



**VOTER GUIDE
ALLEN CITY COUNCIL
Spring, 2019**

**ALLEN
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL
MAY 4, 2019**

Place 4

Melanie Hughes

Chris Schulmeister

Place 6

Jon Toney

Baine Brooks

GALA North Texas has prepared information for Candidate Forums by obtaining information from candidate websites, Facebook campaign and personal pages, press releases and news articles. GALA North Texas has used its best effort to ensure the accuracy of all information. For information about this document or to report an error or request a change, contact dawna@galanorthtexas.org.

PLACE 4

MELANIE HUGHES



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Background: I hope to be a voice for all of Allen, but in particular to provide transparent and accountable representation which, in my opinion, has been lacking. I feel strongly that city councils are most effective when they are made up of members from different life paths who possess varied perspectives, along with an accurate and representative mix of our current demographics. My diverse personal experiences of living in low, middle and high socio-economic statuses have given me a unique perspective on life's struggles and joys as they relate to a wide breadth of people and circumstances. Working as an educator and social worker allowed me to strengthen my advocacy skills, which are critical in representing the will of the people. Having lived overseas and as a newer resident, I bring fresh ideas and experiences while still being well-acquainted with Allen's history since my family started living here in the mid-1990s.

Education: The University of Texas at Austin, Bachelor of Science in Applied Learning and Development, 1998

Occupation: Stay at Home Mom/PTA President

Highlights of civic involvement/accomplishment:

- Current President of the Allen Early Childhood PTA, which serves children 0-5 and their caregivers across Collin County
- Through the AECPTA, has been involved with community outreach programs for Mustang Creek Senior Living, Assistance Center of Collin County, Plano Santas, Rest Eazy Organization, and Allen Community Outreach food pantry
- Volunteer at Heart for the Fatherless Foster/Adoptive Resource Closet
- Spearheaded the collection of over 400 books by our members in partnership with Rountree Elementary to be distributed to their pre-K, PPCD and struggling readers in lower grades for their own home libraries
- Room mom at Vaughan Elementary
- Texas PTA Honorary Life Membership Award (later this year)
- From 2015 until 2018, was involved with MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) at FBC Allen, serving as a care group leader and working on various charitable projects through the organization

Platform:

ENHANCED COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY - Why Is It So Hard To Be Heard?

I am truly passionate about this issue, as two-way communication impacts how citizens can be heard and involved in decision making. We must make it easier for Allen residents to get in touch and track response time from their city council members.

With a collective council email, residents would be able to contact all six council members and the mayor simultaneously with their concerns or requests. The mayor or mayor pro-tem could respond with relevant answers or forward it to the appropriate department, and all other council members would receive a copy along with updates.

I aim to increase citizen input and council feedback, in order to correct the balance of power. Allen City Council is here to serve you and should be easily available to take your input seriously and respond before making decisions for the future of Allen!



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MELANIE HUGHES

Platform – Continued

AFFORDABILITY IN ALLEN - Shouldn't Allen Be Affordable?

We must ensure the quality of life for all Allen residents and workers, especially those who serve to protect us. We need to take steps to guarantee the men and women in our police and fire departments find Allen affordable.

What can benefit one directly, can benefit all indirectly. Not only are our finest finding housing expensive, but there are several older neighborhoods which are at risk of overdevelopment and pricing their current owners and renters out of residency. If my husband and I were purchasing our home today, we probably wouldn't be able to buy it. Residents over 65, daunted by keeping up with rising property taxes, need to also be prioritized.

We must continually look for ways to keep Allen affordable for all. Citizen input should be a top priority for Allen City Council in regards to development and affordability.

As Allen continues to grow as a city, we need to protect our quality of life; taking careful consideration of the direction in which we, as residents, want to proceed.

FAMILY FOCUS - Diverse Families, Distinct Needs

Families come in every shape and size in Allen and we need to take steps to protect the quality of life for everyone. As a mom of small children, I would love to see more public bathroom facilities and gated playgrounds at our phenomenal parks; so many families could increase their enjoyment at a greater number of them and for longer! However, given the summer heat of Texas and skin safety concerns, my first priority would be to advocate for faster implementation of large shade structures at all our parks without natural shade trees.

I also would love to start a mobile library which could reach out to homebound residents, young families who struggle to get out of the house with babies in tow, and older residents who might not feel secure driving across town to the library. Stocked not only with books, DVDs, and CDS but also age appropriate STEAM kits and toys; this mobile library could benefit many in this day and age where we order direct to our door!

Another concern for all families is Allen's current practice of notifying neighbors within 200 feet of a planning and zoning change, per state law. It is my belief we could send certified letters to those within that proximity as the law requires, while also notifying other neighbors and/or HOAs to inform them of potential changes via email.

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MELANIE HUGHES

What would you, as a City Council Member, do to educate yourself about the diverse community you serve, including the LGBTQ community? Do you consider it a priority to ensure that city employees receive diversity training which includes information regarding the LGBTQ community?

Ongoing participation in events and awareness education alongside bidirectional communication with members of the LGBTQ community would be my main resources for educating myself.

Religious Refusal bills allow businesses to deny service to the LGBTQ community. Would you, as a City Council Member, fight to ensure that LGBTQ constituents are treated equally by businesses in our city? If so, how would you accomplish this? If not, please explain your reasoning?

Yes; my entire professional life has been dedicated to advocating for the underrepresented. I would first work to garner support to introduce protecting the rights for LGBTQ and other disparaged constituents to be treated equally by businesses in our city as an agenda item. If successful, I would continue to push for a non-discrimination city ordinance to protect all constituents who feel vulnerable to prejudice.

Currently there is no state or federal law that protects LGBTQ individuals in regard to employment. How will you assure City hiring, firing and promotions will be conducted without regard to sexual orientation and gender identity?

As a city council member, I would encourage the city manager to conduct all HR matters without regard to sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Unfortunately, I believe any more action is out of the current city council members' purview without our ability to pass a non-discrimination ordinance.

With the influx of new companies into North Texas, our city continues to become more diverse. Describe how you would work to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and increasingly diverse.

I feel the strongest impact I can make on an environment is to model the behavior I seek from others. I would continue to be welcoming and inclusive while promoting diversity as a city strength. Fear of the unknown often creates prejudice. Educational vlogs can be made to showcase differences while simultaneously revealing our commonalities.

In 2014 the City of Plano amended their Non-Discrimination policy to include sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran's status and genetic information. In the state legislature there is some movement to nullify this ordinance along with other issues such as paid sick leave passed at the local level. Do you believe in Local Control? Why or why not?

Yes, I believe in Local Control; especially with a state legislature veering so far from where most voters envision the future of Texas. It is important to establish a city's reputation so citizens have options as to where they would like to live and/or raise a family. If the state mandated city ordinances, then cities would lose their individuality and citizens would be deprived of choice.

Why should members of the LGBT community support your candidacy?

Having family members and friends who are a part of the LGBTQ community compelled me to grow and change my viewpoints throughout my life. I am committed to continual education and engagement with constituents to ensure I am aware of needs as they arise and working to a palatable compromise on difficult goals.

PLACE 4

CHRIS SCHULMEISTER



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Background: As a long time resident and community volunteer in Allen, I would be honored to serve on the Allen City Council. It is critical that we wisely manage our pace of growth and enhance the quality of life that Allen residents cherish. While managing this growth, we need to continue to revitalize some of the maturing areas within our City.

Education: BBA, University of North Texas
 MBA, Southern Methodist University

Occupation: Self Employed - Principal, SMB Financial Advisers

Highlights of civic involvement/accomplishment:

- Allen Sunrise Rotary Club – Member since 2011, Past President
- First United Methodist Church of Allen, Member -- Serve on Finance Committee
- Martin Luther King Celebration Service, Steering Committee Member and Chair
- City of Allen Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), Board of Directors (2016 – 2019)
- City of Allen Community Development Corporation (CDC), Board of Directors (2011 – 2016)
- City of Allen Capital Improvement Program and Bond Election, Chair of Finance Sub-Committee (2015)
- Chair of Finance, First United Methodist Church of Allen (2006 – 2008) (2011 – 2014)
- Allen Community Outreach, Board of Directors (2011 – 2017), Board President (2016-2017)
- Vice President and President, AHS Baseball "Homerun" Booster Club (2007-2008)

Platform:

VISION: Allen is a City where deep roots are valued and prudent growth is welcomed. The pace and type of growth in this last phase of build-out must be managed wisely while revitalizing maturing areas within the City.

VALUES: Chris understands that effective decision-making does not occur in a vacuum. He can be trusted to listen to the voices of all points of view and combine that input with his years of experience as a resident, a businessman and a community volunteer to inform his decisions. Rather than approach each issue with a predetermined agenda, Chris listens and learns before he acts.

OPORTUNITIES:

Comprehensive Development Review – Ensure there is a thorough review process prior to approval of new developments with appropriate citizen engagement.

Positive Culture – Work actively to create and support a culture and environment that embraces the diversity and values of our residents.

Enhance Quality of Life – Expand options for all ages with a focus on parks and recreation, and support for partnerships with education, community, and civic organizations.



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CHRIS SCHULMEISTER

What would you, as a City Council Member, do to educate yourself about the diverse community you serve, including the LGBTQ community? Do you consider it a priority to ensure that city employees receive diversity training which includes information regarding the LGBTQ community?

I believe the growing diversity in our community is something that makes our City special. Allen is a City of inclusiveness and it is demonstrated at City events that we have throughout the year.

It is very important to ensure City employees receive the appropriate level of diversity training and the City does provide a variety of training programs to City Staff.

I have had the good fortune to serve on the Steering Committee of the Collin County MLK Appreciation Day service over the last two years. I worked alongside a diverse group of people on this committee. I learned of the struggles so many have experienced over the course of their lives. It has made me smarter about discrimination and how best to advocate for all of those that are discriminated against regardless of the reason. By the way, the MLK Appreciation Day service is a great day in our Community as we all come together, regardless of our differences, and celebrate the life and legacy of a great man.

Religious Refusal bills allow businesses to deny service to the LGBTQ community. Would you, as a City Council Member, fight to ensure that LGBTQ constituents are treated equally by businesses in our city? If so, how would you accomplish this? If not, please explain your reasoning?

We are a City that is welcoming to all and it would be surprising to learn of this happening in Allen. If it were to occur in Allen during my time on the City Council, I would make every effort to find a lawful remedy that includes equal treatment for all.

Currently there is no state or federal law that protects LGBTQ individuals in regard to employment. How will you assure City hiring, firing and promotions will be conducted without regard to sexual orientation and gender identity?

The City of Allen provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetics. The City of Allen complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the company has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training. The City of Allen expressly prohibits any form of workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of the City of Allen's employees to perform their job duties may result in discipline up to and including termination.

With the influx of new companies into North Texas, our city continues to become more diverse. Describe how you would work to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and increasingly diverse.

The City of Allen works to promote inclusiveness. This includes the creation of 900 annual library programs for all ages, interests and cultures. It included community engagement programs such as Chinese and Ramadan Story Times.

To continue to create and foster an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, I would look for opportunities to partner with the different businesses and civic organizations in our City. The intent would be to develop awareness as well as educational programs that residents can attend, much like what is provided at the library. I have also learned from my work at church that so much can be done when our churches share our faiths with one another and we as a Church demonstrate inclusiveness.

In 2014 the City of Plano amended their Non-Discrimination policy to include sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran's status and genetic information. In the state legislature there is some movement to nullify this ordinance along with other issues such as paid sick leave passed at the local level. Do you believe in Local Control? Why or why not?

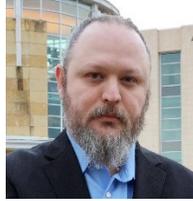
I do believe in local control. Not only related to this issue, but all issues. No one can better serve the City in which they live than those that actually live in the City.

Why should members of the LGBT community support your candidacy?

My friend and business partner is an openly gay man. We have been friends since 1984. When he told me he was gay, our relationship did not change. Regardless of his sexual orientation, I did not view him as anyone other than a guy that has been my trusted friend for about 35 years. We have gone through many ebbs and flows in life, both personally and business wise, but our friendship has never wavered. I don't judge people by their sexual orientation.

PLACE 6

JON TONEY



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Background: This is the most important local election in recent memory. Elections are performance reviews for our representatives and our representatives have failed to put our residents first. Too many times in recent memory we've seen the city council vote against the wishes of residents and even the city officials. We need more transparency. We need more accountability. We need a philosophical shift.

The current council is not giving citizens a voice. It isn't listening. Term Limits are on the ballot this year, in addition to the two city council seats and ISD board seats. While term limits is a good start, without a clear mandate that the residents deserve a greater voice in how their city is run - ultimately they will feel secure in their jobs and continue to ignore the will of the people. Residents should vote for me to start the philosophical shift towards a more proactive, resident-focused, open government.

Education: -

Occupation: Database Application Consultant

Highlights of civic involvement/accomplishment:

- Co-organized/Planned three free annual international music festivals with guests and performers from all over the world.
- Volunteered for a multitude of cultural interchange organizations and events including but not limited to: the Japan America Society of DFW, Celebrating Asian American Heritage Foundation, Allen Earthfest, US Ocarina Association, and the USA-Japan Friendship Concert.

Platform:

GROWTH - Allen is awesome. Businesses know this and want to leverage our amazing city for profit and as a home. The council needs to work harder to ensure that citizens are a part of the entire process. Residents are the ultimate stakeholders and Allen is such a great city, we should negotiate from our position of strength. We must manage new developments wisely and ensure that citizens are notified and engaged at every stage of development. We must apply a CITIZENS FIRST philosophy to the entire process. The ongoing Cricket Stadium fiasco is precisely the kind of thing we need to work to avoid in the future.

ACCOUNTABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY - Council member votes need to be easily searchable. We must endeavor to allow our citizens to become more informed. Citizens should not be expected to parse through the minutes of a multitude of meetings to get a picture of what their representatives are doing. Working people often don't have time to go to every council and board meeting and depend on representatives to represent their interest. Without mechanisms in place to verify that, it is extremely difficult for voters to make a fully informed decision. There's no reason why a city our size can't improve transparency. The Council works for the citizens of Allen.

PRAGMATIC SPENDING - We must be pragmatic in our approach to spending. We cannot let the appearance of fiscal responsibility become a replacement for the real thing. The Police and Fire Departments experience turnover because we aren't paying competitive wages. This means we need to train new officers and the community is losing great people who are familiar with our community and invested in its success. It makes no sense to lose our best because we lag behind neighboring cities in pay. Ultimately it costs more money to replace than to retain.



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JON TONEY

Platform - Continued

MODERNIZATION - As the technology we use changes and evolves, our city needs to evolve with it. Recently I contacted the Allen Police Department to ask about an opt-in resident camera database police could leverage in fighting crime. Other cities in north Texas have successful programs already in place. We must continue to leverage new technologies as they come available and ensure that we have a city-wide culture of integrating our technology, our citizens, and our services in a unified platform.

CULTURAL INTERCHANGE - Allen isn't just a great north Texas city. It isn't just a great Texas city or American city. It's a world class city. So let's strengthen our ties with other communities around the world. Let's establish sister cities. Let's bring people in from all over the world and let's send our exceptional young people to those places too. The world is a big place and through strategic partnerships with cities around the world, we can expand our horizons and bring the world closer. I'd like to start an ambitious cultural interchange agreement with at least specific cities in Italy, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.

What would you, as a City Council Member, do to educate yourself about the diverse community you serve, including the LGBTQ community? Do you consider it a priority to ensure that city employees receive diversity training which includes information regarding the LGBTQ community?

I would work with advocacy organizations as an ally to ensure that we, in action, have a culture of diversity and acceptance. This, of course includes LGBTQ+ individuals.

Religious Refusal bills allow businesses to deny service to the LGBTQ community. Would you, as a City Council Member, fight to ensure that LGBTQ constituents are treated equally by businesses in our city? If so, how would you accomplish this? If not, please explain your reasoning?

Yes. I would vote against any ordinance that allows or supports discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals/businesses/organizations purely on that basis.

Currently there is no state or federal law that protects LGBTQ individuals in regard to employment. How will you assure City hiring, firing and promotions will be conducted without regard to sexual orientation and gender identity?

I will listen to LGBTQ+ leaders regarding successes elsewhere in the country to protect LGBTQ+ as well support data driven approaches (meritocracy and collective improvement via diversity).

With the influx of new companies into North Texas, our city continues to become more diverse. Describe how you would work to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and increasingly diverse.

I believe cultural interchange is integral for the betterment of society and will push for an active pursuit of more cultural interchange events in the city. Additionally, I hope to complete a very ambitious multi-city "sister city" project with cities in Italy, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. Ultimately, we have to encourage and support our cultural diversity through education and sharing.

In 2014 the City of Plano amended their Non-Discrimination policy to include sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran's status and genetic information. In the state legislature there is some movement to nullify this ordinance along with other issues such as paid sick leave passed at the local level. Do you believe in Local Control? Why or why not?

Fundamentally, authority must justify itself. If the broader (state) authority is unjust, then the local authority has the right and responsibility to address it. While we can argue over what is just and what isn't - ultimately if the broader authority will not protect the rights of its residents/citizens, then it is up to the local authority.

Why should members of the LGBT community support your candidacy?

I will support any updates to city policy/law that provides protections for the LGBTQ+ workers. I will support updates to clarify our hiring practices to include diversity protections/actions for LGBTQ candidates. I will support updates for general protections for LGBTQ citizens. I will be an ally and advocate and someone who will listen. I understand that my above answers probably have blind spots. I'll depend on you to help me with those and to teach me to be a better ally and elected representative. Also, you should support me because I need the support. Every vote counts. Every volunteer counts. Every contribution counts.

PLACE 6

BAINE BROOKS



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Facebook: Councilman Baine Brooks

Background: I am running for Allen City Council Place #6 because first and foremost, I am a public servant. I would like to maintain the high quality of life style that Allen residents are accustom to having. Voters should choose me because of my experience of being on the Council, The numerous boards of commission that I have served on , I have owned the same restaurant for 17 years and I have 43 employees that count on me to meet a payroll every two weeks.

Education: Associates from Connors State Jr. College Warner Oklahoma
Bachelor's in Communications from the University of Oklahoma

Occupation: Restaurant Owner

Highlights of civic involvement/accomplishment:

- Allen City Council Place #6
- Allen Economic Development Board
- Lifetime Member Award , Allen/Lovejoy Council of PTA's 2009
- Allen Masonic Lodge Community Builder Award 2013
- All American Baseball Team 1985 Connors State Jr. College
- All Big 8 Conference First Team 1987
- Athletic Hall of Fame Connors State College 2013
- MLK Drum Major Award Winner, 2019

Platform:

- **Transparency-** Listen and be open to serving the community. Making sure we adhere to our yearly budgets.
- **Public Safety** - Give tools needed to hire and retain quality personnel.
- **Build-out** - Making sure we get it right.

BAINE BROOKS DID NOT COMPLETE THE GALA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE