

## 2019 Primary Voters Guide Long Form

Candidates responses were evaluated based whether they showed a specific knowledge about issues of structural racism in our community, a clear interest in combating these structures, and self-awareness of the candidate's own positionality with regard to race and privilege. These assessments are provided to voters for informational purposes. Below are the value statements we used to determine our grades. A group of Core Council and at large BLM members judged candidates platforms, experience, and questionnaire answers, to determine if they "Strongly agreed," "Agreed," "Disagreed," "Strongly disagreed," or were "Neutral" about whether the candidates exemplified the following statements:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE		NEUTRAL			STRONGLY AGREE		N/A
<b>Awareness:</b> The candidate understood the question's point and demonstrated familiarity with the relevant issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Position:</b> Overall, the candidate supports positions are consistent with BLM Bloomington and support BLM Bloomington's political goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Vision:</b> The candidate is open to reimagining the world and demonstrates vision and imagination that could lead to genuine transformative justice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Voices at the Table:</b> The candidate values Black leadership and will make it a priority to invite Black people and other marginalized community members into discussions and decision-making processes in ways that make those voices have deep impact.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Commitment and Effectiveness:</b> The candidate clearly expresses the need to advance racial justice around the relevant issue, offers clear and well-thought-out plans of action that seem practical and useful, and plausibly has or can develop the political competency to bring about change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Passion and Comportment:</b> The candidate is woke and is direct about racial justice being a central issue. For instance, the candidate will name white supremacy and acknowledge that the status quo for white liberals is racist, and does NOT view Bloomington as exceptional when it comes to racial injustice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Andy Ruff, City Council At-Large

Ruff's answers were often short, not giving us great insight into his views on the issues. For instance, on affordable housing, he claims to support current programs, which seems to imply that he thinks current approaches to housing are working. On privilege, there wasn't a lot of attention to how privilege has shaped Ruff's own life or political career but also no mention of how to overcome that or use it to lift others. Ruff seems to indicate that implicit bias training or de-escalation is enough to solve the problems created by militarization of the police, and that the City of Bloomington took enough steps to ensure that the Lenco BearCat would not contribute to these problems. BLM wholeheartedly disagrees with those positions given rates of arrest for people of color and that only other police entities or police approved entities are doing their training/de-escalation programs.

**Awareness:** Disagree  
**Position:** Disagree  
**Vision:** Disagree  
**Voices at the Table:** Neutral  
**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral  
**Passion & Compartment:** Neutral  
**Overall:** Disagree

### Chris Sturbaum, City Council District 1

We felt that there was not enough engagement with the questions, and the responses did not allow us to fully gauge the respondent's awareness. On housing, BLM Bloomington believes that a multi-pronged approach should be taken to the housing affordability and availability crisis, including density housing. Sturbaum proposes mainly single family housing as the way to maintain neighborhood communities. These type of policies often lead to gentrification and community gatekeeping. On schools as replacements for prisons, the kind of discipline Sturbaum describes is too similar in structure and conception from how conformity is enforced in prison, and it would not be the kind of departure from the current system that BLM envisions. He is not in favor of a 311 disconnected to the police even given the dangers involving the police has for black people and people of color.

**Awareness:** Disagree  
**Position:** Disagree  
**Vision:** Disagree  
**Voices at the Table:** Disagree  
**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral  
**Passion & Compartment:** Neutral  
**Overall:** Disagree

### Daniel Bingham, City Council District 2

Answers demonstrated awareness on a range of issues BLM cares about, including a diversity of approaches to housing problems, his critique of the military vehicle the BPD purchased last year, and restorative justice. We were especially in agreement with his view that Judge Mayor Diekhoff and Chief Mike Diekhoff's positions in government raise concerns with conflicts of interest. We also thought his proposal to turn City Council position into full time positions was thought-provoking and unique. We'd like to hear more about his vision, particularly of the future, which question seven was designed to elicit, and how he would bring voices to the table.

**Awareness:** Agree  
**Position:** Agree  
**Vision:** Agree  
**Voices at the Table:** Neutral  
**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral  
**Passion & Compartment:** Agree  
**Overall:** Agree

## David Rollo, City Council District 4

We appreciated that he supports affordable housing, housing density options, and appreciates the seriousness of false reporting, appreciating why such reports might constitute a hate crime. We wonder why Rollo didn't speak up to criticize the expenditure on a militarized vehicle, given the harmful effects of police militarization on the public. The response to question seven implies that prisons are necessary for people with psychiatric conditions (psychopaths), whereas we would rather see fewer mentally ill people in prison and more research and resources put into mental health care. We felt that there was not enough engagement with the questions, and the responses did not allow us to fully gauge the respondent's awareness.

**Awareness:** Agree

**Position:** Neutral

**Vision:** Neutral

**Voices at the Table:** Neutral

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Neutral

## Denise Valkyrie, City Council District 1

We couldn't gauge her knowledge of density housing, particularly of the differences between how a largely rural community might differ from that of an urban community. The answers acknowledge the school to prison pipeline, but we're not sure of her vision for addressing this problem. She doesn't discuss her race as part of her privilege, and she lacked detail in responding to the policy questions in particular the one about "strong mayors". We were pleased that she opposes the BearCat, and is open to a 311 number. Overall, we felt the answers revealed good intentions, but they were not fully knowledgeable about the topics. The "Disagrees" registered below reflected our feeling of her lack of understanding of questions rather than an assessment of the candidates particular views as we couldn't ascertain them.

**Awareness:** Disagree

**Position:** Neutral

**Vision:** Neutral

**Voices at the Table:** Neutral

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Neutral

## Dorothy Granger, City Council District 2

The answers clearly suggested awareness of privilege and systemic racism. We would prefer she was supportive of density housing as a solution for our community, and that she understood that white shirt officers are not the same kind of solution as our proposed 311 system. She claims to have met with BLM members about the BearCat, but that is a false statement; members of our organization approached her as she was fleeing a City Council meeting about the militarized vehicle that BLM disrupted due to bad behavior on the part of fellow Council members. She also had to leave a scheduled meeting with BLM members 15 min into it and did not follow up afterward. At the same time, we do appreciate that she co-authored the legislation

that requires expenditures for more than \$100,000 to go through a public approval process by City Council.

**Awareness:** Disagree

**Position:** Neutral

**Vision:** Neutral

**Voices at the Table:** Disagree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Disagree

**Passion & Compartment:** Neutral

**Overall:** Neutral

### Isabel Piedmont-Smith, City Council District 5

Piedmont-Smith's answers suggested that she was informed about many important issues. We like that she supports density housing and believes the hospital area should be used for affordable housing; that she is aware of discrimination in schools; and that she led the charge on the legislation that ensures the Mayor's office must go through a public process for approval for purchases over \$100,000. Also, we appreciate Piedmont-Smith's dedication to the office; she is the only City Council member who holds public meetings. She also met with BLM consistently about the militarized vehicle. Overall the answers to her questions were thoughtful and thorough.

**Awareness:** Strongly agree

**Position:** Agree

**Vision:** Agree

**Voices at the Table:** Agree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Agree

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Agree

### Jean Capler, City Council At-Large

On the whole, these answers demonstrated deep engagement with a range of issues. We thought she had particularly good responses to the questions about prisons, schools, and housing, as well as an unique background that will make her a helpful voice on issues we care about. Her work with traumatic brain injuries gives her an interesting perspective on issues of social justice, such as the intersection of mental health and policing. The response to privilege was particularly nuanced, and provided a very clear overall picture of the time she has dedicated to the topic.

**Awareness:** Strongly Agree

**Position:** Strongly Agree

**Vision:** Agree

**Voices at the Table:** Agree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Agree

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Agree

### Kate Rosenbarger, City Council District 1

We concurred with much in her answers to the questions about housing and school. We would like a stronger response on the privilege question, and to hear more about the 311 question fully, though she does acknowledge the importance of having an alternative number. Beyond the questionnaire, she has also been eager to meet with BLM to discuss our concerns about and hopes for the community.

**Awareness:** Agree

**Position:** Agree

**Vision:** Agree

**Voices at the Table:** Neutral

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Agree

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Agree

### Matt Flaherty, City Council At-Large

Flaherty stood out for being clear that he wants to lead through data-driven policies, which BLM wholly supports. We believe that a lack of attention to the data on and studies of the issues most important to us such as police brutality holds back good policy. We also appreciated his opposition to the process through which the militarized vehicle was purchased and his willingness to acknowledge the discomfort and fear some individuals might feel contacting the police.

**Awareness:** Agree

**Position:** Agree

**Vision:** Agree

**Voices at the Table:** Neutral

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Agree

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Agree

### Miah Michaelson, City Council District 4

Overall, we found it hard to fully ascertain where this candidate stood on certain issues. For instance, we were not sure about her position on the current housing debate around density, nor if she fully understood what we were asking about with the question about the Mayor's Office. We didn't feel the answers suggested enough awareness of the concerns about militarization, nor a clear opposition militarization. They seem to suggest regulation instead. We were unclear about her position on prisons, and whether that her answer was implying a pro or anti-welfare stance.

**Awareness:** Disagree

**Position:** Neutral

**Vision:** Disagree

**Voices at the Table:** Disagree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral

**Passion & Compartment:** Neutral

**Overall:** Neutral

### Nicole Bolden, City Clerk Candidate

We especially noted the candidate's awareness of discrimination at local schools, which was more personal than some of the other candidates. We appreciate the support for the 311 number, as well as her recognition of how important it would have been to include more people of color in the BearCat conversation. Finally, we note that Bolden has been an outstanding public servant in her capacity as City Clerk, and that she had already broken boundaries in her initial election by becoming the first black City Clerk in Bloomington. We look forward to hearing more from Bolden in her political career.

**Awareness:** Strongly agree

**Position:** Agree

**Vision:** Agree

**Voices at the Table:** Strongly agree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Agree

**Passion & Compartment:** Strongly agree

**Overall:** Strongly agree

### Ron Smith, City Council District 3

A lot of the answers touched directly on some important issues such problems with the militarized vehicle and the existence of a school to prison pipeline. We felt that there was not enough engagement with the questions, and the responses did not allow us to fully gauge the respondent's position and vision. He did specifically call the militarization of our police force frightening and was glad the council implemented rules to safeguard against such purchases in the future. He called for a community group to assess fraudulent calls to the police as hate crimes which is an interesting example of putting these issues into the hands of the community.

**Awareness:** Agree

**Position:** Neutral

**Vision:** Neutral

**Voices at the Table:** Neutral

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral

**Passion & Compartment:** Neutral

**Overall:** Neutral

### John Hamilton, Mayoral Candidate

The Mayor's Office, and much of the public, is well aware of the disagreements BLM has had in the past about choices like the purchase of the militarized vehicle and the website that displayed the personal information of victims of the opioid crisis. We were disappointed that the Mayor did not use this opportunity to engage with us on any of those fronts. We were open to hearing how he might have learned from any of these experiences, whether he would still make the same choices today, or further information about his views at the time these decisions were made. However, we were not especially impressed with the overall implication that the Mayor feels his work has been satisfactory and he would like to continue along the same lines. Also, we hoped the seated Mayor would have more in depth information about discrimination in our schools, and we invite him to reach out to former School Board candidate Byron Turner for more about this

issue. Again, we wish the Mayor shared our concerns about police militarization both anecdotally from people of color and those that are based on empirical observation and data. At the same time we feel the mayor is trying to address affordable housing, that he is attempting to learn and acknowledge his privilege and bring diverse voices to the table. We just wish he would also bring dissenting diverse voices to the table.

**Awareness:** Neutral

**Position:** Neutral

**Vision:** Neutral

**Voices at the Table:** Agree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Neutral

**Passion & Compartment:** Neutral

**Overall:** Neutral

### **Jim Sims, City Council AT Large**

Being only the second black councilperson to serve Sims has been an advocate voice for Black people on the city council. He has a great grasp of what black people face in the community and in the policy making and political sphere. His experiences personally as well as his time working as the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Black focusing on other forms of discipline for students that focuses on completion of academic work rather than loss of work time. We only wish that Sims had a better vision of a world without prisons. Overall we can see Sims has been an outstanding public servant.

**Awareness:** Agree

**Position:** Agree

**Vision:** Neutral

**Voices at the Table:** Agree

**Commitment & Effectiveness:** Agree

**Passion & Compartment:** Agree

**Overall:** Agree

## **Statements on non-participating candidates**

### **Did Not Reply:**

The candidates below chose not to reply to BLM's questionnaire. We feel this shows not only a lack of respect for our organization, but also to the people we represent. Not just black people living, working and voting in Bloomington but other People of Color and anyone who believes that Black Lives Matter. Our mission to enhance and safeguard the lives of black people in Bloomington is an intersectional one, and we are taking care of the whole community we take care of the most marginalized. Why should these candidates engage? Because they are beholden to the community and the voters. Black people are a key part of this community and voting base. Many will say timing and scheduling are a part of their problem for not responding, but we think that if candidates cannot complete these types of questionnaires how will they respond to the serve the office the wish to occupy and meet the needs of their constituents. Those Candidates are: Sue Sgambelluri, Ryan Maloney, Steve Volen and Susan Sandberg.

### **Vauhxx Booker, City Council At-Large**

Vauhxx Booker is a former member of Black Lives Matter B-Town. Earlier this year, Booker was removed from the organization for violating internal agreements relating to his candidacy. Mr. Booker choose not to respond to this primary candidate questionnaire, stating: "I'm concerned about participating at this time. I'm not sure that I'll be afforded any fair measure of impartiality." As with any other candidate, BLM B-Town takes Booker's decision not to engage with these questions about the state of Bloomington as a commentary on his commitment to addressing and solving these important issues in our community.

We further note that several BLM B-Town members and other Bloomington community members (mostly women and trans folks) have made credible accusations of mental and emotional abuse by Booker. These actions are absolutely counter to BLM's mission, guiding principles, and internal agreements. During his time with the organization BLM B-Town's members did attempt to use restorative justice with Booker and found him combative and unresponsive to the process.

We urge Mr. Booker to seek help to understand his wrongdoing and come to restorative justice with those he has harmed and the larger community. To do so involves an admission of wrongdoing, a willingness to be vulnerable and a commitment to making amends. We believe that restorative justice can be an amazing way forward for Mr. Booker and those he has wronged.

To read our full reboot and removal statement go here:

<https://blm.btown-in.org/blm-b-town-blog/black-live-matter-bloomington-rebooting-with-new-core-council> Update: Ultimately the candidate decided to turn in his answers, you can view them with the other candidates answers

### **Amanda Barge, former Mayoral Candidate:**

After the news broke about Ms. Barge's sexual harassment of Mr. Brandon Drake BLM B-town was the first social justice organization in Bloomington to call for her to end her campaign, resign from her commissioner's position and to engage in restorative justice with Mr. Drake and with the community. While Ms. Barge did end her campaign and resign, she has yet to engage in restorative justice. We once again implore her to do so, along with any of her supporters who've engaged in online attacks of Mr. Drake, BLM and anyone supporting victims of harassment.

Restorative Justice involves an admission of wrongdoing, and a willingness to be vulnerable and a commitment to making amends. We believe that restorative justice can be a powerful way forward for both Ms. Barge & Mr. Drake, but also for our community that has been hurt by this scandal. If we are to have more transparent politicians who are accountable to the community they serve, then when these issues come up they should steer into the conversation keeping restorative justice and its components in mind. Ms. Barge remains on the ballot though she had said she wouldn't accept if she won. We hope to keep her to her word as well as continue to ask for her to come to the table to work towards restorative justice.