retailer stays in our local economy. When purchasing from a big box retailer only 30 to 40 cents stays local. Once goods are ordered from an online retailer, the amount which stays local is only 10 to 20 cents per dollar spent.

Springfield is well positioned to be the hub of a strong economic region in southwest Missouri, similar to the northwest Arkansas region. To accomplish this, the city needs to work with the communities in and around Springfield. The recent Amazon warehouse and future Wal-Mart pharmaceutical distribution center, both in Republic are prime examples of strengthening the region. The relationships between our communities become economically symbiotic.

## **SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

We need to look deeper than just striking a balance. We must ensure that our growth is satisfying the current needs while looking to the future. Are we positioning ourselves so future generations have a springboard to grow from? Are we creating a quality of place in which we draw new ideas and new residents, while improving the quality of life for our current residents? What does our housing stock look like? Have we moved to close the gap on our missing middle and inspired more home ownership? The current 60/40 split between rental and homeownership is unhealthy.

The clash between proposed development and existing housing continues to be an issue we see in Springfield. Growth and change are inevitable and our residents understand this. Much of the friction can be alleviated through the current code changes which are on the horizon and with open and frank discussions between city staff, neighbors, and developers at the beginning stages of proposals. Too often the current homeowners are unaware of proposals and the process until it appears that they have no choice but to fight back since they have not been part of the discussion until the end.

Intelligent development and communication is key. All the stakeholders should have equal space at the table. Should citizens feel they are being exempt from the process, we can see continued migration from our city's limits to outer locations thereby creating the doughnut hole effect.

## **AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD'S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

I would like to see us as an economic region which continues Springfield's history as a crossroads. Much like the native Americans who first used this region for trading and hunting, the railroads which connected us to the rest of the nation, to our current highway system. We have the building blocks and the opportunity to position them to take us into the future while improving the quality of life today.

Not many other locations can compete with Springfield for the natural beauty and the high caliber of our neighbors. We are very unique to have all of these positive attributes. Through better wages and increased opportunity for the region's workforce we can maintain and draw people to Springfield. By encouraging more individuals and families to buy into Springfield housing, we create a stronger community bond.

This is all interconnected. Good wages spur continued economic development through housing, purchases of goods and services, increased sales, and business growth. Since we are all in the same boat, all oars need to equally work together.

If you wish additional information, please check my campaign Facebook page, [\*\*paulyforcouncil\*\*](#).





## ZONE 1 CANDIDATE **MONICA HORTON**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- I have professional experience in the field of juvenile justice (2005-2011).
- I have been self-employed since 2011, and currently I am the owner of a Lenica Consulting Group.
- I have been a member of the Drury University Adjunct Faculty since 2016.

### EDUCATION

- B. A. Psychology, Tuskegee University, 1997-2001
- Master of Music Therapy, Florida State University, 2001-2005
- Master of Public Administration, Missouri State University, 2013-2015

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Springfield City Council Member, 2022-present, chair of the Public Involvement Committee
- Leadership Springfield, board member, 2019-2022
- Greene County Senior Citizens' Services Fund Board, board treasurer, 2018-2022

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Facebook: Monica Horton, Councilwoman - Zone 1, Springfield, MO

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

As owner of Lenica Consulting Group, my business executive and technical skills in strategic planning, program evaluation, and data analysis/research have served city council exponentially in sponsoring council bills that promote quality of place; consensus-building within council committees; and decision-making on Forward SGF initiatives such as corridor improvements, complete neighborhoods, and catalyst projects to spur economic growth.

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?

The city's role is complementary as an equal partner in fostering public-private partnerships. Core transportation infrastructure, stormwater, and green infrastructure can be cost-prohibitive for existing and relocating businesses. Therefore, business incentives and infrastructure cost-shares, etc. are key economic development tools the city offers, but also...the Job Center relocated back to the north Springfield which was necessary for enhancing our regional workforce goals.

**SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

This city can take the single-most bold step in managing sustainable growth by codifying and implementing the new community development code. Permitting/approval processes will be streamlined and the zoning ordinance will be more flexible to facilitate desirable growth for years to come.

**AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD’S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

Springfield ranks last in our region when it comes to the median income so therefore, I would like to see progress in wage growth for participants in the workforce. I hope to witness a 5,000-unit increase in workforce housing over my next 4-year term as a city council member which can be measured in permit approvals, groundbreaking, etc. But I also want city council’s decisions to promote opportunities for wider profit margins for small businesses. When wages increase, spending and investing increases benefitting the entire local economy. When profit margins increase, business expansion and job growth empowers every stakeholder to spend local, create local, and own local and in turn the municipality expands the tax base allowing the city to sustainably fulfill its fiscal responsibilities to public employees who will render quality public services to the citizens (and visitors) of Springfield.

SPRINGFIELD, MO  
HOUSING STUDY

SPRINGFIELD'S  
HOUSING  
STOCK IS  
**92%**  
SINGLE-FAMILY

**21%**  
OF HOUSING  
IS IN FAIR OR  
WORSE CONDITION,  
WITH AN AGING  
HOUSING SUPPLY

HOMEOWNERSHIP  
DECLINED  
**17%**  
FROM 2010-2020

Source: City of Springfield (2023)



## ZONE 4 CANDIDATE

# BRUCE ADIB-YAZDI

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- As an architect with over 35 years of experience Bruce has worked on projects for clients in SW Missouri as well as all over the United States.
- In 2013, Bruce began working for a real estate development company which has completed over 60 affordable housing projects in 13 states.
- The community recognized Bruce by being named one of the Springfield Business Journals 40 under 40.

### EDUCATION

- Bruce graduated from High school from Broken Arrow High School, Broken Arrow, OK
- Bruce earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Louisiana State University.
- Bruce has experienced 35 years of continuing education and personal growth, including Leadership Springfield Class 11.

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Bruce's involvement in bicycle advocacy began in the late 90's through Springbike Bicycle Club and carried through to 2010 when Springfield achieved Bicycle Friendly Community Status, then he shifted to multi modal transportation advocacy through two terms on the board and past president of Ozark Greenways.
- Bruce has always been a champion of downtown and commercial street through service on AIA Springfield, Downtown Springfield Association, Downtown Community Improvement District as well as having office in downtown or Commercial Street for over 35 years.
- He is currently serving as president of Seminole-Holland Neighborhood association as well as a founding board member of the Urban Land Institute of SW Missouri.

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Website: [bruceaforsgfcouncil.com](http://bruceaforsgfcouncil.com)
- Facebook: Bruce Adib-Yazdi for SGF City Council

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

His background in architecture and development will bring a unique perspective and professional abilities to City Council. Having worked on projects with other municipalities provides a wide array of opportunities to learn from – both things we should consider doing differently as well as what we may be doing right.

His involvement with his neighborhood association brings a different perspective. His view on incremental growth within neighborhoods, and his goal of creating mini-comprehensive plans for each neighborhood will help bring more certainty to how neighborhoods can enhance quality of life and perpetuate growth.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?**

The city should take stock in properties that are available for public private partnerships and then generate a desired outcome for each – individually or as collectives that are in certain areas in the city. The properties can be tracts of land in the downtown area, vacant houses or lots in historic neighborhoods, or existing buildings that need to be repurposed. Then, an RFQ can be established for establishing a ‘Preferred Developer’ with whom to start an Exclusive Negotiated Agreement that can then be converted in some form of contractual obligations.

Bruce has been directly involved with at least 2 such arrangements over the last 10 years, and those opportunities can truly be catalysts to spur further private development that can complement the public private partnership project.

**SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

The first step would be to identify specific elements contributing to the Quality of Life that are to be preserved or enhanced. Forward SGF does a good job of generally defining these things, but we need to work on being more specific in general, and in each part of the city. We also need to identify those things which are negatively impacting the Quality of Life that can be improved, again with more specificity.

Bruce firmly believes that there is an opportunity for growth along arterial corridors reimagining underutilized properties and parking lots, as well as incremental growth in and around the edges of neighborhoods. This will require some long-range planning within the boundaries of each neighborhood and help them determine what they would like to see in their respective areas of Springfield. We should also identify specific business districts that can work toward creating specific experiences or activity nodes in different parts of the city.

**AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD’S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

Based on taking stock in item 3 above, I would like to see us set some goals for:

1. Increased housing units in all categories – Low to moderate income housing, new and renovated single family homes for sale, multifamily units – both for rent and for sale.
2. Additional commercial districts along arterial corridors and other areas currently served with utilities, to support added population and businesses. This will also bring increased demand for transit.
3. Higher overall revenue ‘yield per acre’ from the land bounded by our city limits.

These goals will require us to think more like a small city than a large town. It will also require coordination and collaboration with surrounding communities and taking a leadership role in our region. The next mayor and city manager are going to be important figures in that process.



## ZONE 4 CANDIDATE

# MATTHEW SIMPSON

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- I have worked at Ozarks Technical Community College since 2011 where I've been able to work with a great team helping connect members of our community with transformative educational opportunities that lead to good jobs.
- As the college's Chief Research and Governmental Affairs Officer my job is to analyze data and provide information to decision-makers to help make the best decisions for our students and communities we serve.
- I'm an active member of our regional professional organizations and have received award recognition from the Missouri Community College Association, Mid-American Association for Institutional Research, and the League of Innovation.

### EDUCATION

- I grew up in Springfield attending SPS, where both of my sons now attend.
- I earned my bachelor's degree in Political Science from Missouri State University with a minor in Economics.
- I earned my master's degree in Political Science from Vanderbilt University.

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- I have served as the Zone 4 representative on City Council since 2018 and have taken on several roles including serving as Mayor Pro Tem, Chair of the ARPA Review Committee, Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, and Council liaison to the Citizens Commission on Community Investment and Police Fire Pension Board.
- I served as the President of the Foundation for Springfield Public Schools Board and was awarded their 2023 Advocate for Education award.
- I have served on other community boards including as an officer for Springfield Greene County Library Board and the University of Missouri Greene County Extension Council.

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Website: [ElectSimpson.org](http://ElectSimpson.org)
- Facebook: [Elect Simpson](https://www.facebook.com/ElectSimpson)

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

I've had the privilege of serving Springfield on City Council since 2018. During that time I've taken on key leadership roles including serving as Mayor Pro Tem, Chair of the ARPA Review Committee, Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, and Council liaison to the Citizens Commission on Community Investment and Police Fire Pension Board. My focus as a Council member has always been to work collaboratively to achieve our community's goals. This includes bringing my professional experience working in Institutional Research at Ozarks Tech to contribute a data-informed approach to decision making. My professional experience at Ozarks Tech also provides a first-hand view of the transformative impact that education and workforce development has on the lives of students we serve. It also drives home the importance of upstream solutions to our community's problems. Prior to serving on Council I was involved in several community organizations including serving as the President of the Foundation for Springfield Public Schools Board, serving as the President of the University of Missouri Greene County Extension Council, and serving as the Treasurer for the Springfield-Greene County Library Board. I also co-founded 5 Pound Apparel with my brother. While he sold the business in 2017, I'm proud to see the continuing impact it has through supporting local charities and as now one of the longest standing retailers in downtown Springfield. I'm also personally invested in the future of Springfield with two children who I hope will grow to love our City as much as I do.

## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL MENTIONED IN FORWARD SGF. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE CITY PLAY IN FOSTERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF AN INITIATIVE YOU WOULD SUPPORT?**

Partnerships are an essential part of any successful project in Springfield and we can not achieve the goals found in Forward SGF without them. I think that the City, in cooperation with other regional organizations, must always be proactively seeking partnerships to address identified opportunities as well as be prepared to work well with partners who bring new opportunities to the table. We also have to recognize that we are typically competing with other regions for these opportunities and that success requires strong public participation which can include elements like infrastructure investments, incentive packages, or workforce training in cooperation with our educational partners. These public investments should be made strategically to leverage private investment and successfully land projects that create new jobs, expand jobs at existing employers, address our City's housing needs, improve quality of place for residents, and serve as economic or tourism drivers. I think the opportunity we have with Lake Springfield is a perfect example of a public private initiative I would support that can achieve all those goals. We've already seen public-private partnership to fund the creation of a master plan for that area and achieving it will require aligning City funded infrastructure investments with private development. The area around Hammons Field is another prime opportunity for public-private partnerships to leverage City owned facilities and investments into private developments that improve quality of place and economic vitality.

## **SPRINGFIELD IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. HOW SHOULD THE CITY BALANCE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE?**

Supporting future growth and achieving community goals like keeping home ownership within reach for young families often requires difficult decisions. For those who live near potential new homes or buildings these are understandably emotional decisions with the uncertainty that comes with change and any potential impacts. I believe that we achieve balance not by fighting all change but by proactively shaping it. This includes effective communication on projects and how they fit into community goals related to housing, economic opportunities, and growth. It also includes making sure that impacts like stormwater and traffic are addressed through infrastructure improvements. It also includes processes and provide fair certainty to all involved – neighbors and those looking to invest in our City. Neighbors need to have fair certainty that the City's processes and standards will protect their quality of place, and those looking to invest should know that we will follow those standards in the Council decision making process. If proposals that meet City code and the comprehensive plan are rejected for political reasons that creates an extremely high level of uncertainty for those looking to build homes or start businesses. It is also likely to drive those investments to other communities. Finally, while individual building cases can be divisive there is broad consensus on goals: meeting our community's needs for good homes, jobs, economic opportunity, and quality of place. We must keep these goals in focus when making these decisions.

## **AT THE END OF YOUR TERM, WHAT SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS OR PROGRESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SPRINGFIELD'S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

I would like for the City to be seen as a strong partner in these areas with processes that are timely, effective, and don't unnecessarily create adversarial relationships. I would like to ensure we deliver on our promises to voters that approved the 3/4-cent SPRING Forward tax in November 2024. The first part of this is using the 1/4-cent revenue dedicated to public safety to achieve full staffing for our Police and Fire departments. For us to succeed on economic growth it is essential that our community is safe for all who live, work, or spend time here. The second part of this is ensuring that the 1/2-cent revenue dedicated to Forward SGF projects is invested strategically and wisely in accordance with the standards set by the Citizens Commission on Community Investment. This includes investing in catalyst projects that attract public-private partnership and/or leverage other external funding to have a greater impact. It also includes prioritizing projects that help attract and retain residents, as well as supporting job and economic growth. I would like to achieve successful implementation of the new land use code using lessons from our upcoming trial period. Improving our outdated code can implement processes that provide fair certainty and give us the ability through new proven approaches to meet our City's housing shortage. Finally, I would like to have made significant progress in closing that housing shortage through both private development of homes and scaling partnership initiative like Restore SGF.





# SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATE RESPONSES

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS SECTION

**Springfield R-12 School District Boundary Map . . . . . pg. 23**

**Springfield Chamber Education Platform . . . . . pg. 24**

Used to guide the questions for Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Board of Education candidates.

**Candidate Experience and Questionnaire Responses . . . . . pgs. 25–32**

All SPS Board of Education candidates on the April 2025 ballot received the questionnaire with four questions, with each response limited to 250 words. All candidates submitted responses.

Questions:

1. Describe your professional experience and other relevant qualifications that prepare you to effectively serve in this role.
2. What strategies would you advance to ensure SPS is able to recruit and retain quality teachers?
3. A strong public school system is a major factor in where families choose to work and live. What role do you think Springfield Public Schools plays in making our city a more attractive place for business and talent?
4. What stakeholders will you consider when making decisions?

## Candidate Response Order (Alphabetical):

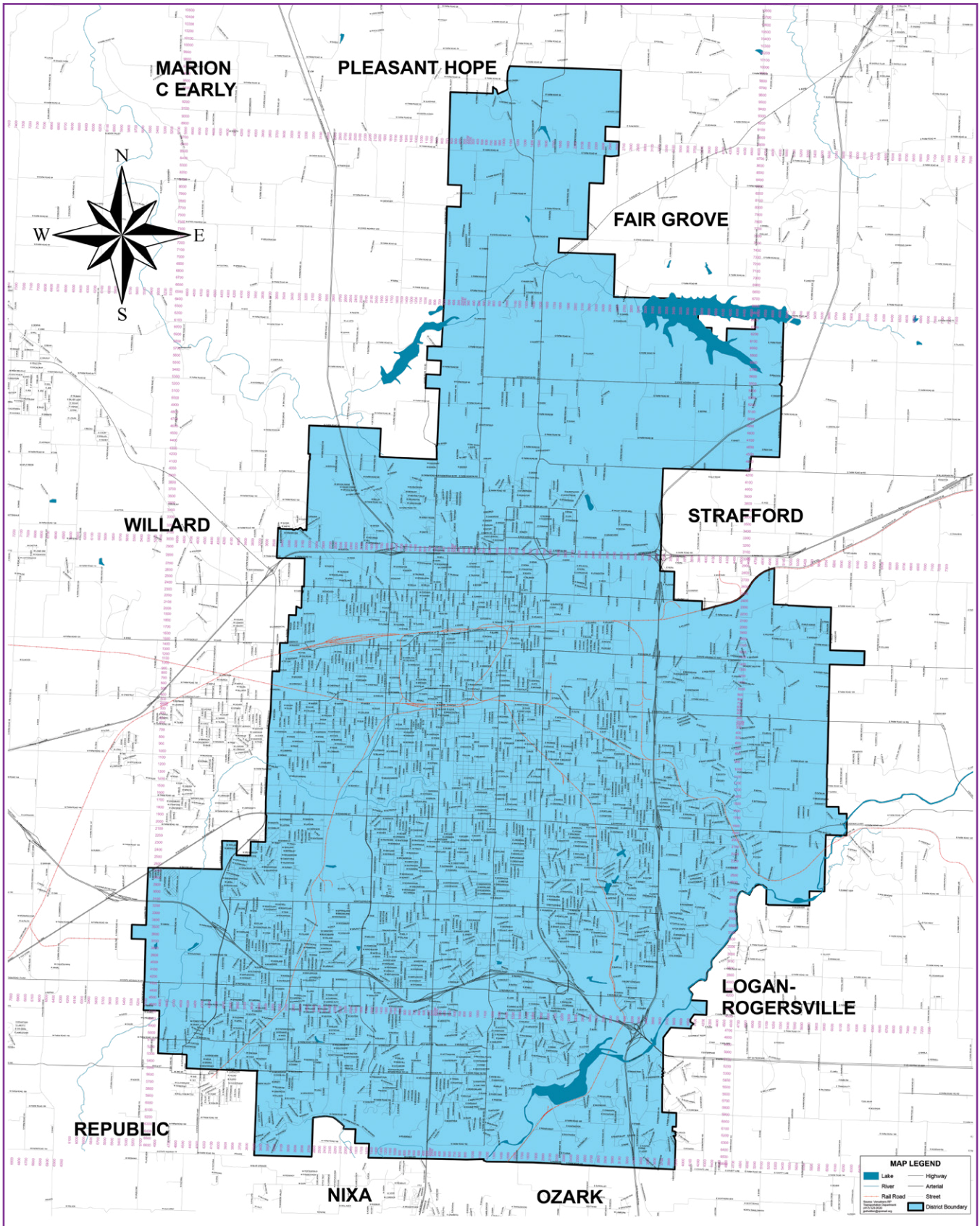
**Kelly Byrne (*seeking re-election*) . . . . . pgs. 25 –26**

**Sarah Hough . . . . . pgs. 27–28**

**David Myers . . . . . pgs. 29–30**

**Gail Smart . . . . . pgs. 31–32**

# SPRINGFIELD R-12 SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY MAP



MAP PROVIDED BY SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# THE EDUCATION PLATFORM: DEFINING AND GUIDING CHAMBER ADVOCACY IN EDUCATION

Education has a direct connection to the future workforce and a thriving community. The Chamber's board-adopted Education Platform sets the vision for our engagement and establishes the strategic objectives and policy positions that guide our action in this area.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Chamber supports schools that emphasize academic excellence within an education system that is accountable, visionary and equipped to prepare students for living and working in a global economy.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that the region's school systems successfully prepare students for higher education and the local workforce.
2. To help Springfield Public Schools operate as Missouri's premier school district when measured by student achievement, graduation rates, resource utilization and attendance rates.

### Policy positions key to ensuring students are ready for college and/or careers:

- **Workforce Development** - Schools must take a leadership role in developing a skilled workforce.
- **Career Exploration** - Programs that provide opportunities for students to "test drive" careers, especially those fields that are in high demand locally.
- **Technology** - The strategic use of technology to prepare students for life in a high-tech world.
- **Emphasis on Basics** - Continued emphasis on basic educational subjects such as math, science, communication and interpersonal skills that prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace.

### Policy positions focused on effective, responsible management of resources and accountability:

- **Employee Attraction and Retention** - Attracting and retaining quality, experienced employees, including teachers, is a priority.
- **Staff Leadership and Development** - An emphasis on professional development and continuity of leadership strengthens the district.
- **Fiscal Responsibility** - Fiscal policies should align with the district's strategic plan.
- **Addressing Capital Needs** - Strategic planning for capital needs must be quantifiable, realistic and include community input.
- **Communication and Civic Involvement** - Clear communication with, and input from, the community regarding district goals and activities is critical to district success.
- **Safety and Security** - The board should prioritize safety of students, faculty and staff through resource allocation, building design, training and security features in facilities, policies and practices.
- **Progress and Transparency** - District progress including student graduation rates and test scores, among others, should be measurable and clearly articulated to all stakeholders.
- **Good Governance** - The board should provide transparency and accountability to stakeholders, in addition to working collaboratively with one another and the community in the best interest of the district, students and families.



Source: Springfield Public Schools, Analytics, Accountability & Assessment Department as of 2-5-2025.





## SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE **KELLY BYRNE**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 15 year local business owner bringing outside investment into the Springfield community, employer
- Real estate investments and development including multi-family, single family, student housing, senior housing, industrial outdoor storage

### EDUCATION

- 2003 graduate of Kickapoo high school and starting member of the 2003 Kickapoo basketball state championship team, Academic All-State Honors
- Bachelors in Business Marketing from St. Cloud State University
- Full Scholarship for basketball, 2 NCAA National Tournament appearances

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Current SPS Board member, 5 year member of the board for the Ozarks Regional YMCA
- Substitute teacher and donated proceeds to Care to Learn, Youth basketball coach, PTA Member, Financial support for: Care to Learn, Life. Church, Worldserve, YMCA, Big Brothers big Sisters
- Mentor for Real Estate Developers and Entrepreneurs, Presenter at the NBA Player's Association Entrepreneurship and Investment Seminar for NBA Athletes.

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Website: [Kelly4sps.info](http://Kelly4sps.info)
- Facebook: Kelly Byrne SPS School Board Member

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

For 15 years I've been a local business owner bringing both local and non-local investment into Springfield. As a developer you must have a vision, then bring together a team of people to turn that vision into reality. I've done this time and time again. It takes leadership and relentless drive to navigate thousands of obstacles. It takes constant problem solving. It takes delegation and putting together a team of people who specialize in their individual areas to provide guidance, then I must take their advice and make decisions that have very real consequences to me and my partners and employees. Along the way I employ people, manage budgets, manage the construction process, negotiate contracts, navigate bureaucratic structures to secure permitting and zoning, and at the end of the day I go home to two school age kids. I cannot think of a better way to prepare a board member for service. A lot of board members or candidates have a lot of opinions on politics or on how to educate kids, but the true nuts and bolts of board service is absorbing information and making decisions (with very real consequences) about contracts, policy, budgets, construction, and employment. If I don't win in April, there's no one on that board that has this experience. And during a time of budget cuts, laying off staff, and hundreds of millions of construction projects underway or soon to be, SPS cannot afford to be lacking in this type of leadership on the board.

## WHAT STRATEGIES WOULD YOU ADVANCE TO ENSURE SPS IS ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS?

The number one obstacle for retention and recruitment is the problems with student behaviours and the need for stronger and more consistent discipline policies and practices to correct the issue.

We're the highest compensated district in the area. I've voted for every teacher raise and will continue to vote for raises. This just isn't the end of the story, not by a long shot. We have to make it a more desirable job. It has to be safer. Staff must feel valued. Staff must have the supports necessary to do their job which has changed quite substantially. It was clear to me in the most recent Climate and Culture survey that we're way off track. Student behaviour is the largest, most agreed upon issue in the district, and I don't think we're doing a good enough job listening to and valuing our staff.

Also in that survey, and through many other discussions with staff, it's clear to me that requirements of teachers have become more demanding and rigid. We must have a teamwork mentality at SPS. Teachers must have the supports they need from admin to be successful. We need to be in it together for the mission of the district and its stakeholders.

## A STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN WHERE FAMILIES CHOOSE TO WORK AND LIVE. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLAYS IN MAKING OUR CITY A MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR BUSINESSES AND TALENT?

As a board member I must be very careful to understand my role. My role is to support the mission of the district which is to provide high quality academic opportunities for each student. My role is not economic development for Springfield; however, if we're successful in our mission and ensure high quality education in SPS then economic development will follow. The best thing we can do for the SPS stakeholders, and most importantly the students of SPS, is to be relentlessly focused on providing a robust K-12 academic experience for our students. If we do that the community at large will benefit as families once again seek out SPS as the district of choice in our area, or in the state.

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WILL YOU CONSIDER WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?

As an incumbent I have the advantage of a track record. I've been very approachable and have met with a wide variety of stakeholders in my term. My transparency and communication with the teacher groups has led to me being endorsed by both groups (SNEA and MSTTA) this election cycle. I communicate with the superintendent, parents, grandparents, students, business leaders, local state and federal elected officials. In this election cycle I have communicated with any group that has reached out for interviews or questionnaires. There is no voice that I have shut out.

In the end I find all of the information I gather useful, and apply that to my thoughts on any given topic through the lens of the mission of SPS. If a stakeholder has a point of view that has a motive other than the mission of SPS, I still listen and try to understand the issue, then in the end make the decision that is best for SPS, not any other group or special interest.

### DISTRICT FACTS

**MISSOURI'S  
LARGEST PUBLIC  
K-12 SYSTEM**

**SPS 2024  
GRADUATION RATE  
97.4%**

**MISSOURI'S  
ONLY K-12  
INTERNATIONAL  
BACCALAUREATE  
PROGRAM**

Source: Springfield Public Schools



## SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE SARAH HOUGH

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Senior Manager, Community and Outfitter Engagement, Bass Pro Shops (Present) – Leads employee engagement programs impacting over 35,000 employees across North America.
- Manager, Community Affairs, Bass Pro Shops (2016-2021) – Played a key role in establishing the company’s philanthropic strategy, initiatives and impact reporting.
- President and Co-Founder, Valley Springs Foundation (2012-2020) – Founded a non- profit to support the school and community in my hometown of Valley Springs, AR.

### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Arts in English, Missouri State University – Graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Honors College (2006).

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Currently serves on the boards of *Care to Learn*, *Springfield Innovation Inc.*, and the *Citizens Advisory Council for City Utilities*, focusing on student support, workforce development, innovation, and community impact.
- Previously served on the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Education Task Force, Discovery Center of Springfield Board, and Ozarks Regional YMCA Ward Branch Advisory Board, supporting education, STEM, and youth programs.

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Website: [sarahforsps.com](http://sarahforsps.com)
- Facebook: Sarah Hough for SPS School Board

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

With a career rooted in leadership and community engagement, I bring experience in balancing complex priorities and ensuring the needs of diverse stakeholders are met. As the Senior Manager of Community & Outfitter Engagement at Bass Pro Shops, I oversee initiatives that impact more than 35,000 employees across North America, including local philanthropy, employee engagement and programs aimed at improving employee retention and satisfaction. In this role, I have learned the importance of listening, problem-solving, and making decisions that support both long-term goals and immediate needs—skills that directly translate to effective board service.

Growing up in a family of educators, I saw firsthand the power of strong public schools, and now, as a parent of two SPS students, I am committed to ensuring that every child in our district has access to an excellent education. Beyond my professional career, I have spent years advocating for students and education. I serve on the board of *Care to Learn*, working to remove barriers to student success by addressing health, hunger, and hygiene needs. My service with the *Springfield Chamber Education Task Force* and *Springfield Innovation, Inc.* has deepened my understanding of workforce development, innovation and the critical role our schools and community partners play in shaping the future of Springfield. Additionally, I founded a community foundation in my hometown that has funded student scholarships and school improvements. My background as a business leader, education advocate, and engaged parent uniquely positions me to serve effectively on the school board.

## WHAT STRATEGIES WOULD YOU ADVANCE TO ENSURE SPS IS ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS?

Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers is essential to student success, and Springfield Public Schools must remain competitive in both compensation and workplace culture. While the district has made progress in improving teacher pay, we must continue working toward the goal of being one of the top-paying school systems in Missouri. Competitive salaries and strong benefits are a foundation for retention, but they alone are not enough.

Teachers and students need a safe classroom environment. Addressing student behavior is critical, as disruptions contribute to teacher burnout and hinder learning. Ensuring clear and consistent discipline policies, providing teachers with the necessary tools to manage behavior, and expanding access to behavioral support staff will create a more stable learning environment.

Beyond behavior support, fostering a culture where teachers feel heard and valued is equally important. Regular feedback, proactive problem-solving, and professional growth opportunities all contribute to a positive work environment. Expanding *Grow Your Own*, which creates pathways for paraprofessionals, substitutes, and students to become certified teachers, will strengthen the district's talent pipeline. Additionally, meaningful recognition for teachers—both within the district and the community—helps reinforce their essential role. As a board member, I will prioritize both attracting top talent and ensuring SPS remains a district where great teachers want to stay and thrive.

## A STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN WHERE FAMILIES CHOOSE TO WORK AND LIVE. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLAYS IN MAKING OUR CITY A MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR BUSINESSES AND TALENT?

A strong public school system is the foundation of a thriving community, shaping both the workforce and the local economy. Many families choose where to live based on school quality, and businesses consider education systems when deciding where to expand. Springfield Public Schools play a crucial role in both areas, ensuring that students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for college, careers, and life beyond the classroom. By prioritizing academic achievement, SPS helps create a well-educated, adaptable workforce, which in turn strengthens the community's economic prospects.

Beyond academic success, SPS should understand and partner with local industries to provide students with valuable, real-world experiences that align with future workforce opportunities. Career-focused programs and hands-on learning help prepare students for success in high-demand fields, ensuring that businesses have access to a strong talent pipeline and students have viable opportunities for their future. By equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, SPS not only supports individual student growth but also contributes to the long-term economic vitality of Springfield.

When we invest in strong schools, we invest in a stronger, more prosperous community. As a board member, I will work to ensure SPS continues to be a driving force in making Springfield a place where families and businesses want to grow.

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WILL YOU CONSIDER WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?

Effective decision-making requires listening to and balancing the perspectives of all stakeholders who are invested in the success of our schools. First and foremost, students must be at the center of every decision, as their growth and achievement are the ultimate measure of success. Teachers and staff are equally critical voices, as they bring firsthand knowledge of what is happening in classrooms and what is needed to create the best possible learning environments.

Parents play a vital role as partners in education, and their insights should be valued when considering policies that affect their children. Businesses and community leaders also have a vested interest in the strength of our schools, as well-prepared graduates contribute to a thriving local workforce. By fostering strong partnerships between SPS and the broader community, we can ensure that students have opportunities that extend beyond the classroom.

Collaboration with school administration is key, as the board must set strategic direction while allowing educators and district leaders to implement policies effectively. Finally, taxpayers deserve transparency and accountability in how their dollars are spent, as public education is a shared investment in our future. By engaging with these diverse voices and ensuring open communication, I will work to make decisions that reflect the best interests of students and the entire Springfield community.





## SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE DAVID MYERS

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 16 years in the National Guard, achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant, currently serving
- Aviation maintenance technician, fixed wing and rotary
- Business Owner, Fiduciary for Dept of VA managing disability benefits

### EDUCATION

- A.A. in General Studies from OTC
- B.S. in Sociology from MSU
- Continuing Education Certificate (150.1 hrs) in Public Administration from U. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Suicide Interventionist training, US Military, Chicago, IL
- Master Resilience Trainer course, US Military, Ft. McCoy, WI

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Co-hosted Springfield Culture Fest 2024
- Korean War Memorial, serving in uniform
- Messiah Project choral and visual arts ensemble, Springfield Mid-America Singers

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- Website: [david4greateducation.org](http://david4greateducation.org)
- Facebook: David4GreatEducation

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

With a strong foundation in leadership and public service, I bring a diverse and well-rounded background to the table. As a Staff Sergeant in the Army National Guard, I have honed skills in teamwork, discipline, and problem-solving. During my service in the National Guard, I was deployed as part of the COVID emergency response operations, contributing to critical efforts to safeguard public health and provide essential support to communities during a time of crisis. For my service, I was honored with a commendation medal recognizing my dedication and impact during this challenging time. My experience in local politics, including working alongside state representatives and senators, has given me valuable insights into policy-making and community advocacy. I have also served as a substitute teacher, which has provided me with firsthand experience in education and a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities within our schools. Additionally, I have served as a fiduciary for disabled veterans, ensuring their financial and personal well-being with integrity and care. My years as a minister of music have allowed me to connect with people on a personal level, fostering communication and collaboration within diverse groups. Together, these experiences equip me with the dedication, leadership, and perspective needed to serve effectively on the school board.

## WHAT STRATEGIES WOULD YOU ADVANCE TO ENSURE SPS IS ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS?

I believe fiscal responsibility needs to be a top priority of the Board and administration. If programs aren't working or performing to specification, they need to be reevaluated, tweaked, or removed. We need to be creative. I also know that teachers not feeling supported or empowered by their principals do not desire to stay; it amounts to a hostile work environment.

I speak to former teachers who substitute in retirement, and they are frustrated to the point of quitting.

I believe we need to have as many robust continuing education advancement opportunities as possible. I think teachers, especially fresh-out-of-college teachers want to know they have growth potential in the first District that gives them a chance. In the military, I am a Master Resilience Trainer and a Suicide Interventionist and Instructor. I think teachers, who certainly care about their students, ought to be given practical, real-world training and skills that benefit their students and their careers. I think people who want to be teachers care about not only the educational health of their students, but also the growing mental and emotional struggles our young people face today. We should look at how other school districts are maintaining their teachers and imitating those methods. At this juncture, where we are having these struggles, we should be open to as many ethical and successful solutions as possible. We should look to other industries' recruiting methods and resource management to find innovative ways to retain and to entice quality staff and faculty.

## A STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN WHERE FAMILIES CHOOSE TO WORK AND LIVE. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLAYS IN MAKING OUR CITY A MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR BUSINESSES AND TALENT?

The students that come out of our schools are a vital aspect to our community businesses and non-profits. Not to overuse an overused cliché, but they truly are our future. The students we teach become our employees, our military members, our local police and fire fighters, our future business owners. However, right now we are graduating students at C and D averages in core competencies, C+ average in standardized testing, and reading two grades below level. This is doing a disservice not only to our students, but also to our community. If parents don't believe their children have the best opportunity to learn, they won't bring their talents here; they won't raise their kids here. Our education standards must increase! We must focus on giving all students an equal opportunity to learn. We have to do a better job at empowering teachers in the classroom so they can maintain discipline and order, and that definitely involves an active cell phone policy that prevents (not necessarily bans) use during class time. We need to have administrators who will back up our teachers. We need to show our students they are valued by, again, giving the best chance to learn the basics, and to learn how to be good and functioning adults.

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WILL YOU CONSIDER WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?

All that have a stake in the decision. That said, I'm also being elected for who I am. I highly value communication and bridge-building. I've been a networker for over twenty years of my life. I understand the value that diverse viewpoints, perspectives, and experiences brings to the table. Over the years, I too have had a very versatile background of experiences that highly qualifies me to represent all those who have a stake in this community. I'm a father, my oldest being 13, and I can identify and empathize with parents who are struggling with raising children in this age of technology and social media. As a substitute teacher, I have seen the struggles teachers have in the classroom with discipline and ever-changing curricula and methods. Having worked in government and serving in the US Army for 16 years, I understand what it means to lead and also to collaborate and work cooperatively within a government system. I have an extended education in the humanities, and I have skills and training in communication and active listening - both vital functions in working with others in this role.



## SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE GAIL SMART

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Practicing attorney, Radcliff, Kentucky
- Administrator of the Hardin County Public Defender system, Radcliff, Kentucky

### EDUCATION

- University of Arkansas, Bachelor of Arts in English
- University of Arkansas, Juris Doctorate

### COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Community Foundation of the Ozarks, current board member
- SPS Foundation, former board member
- Co-chair, Poverty Commission

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

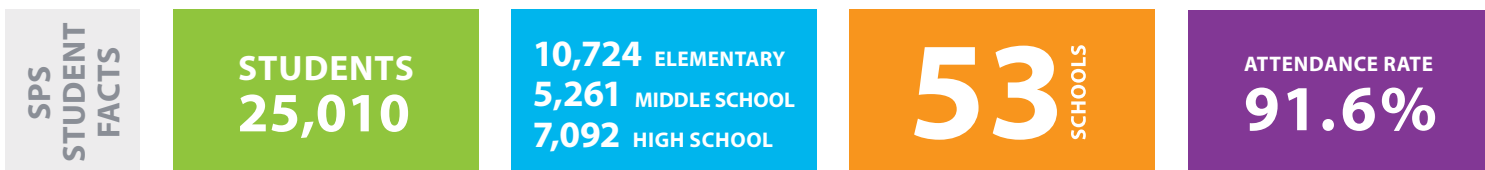
- Website: [smartforschoolboard.com](http://smartforschoolboard.com)
- Facebook: [GailSmartforSPSSchoolBoard](https://www.facebook.com/GailSmartforSPSSchoolBoard)

## DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS THAT PREPARE YOU TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE IN THIS ROLE.

For over 30 years, my focus has been bringing people together to solve issues with compassionate leadership. I care about Springfield and want it to continue to thrive. I've been a fierce community advocate for those struggling to be successful.

I served as co-director of the Well of Life for eight years where I oversaw the day-to-day operations of the pantry, helped craft budgets built on donations from eight downtown churches, and served as board president. I co-chaired the local Poverty Commission for two years. We brought together city officials, university professors, community leaders, and others to learn about root causes and assess best practices to address the issue of poverty in Springfield. We set a vision, measurable goals, and strategies to reduce the poverty rate. Because of the work of this commission and the programs it launched, the poverty rate in Springfield has declined. I proudly served on the SPS Foundation Board for several years. Serving on this board helped me become familiar with teachers' needs and the importance of raising private money.

I currently serve on the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. The board oversees \$500,000,000 in assets. Attending budget workshops and strategy sessions enables me to make informed decisions that align with the Foundation's goals. I'm committed to bringing that same diligence to the SPS budget priorities. I am fiscally conservative and understand the importance of public trust and transparency. In the case of SPS, the adopted budget must support academic achievement and employee retention.



Source: Springfield Public Schools, Analytics, Accountability & Assessment Department as of 2-5-2025.

## WHAT STRATEGIES WOULD YOU ADVANCE TO ENSURE SPS IS ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS?

Research shows high-quality teachers are the number one factor contributing to student success. There are multiple ways to approach this issue. Raising educators' salaries is an important strategy to ease the staffing shortage, but it is not the only answer. SPS should prioritize strengthening its relationship with the three Springfield universities, all having robust educator preparation programs. In 2021, MSU and SPS signed an agreement to create a Future Educator Program. This "Grow Your Own" program is a districtwide initiative that identifies under-resourced high school juniors, seniors, and college students, as well as non-certified school staff who want to become educators. Graduates commit to teaching in SPS once they complete the program. SPS must continue to recruit teachers that are educated in strong teacher preparation programs.

Strengthening our mentorship programs is another way of retaining teachers. Having a strong mentorship program shows the district is focused on "passing the torch" to a new generation of educators while communicating to new teachers that they are respected and valued. Supporting teachers in the classroom is critical. We should listen and respond to what teachers need while celebrating and recognizing the incredible work they are doing every day. Employee engagement increases when one's talents and contributions are recognized and appreciated. While our focus is always on student success, as a board member, I am also a trustee to ensure our nearly 4000 employees -teachers and staff- have a healthy work environment. I will champion policies that reflect that support.

## A STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN WHERE FAMILIES CHOOSE TO WORK AND LIVE. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLAYS IN MAKING OUR CITY A MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR BUSINESSES AND TALENT?

Knowing you can send your children to school at no cost to a strong public school system is a critical advantage Springfield has in recruiting families and businesses to our community. SPS has a record graduation rate of 97.4% with 1,800+ graduates earning \$25.6 million in scholarships. It is solid academically and improving; it has unique choice programs for all ages and an outstanding IB program for gifted students. It is connected to all local colleges and universities, offering opportunities for college credit while attending high school and real work force training. You can graduate with your associates degree and a high school diploma at the same time.

Extracurricular activities and athletics are also strong. Many student athletes receive college scholarships every year while theatre, debate, FBLA, cheer and dance clubs, entrepreneurship and volunteer opportunities, and honor societies are strong. Unique affinity groups add options for all students to find ways to engage.

A school board supportive of all students and focused on student success and safety is critical to continued strength and improvement. Those are my priorities along with financial discipline. I have also positioned myself as Springfield's advocate to better connect SPS to the community. Partnerships with business are critical to its continued success.

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WILL YOU CONSIDER WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?

Priority number three of the SPS Strategic Plan is cultivating a Collaborative Culture. Partnering with and listening to stakeholders as we work toward common goals, share resources, and expertise fosters support for the district.

I am listening to students, parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, other school board members, business owners, and the larger community. Each stakeholder group has unique insights, resources, and skills that contribute to the school environment. I will attend workshops, study sessions, and board meetings and stay in communication with the superintendent and other board members. I have the time and will welcome meetings to collaborate with stakeholder groups- whether that be the PTA, MSTTA, SNEA, Teamsters, community members, etc. I am already doing it as part of my campaign for the school board.

I have made it a priority to seek input from people on the front line—primarily teachers. I appreciate their expertise and passion for their profession. Recently, I met with a group of teachers and discussed what is and what isn't working in the district. I am curious and I will enjoy asking questions to learn so I can be well advised. More importantly, I believe those directly impacted by current and future decisions, the teachers, staff, and students when appropriate, should be involved in the collaborative partnership with the district from the beginning, not hearing about decisions without input. The collective efforts of these stakeholders are essential in building an environment that nurtures learning, personal growth, and community engagement for our students.

## VOTER RESOURCES

- **Local Election Results:** [vote.greenecountymo.gov/elections/](http://vote.greenecountymo.gov/elections/)
- **Check Your Voter Registration:** [voteroutreach.sos.mo.gov/portal/](http://voteroutreach.sos.mo.gov/portal/)
- **Greene County Clerk Voter Registration:** [greenecountymo.gov/county\\_clerk/voter.php](http://greenecountymo.gov/county_clerk/voter.php)
- **Greene County Sample Ballots:** [vote.greenecountymo.gov/voting-information/#sample](http://vote.greenecountymo.gov/voting-information/#sample)
- **Greene County Absentee Voting:** [vote.greenecountymo.gov/voting-information/#absentee](http://vote.greenecountymo.gov/voting-information/#absentee)
- **2025 Missouri Election Calendar:** [sos.mo.gov/elections/calendar](http://sos.mo.gov/elections/calendar)

## BE AN INFORMED VOTER ON APRIL 8

Learn more about the candidates running for Springfield City Council and Springfield Public Schools Board of Education. Scan to learn more about this year's candidates or go to: [springfieldchamber.com/voter-education](http://springfieldchamber.com/voter-education)



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Lauren Shantz, Vice President of Public Affairs • [lshantz@springfieldchamber.com](mailto:lshantz@springfieldchamber.com)

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