



Questionnaire for Billings 2025 City Council Election.

The members of the Billings Firefighters Union, IAFF Local 521, are committed to protecting the lives, property, and well-being of our community. As we consider endorsements for the upcoming city council election, we are seeking your positions on issues that directly affect public safety, emergency response, firefighter health and wellness, and the future of Billings.

Please respond to the following questions as thoroughly as possible. Your answers will help our membership make informed decisions about who will best support the citizens of Billings and the men and women who serve them.

1. Please provide a brief bio.
 - a. I grew up in Billings and after leaving for a brief period at the start of my career have lived here for the past twenty years. I have worked locally as the IT Director for EBMS, Chief Operating Officer for Avitus Group, and currently serve as the Chief Information Officer for Vensure Employer Solutions based out of Chandler, AZ (Working remote).

I am married with three kids, ages 28, 15, and 13. My wife and I also have an amazing granddaughter who is 3.

2. What made you want to run for city council?
 - a. I'm running for City Council because I care deeply about Billings and believe in its potential. Billings has always been a great place to live, work, and raise a family—and I want to help it grow in a way that reflects our values of hard work, self-reliance, and looking out for each other.

As a longtime resident of Ward 4, I've raised my family here and built a career here. I believe that Billings is a great place to live and raise a family. Billings needs to be a great place for business to thrive and a place where residents can afford to live with city amenities for everyone. In order to make this happen we need strong leadership to ensure that we increase funding for public safety while not always asking property owners to carry that burden. There are solutions, but it will take collaborative leadership to get there.

3. What is your leadership style and how do you intend to bring a consensus to the council?

- a. My leadership style is engaging, collaborative, and open to ideas. I am happy that the municipal races are non-partisan as I think that helps lead to better outcomes. City government should be focused on making Billings the best place to live, visit, and do business and bringing partisan politics into it isn't helpful
4. What do you see as the role and/or function of city government?
 - a. With the Billings city charter having a council/administrator form of government it's the job of the council to set the vision for the city and clearly communicate that to the city administrator who can deliver on that vision. I think the city council has no place telling individual departments how they should do their jobs as the council's role is advisory and financial oversight. We have amazing staff in all of the city departments and we need to help support them in the difficult jobs that they do.
5. What is the number one issue facing Billings for the next city council, and how do you intend to address it?
 - a. The number one issue is the budget shortfall. In that environment all discussions are focused on budget cuts and while there may be some waste we could identify and deal with, I don't believe we could find anywhere near that amount needed to balance the budget. This results in decisions that will hurt the residents of Billings. We need to work with state legislators to make sure that we find solutions that would help address the changes that happened in the 2025 session that created this issue. Giving larger cities like Billings more options to consider using, like a local option tax, would give us the ability to give voters a choice of getting help from the large number of visitors that Billings has each year to share in the cost of making our city a great place to visit and live.
6. How would you determine and consider the agendas of other council members to be the most productive and prioritize the conflicting demands of Billings?
 - a. Good working relationships with all council members and the mayor is critical. We need to be able to discuss our individual ideas and work together to decide what issues are most critical. In my corporate leadership roles I have consistently been open to the best idea in the room instead of just the idea that I brought forward. The job of the council is to do what's best for Billings, full stop.
7. How would you work with other entities to balance asks of the public for funding through levies and bonds?
 - a. As mentioned before, I think it would be best if Billings had the ability to ask voters if they wanted to use another tool such as a local option tax to increase

revenue without putting the burden on property owners. However, when we do need to make an ask for a levy or bond it's important that the council and other entities are committed to providing transparent and complete data about what we need the money for, and provide follow up data for citizens so they feel confident that the money was well spent.

8. What do you see as the role of the Union in representing the 144 members of Local 521?
 - a. The Union plays a vital role in ensuring that the voices of Billings' firefighters are heard and respected. Local 521 serves as a crucial advocate for safe working conditions, fair compensation, adequate staffing levels, and professional development opportunities. The union provides a direct line of communication between its members and city leadership, helping build trust and collaboration. I see the union as a partner in maintaining a highly trained, well-supported fire department that can protect the residents of Billings safely and effectively.
9. Currently Fire Station 5 is undergoing a renovation that is long overdue. There are four other stations that need considerable renovations and a growing need for a new station to support growth. What is your stance on maintaining what is currently in use versus building new stations?
 - a. Our first priority must be ensuring the safety and effectiveness of our existing fire stations. Renovating and maintaining our current infrastructure—like the much-needed updates at Station 5—demonstrates respect for the crews who serve there and ensures reliable service for nearby residents. That said, we must also proactively plan for future growth. As new neighborhoods expand, we need a strategic plan to fund and build new stations to maintain reasonable response times across the city. This isn't an either/or—it's about maintaining what we have while responsibly preparing for the future.
10. The men and women of Local 521 currently respond to about 18,000 to 20,000 calls for service each year. Departments throughout the nation that respond to a similar number of calls have between 200 and 250 members taking those calls. Currently L521 has 144 members. What do you see as solutions to add staffing?
 - a. Ensuring adequate staffing for our fire department is essential to public safety and the health and well-being of our firefighters. The fact that Local 521 responds to nearly 20,000 calls annually with only 144 members—while comparable cities staff over 200—makes it clear that Billings must act. I support a multi-pronged approach that includes advocating for additional general fund investment, exploring grants like the SAFER program, and prioritizing staffing in budget planning. We also need to make sure we're doing everything we can to support recruitment and retention, so we can build and sustain a strong team for the long term. However, if we tried to use a program like SAFER, we would need

to be ready to fund the salaries going forward. This again points to the need to look at all ways to fund public safety.

11. Firefighters face significant risks from cancer, PTSD, and other occupational hazards. How would you support initiatives to improve firefighter health and wellness programs?

- a. I fully support investing in health and wellness programs that address the real risks our firefighters face—especially cancer prevention, mental health services, and physical recovery. We must prioritize early detection programs, access to counseling, and proper protective equipment. As a councilmember, I would advocate for sustainable funding and partnerships to ensure these critical resources are available without delay or disruption.

12. How will you approach contract negotiations with Local 521 if elected to city council?

- a. I will approach contract negotiations with Local 521 in good faith, with a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect. Our firefighters put their lives on the line every day, and they deserve to be heard and valued in the negotiation process. I'll focus on fairness, transparency, and sustainability—working to ensure that we meet the needs of both our public safety professionals and the long-term health of our city budget.

13. How would you support community risk reduction initiatives such as fire prevention education, wildfire preparedness, and public health partnerships?

- a. I believe community risk reduction is essential to both public safety and long-term cost savings. I will advocate for strong support of fire prevention education, wildfire preparedness efforts, and public health partnerships that proactively reduce risk. These initiatives help save lives and resources by preventing emergencies before they happen. I'm committed to working with the fire department and community partners to ensure these efforts are prioritized and funded appropriately.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses. Your answers will be shared with our membership as we consider our endorsement. Please return your completed questionnaire to Local 521 by September 1st, 2025 at 5p.m.