



Voter Guide: 2020 Election for Kerr County Offices

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Kerr County Election for Sheriff: term of office is 4 years.

The Kerr County Sheriff acts as the primary elected law enforcement officer of the county.

Duties: serves as a licensed peace officer who is responsible for enforcing the criminal laws of the State of Texas; manages and operates the county jail; supervises prisoners in the county jail; provides security for the county and district courts; serves writs and processes of the courts; seizes property after judgment; and enforces traffic laws on county roads.

Warren Funk	Larry Leitha
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1. What in your background qualifies you for the position of Kerr County Sheriff?

Funk: As a naturalized American, I have sworn to preserve, protect and defend the US constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. To understand this obligation, I have studied the foundational documents of the republic. I have learned that the role of government is to preserve the natural rights of the citizens. The sheriff is the officer of local government best positioned to carry out this mission. I pledge that, as your sheriff, I will make preservation of your rights my top priority. Second, as director of a research institution, I successfully managed an organization of similar size and budget.

Leitha: I have over 31 years' experience in Law Enforcement, at the local, state, and federal levels. I retired from Texas DPS as a special Agent and Narcotics Sergeant. I am a Kerr County Native. I have worked with the FBI, DEA, Customs, ATF, and other jurisdictions and have successfully filed over 350 felony cases against drug smugglers, gangs, and violent criminals. I have been an active member of community organizations, including the Center Point School Board, HCDJLS, Elks Lodge, and FFA, among others. I have extensive supervisory and administrative law enforcement experience, and over 5000 hours of law enforcement education.

2. What are the current challenges for the Kerr County Sheriff and how will you address them?

Funk: There are two related challenges. The first is the failure to consider constitutionality in the enforcement of the law. The second is the trust gap that has developed between the citizens and the police. Final determination of constitutionality is not an authority granted to any branch of government, not even the Supreme Court. This power rests with the citizen and finds expression through the sheriff, an elected official. I will immediately begin to instruct and guide the officers of the department to an understanding of the limits of their powers under the Constitution. This will address both challenges.

Leitha: Like counties nationwide, drugs will continue to be a top concern for law enforcement, along with the many issues that come with them. With Covid-19 effects, the next Sheriff will face a tightening budget situation. I have extensive experience dealing with both drug enforcement and budgetary issues. As Sheriff, my office will continue to provide value and maintain efficiency for Kerr County taxpayers. The next Sheriff will also be responsible for protecting the health and safety of KCSO staff and inmates in the Kerr County jail from the Covid-19 threat, as task that requires strong leadership and a team approach.

3. What measures or programs do you propose to reduce crime in Kerr County?

Funk: Most crimes being prosecuted involve the sale and use of drugs. These laws violate natural rights and are unconstitutional. The war on drugs has been a catastrophe for the nation and the hemisphere. It has clogged the courts, created a huge domestic prison population, disrupted civil order in the nations on the supply route, created a crush of refugees at the border, and has fostered an adversarial atmosphere between law enforcement and citizens. Drugs are as available as ever. I will reduce crime in Kerr County by ending the enforcement of laws against victimless crimes, especially drug laws.

Leitha: In my experience at the municipal, county, state, and federal levels, I have seen many programs that work well to combat crime in our communities. Working with three decades of colleagues at all levels of law enforcement, I will cooperate with outside agencies for the benefit of Kerr County. Dozens of grant and assistance programs are available to local jurisdictions. I will also explore adding mental health capabilities to the Sheriff's office and expand drug awareness programs to reduce local demand. I will approach KCSO programs with an experienced and pragmatic view for stopping and preventing crime.

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Kerr County Commissioner Precinct 1 Election: term of office is 4 years.

The Kerr County Commissioners Court conducts the general business of the county and consists of the county judge who is elected at-large and four commissioners who are elected by geographical precinct. Each commissioner is typically responsible for building and maintaining county roads and bridges with their precinct.

Duties: adopts the county budget and the county tax rate; approves all budgeted purchases of the county; sets all salaries and benefits for county employees; authorizes all county contracts; provides and maintains all county buildings and facilities; and fills vacancies in elective and appointed county offices.

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1. What experience and knowledge qualifies you to serve as a Kerr County Commissioner for Precinct 1?

Belew: Four years actual experience. Helping craft county budgets. A TAX DECREASE for the upcoming Fiscal Year! Rejecting a COLA pay increase for myself. Working with Kerr County Road & Bridge to resolve numerous road and sign issues, partnering with Kerrville South CAG to obtain a portable lighted message sign to share between CAG and county, working with County Engineering and developers at concept meetings, and helping re-write subdivision rules. I attend HOA and CAG meetings to hear concerns, work out solutions, and give updates on county operations. I'm a former director at Headwaters Conservation District and business owner.

Wert: I have served as an educator and leader for twenty years within public schools across the hill country and nationally via Boys and Girls Clubs of America, For the Love of Children, Mustard Seed, and Volunteers of America, focused on community development. I've been awarded Teacher of the Year in 2013 and ExCEL Award for Teaching Excellence 2014 for leadership and ingenuity. I serve on the Board of Directors for Big Seed, area non-profit serving young adults in the arts. I have my Bachelors in Peace & Justice Studies/Mediation Conflict Resolution, and Masters from Schreiner University in Education Leadership.

2. What is the most pressing issue facing the Kerr County Commissioner Court and what do you hope/plan to do about it?

Belew: Growth means development and jobs. Keeping the county tax rate low encourages residential development and new business growth in Kerr County. Planning includes water availability, environmental impact, infrastructure, roads, flood zoning, subdivision rules, and other related considerations. With the East Kerr Wastewater Project near completion I expect growth in that direction. I'm doing my part to make sure our kids can find good jobs in Kerr County. Growth also means a growing records department. As County Internet Technology Liaison I help with solutions to store protect county vital records. I'm liaison with Kerr County Historical Commission and county 911 Service.

Wert: The Court requires the dedication and commitment of full time service. As a Commissioner I would be proactive with my training and preparation. I would understand a leader's role is to be objective, unifying, and without political bias. If elected I will commit myself as a full time employee of the County, stepping down from my current teaching position. I would actively pursue grant writing offered by the Texas Association of Counties. I will be proactive with my collaboration and communication with both the Court and residents within Precinct 1. I will serve humbly, committed as a servant leader.

3. What are the citizens who live in the Kerr County Precinct 1 telling you about county problems?

Belew: People want dependable Emergency Services, good roads, and low taxes. Those are the three main responsibilities of a County Commissioner. I answer questions about and deal with road repairs, recycling, Animal Control, septic rules, illegal dumping, zoning, Burn Ban, etc... I'm often asked to help with city issues. The worst part of this job is having to tell a taxpayer that I can't help them because their problem is a City of Kerrville issue. Better information availability is helpful. At my insistence Kerr County hired a Public Relations Director to help inform taxpayers of county services and information.

Wert: The greatest concern I hear from neighbors and fellow residents living in Precinct 1, is both budgetary concern and representation. As a Kerr County Commissioner allotted \$62,000.00 annually, I would recognize such an expectation demands full time service. County expenditures should be matched by the equal efforts of our elected officials. Precinct 1 residents have shared time and time again, that their representation and voice within the court should remain professional and welcomed. As Kerr County Commissioner of Precinct 1, I would actively listen, appreciating our varied opinions and backgrounds.

Election Day for 2020 General Election: Tuesday - November 3, 2020 from 7:00am to 7:00pm

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