



Voter Guide: May 2021 Elections for the City of Blanco

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan civic organization and does not support or oppose any candidate or candidates or political party or parties. The League voter guide includes the elections that have at least two or more candidates on the ballot for an office. All responses to questions come directly from the candidates and are not edited by LWV-Hill Country Texas.

Blanco City Council Election for 2 Places: term of office is 2 years.

The election is for two positions on the Blanco City Council: Place 1 and Place 4. The positions are numbered but elected at large. The two candidates with the highest number of votes will be declared as elected. The Blanco City Council has five members who are elected at large. Blanco is a general law (Type A) city with a charter and a city council/mayor form of government.

Duties: appoint the city manager; oversee the city manager and the direction of the city; approve the city budget and the tax rate; set salaries and benefits of city employees; pass ordinances and resolutions; appoint members to advisory boards.

Table with 3 columns: Connie Barron, Andrew Forsberg, Matt Herden. Rows include Email, Phone, and Website.

Table with 2 columns: Keith J. McClellan, Andrew Sorrell. Rows include Email, Phone, and Website.

1. What in your background qualifies you to serve on the Blanco City Council?

Connie Barron: My website, ConnieforBlanco.com, lays out my background and qualifications. Simply put, I get things done. I have the demonstrated ability (developed over 30 years of executive level experience) to analyze a problem, develop alternatives, build a team to develop a reasoned plan of action, and then follow through to accomplish goals. I don't pretend to know a lot of "stuff", but I know a lot of people who know a lot of stuff and I'm not afraid to seek that expert help on behalf of the City. I have the experience, time, and energy to get things done for Blanco.

Andrew Forsberg: Candidate has not yet responded.

Matt Herden: I know I have the background and qualifications to best serve as council person. I have lived in Blanco for more than 36 years. Testimony to my life community service shows as; Detective San Antonio PD (30 years retired) Blanco ISD School Board President, Blanco Lions Club President, Blanco ESD2 Advisory Committee, Blanco Planning and Zoning committee, B.S. Degree Texas State Univ. (SWTSU), San Antonio F&P Health Care Fund Board Secretary / Treasurer for C.L.E.A.T., Gov. Richards Law Enforcement Advisory Committee, Tex. Trans/Econ. Development Advisory Committee, Finance Chair St. Ferdinand church, Keep Blanco Beautiful & Meals on Wheels.

Keith J. McClellan: I married a Blanco girl 27 years ago and have been a permanent resident for 16. I am currently serving a second term on the Blanco City Council. I volunteer at the Blanco Historic Cemetery and write "Mustard Seeds" for the Blanco and Johnson City newspapers. I have been a registered Scouter since boyhood and have served on the Eagle Scout Board of Review for local Troop 497. I am bilingual English/Spanish and have a master's degree from UT Austin. We care for farm animals and operate a Guest House in Blanco. I am a retired high school principal.

Andrew Sorrell: Candidate has not yet responded.



Blanco City Council Election for 2 Places: term of office is 2 years.

2. What is the most pressing issue facing the Blanco City Council and what do you hope/plan to do about it?

Connie Barron: Obviously, water is what should drive virtually every decision made by the Blanco City Council. There are various proposals to buttress our supply of water...Canyon Lake, new wells, new reservoirs, rainwater collection. We need to pursue those. But we also need to make sure that we don't overbuild and overcommit to the extent that we create demand for water that we can't meet. We need to seek expert advice on this and accept development only to the extent that we can support it with reliable sources of water.

Matt Herden: Blanco's recent bout with the record freeze and lack of water is the most pressing issue for the city council. Blanco citizens are demanding to know that there is adequate water for now and future growth. This takes planning. My goal is to create a citizen planning committee for immediate action on the issues of both water and growth. Full transparency to the citizens is vital and Tax payers must have their voice in governing. Blanco needs planning because rapid growth is here. Planning will ensure Blanco will always be a pristine place to live.

Keith J. McClellan: In order to "Keep Blanco Blanco" in the face of projected growth and development, we cannot allow big developers to take over our town. We must control the things we can control and mitigate those things we cannot fully control. To maintain a safe wholesome environment for our families we must provide dependable clean water and reclaim our wastewater with zero discharge into the Blanco River. We must support local law enforcement, protect the night skies, keep our historic town beautiful and safe while encouraging local business owners.

Andrew Forsberg: Candidate has not yet responded.

Andrew Sorrell: Candidate has not yet responded.

3. What are the citizens of Blanco telling you about city problems?

Connie Barron: The people of Blanco are scared and justifiably upset. They are scared about our water supply. They don't want to wake up one morning to find that the faucets have run dry. They are upset about the City's crumbling infrastructure. They are tired of driving over streets full of potholes and want more public parks and sidewalks for our kids. They are scared to death of unplanned development that can destroy Blanco's small-town character and sense of place while stressing our already fragile infrastructure. And they are afraid of higher taxes on those who can least afford it.

Matt Herden: Citizens' concerns range from adequate water, housing, improved streets, growth and how their tax money is being spent. They want to ensure growth matches the character of the community rather than seeing their town turned into "Anywhere USA". Citizens want to be actively involved in determining how the changes will affect them. Residents understand the need for new business and housing and want to ensure new development happens on locally defined terms. Preserving Blanco's heritage in the midst of change is vital to all of her citizens.

Keith J. McClellan: The Citizens of Blanco want to be more informed about the decisions being made by local officials. The pandemic has made attendance at meetings difficult if not impossible for many. They are rightly concerned that our City will be forever impacted by uncontrolled growth. They want to know what is happening and to be included in the decision-making process. They would also appreciate occasionally having a pothole filled.

Andrew Forsberg: Candidate has not yet responded.

Andrew Sorrell: Candidate has not yet responded.

Compare candidates online: www.VOTE411.org

Website sponsored by the League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas: nonpartisan and nonprofit.



City of Blanco - Mayor: term of office - 2 years.

Blanco is a general law city (Type A) with a city council/mayor form of government. The mayor serves as the presiding officer for a city council with five members.

Duties: presides over the meetings of the city council; recognized as the head of city government for all ceremonial purposes; acts as the chief executive officer of the city; ensures that the laws and ordinances of the city are properly carried out; monitors the conduct of each subordinate municipal officer; informs the city council and recommends any measure that relates to improving the finances, police, health, security, cleanliness, comfort, ornament, or good government of the city; charged with emergency powers to preserve the peace and good order of the city.

Table with 2 columns: Rachel Lumpee and Pastor Phil Thompson. Rows include Email, Phone, and Website for both candidates.

1. What in your background qualifies you to serve as Mayor for the City of Blanco?

Rachel Lumpee: I graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Human Resources Development with minors in English and Business. I sit on the Planning and Zoning commission and serve as the secretary. I am a reporter for the Blanco County News and have attended virtually every County Commissioners, P&Z, KBB, CoAPT meeting since 2018, and City Council meetings since 2019. Because I have attended these meetings, I have a thorough, detailed knowledge of the issues facing the city. I serve as Keep Blanco Beautiful's PR Chair and secretary; I have a lot of experience in grant writing.

Pastor Phil Thompson: I believe starting a new ministry in Blanco and serving as pastor 20-plus years is a great qualification for serving as the Mayor of Blanco. Speaking for myself, I believe every pastor in our City pastors the whole City, not just our congregations. In addition, 17 years in the automobile industry most of the time as a Finance Director in two of the largest dealerships in San Antonio, Texas. Finance Directors are entrusted to generate great wealth for their employer. I believe creative wealth generation is a great need of Blanco City's Government.

2. What is the most pressing issue facing the Mayor of Blanco and what do you hope/plan to do about it?

Rachel Lumpee: Transparency is a big issue. Citizens need to have easy access to public records. There are only a few ordinances available on the city's website currently; those that are posed might not necessarily be up to date either. I will help get all the files onto the city's website so the public can access them easily. For meetings, I will have additional information available posted for the public. I will have articles frequently in the paper dedicated to informing the public of the latest information. As Mayor, I will strive to keep everyone informed.

Pastor Phil Thompson: To bring Blanco's infrastructure into the 21st century. As revealed in the "Freeze of 2021" our water infrastructure is of primary importance. The water plan consists of the restoration of Blanco River surface water, continuing Canyon Lake surface water, and our Long-Term Reserve Water, which consists of a mix of both surface and well water. Transparent lines of communication are needed with the residents of Blanco, e.g., Blanco has a modernized and fully functional wastewater treatment plant. Blanco no longer discharges into the Blanco River; that ended in October 2019. The City dumping wastewater into the River is fake news



City of Blanco - Mayor: term of office - 2 years.

3. What are the citizens of Blanco telling you about city problems?

Rachel Lumpee: Communication and transparency from the city to the citizens is desired. People want to know what is going on around town and have the right to know what is happening as tax paying citizens. Maintaining the small-town charm is important to many of our citizens and it's important to consider their input; "keep Blanco, Blanco." Concerns about upcoming growth, water availability, and the roads have also been relayed. We must prepare for the future now.

Pastor Phil Thompson: Most responses mentioned water quality and availability as an important issue, particularly in relation to growth and drought conditions in the region. Improving water and wastewater infrastructure is a high priority for many in our city. As well, there is a concern with wastewater and the safety of the Blanco River. Controlling growth to keep the small-town atmosphere was another priority. At the same time attracting business who will provide career opportunities with benefits for our next generation. Affordable housing for seniors and those starting out are another concern of our citizens.

Voting Information for the City of Blanco Elections

Take a photo ID with you to the voting location. Curbside voting available.

EARLY VOTING: City Hall for the City of Blanco at 300 Pecan Street in Blanco

Note: Extended hours on Tuesday, April 20 and Thursday, April 22

Table with 7 columns (Sunday to Saturday) and 2 rows of voting hours for April 18-24 and April 25-May 1.

ELECTION DAY: SATURDAY, MAY 1 from 7:00am to 7:00pm

Location: Byars Building - City of Blanco 308 Pecan Street Blanco

Dates to Remember for the 2021 Election

- Last day to register to vote: Thursday, April 1
Last day to update voter registration: Thursday, April 1
First day of Early Voting (in-person): Monday, April 19
Last day to apply to vote by mail: Tuesday, April 20
Last Day of Early Voting: Tuesday, April 27
Last day to return mail-in ballot: Saturday, May 1
Election Day: Saturday, May 1

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