



Edwardsville | Glen Carbon
Chamber of Commerce

CITY OF EDWARDSVILLE: ALDERPERSON CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Elizabeth Grant

Position Sought: Alderman, Ward 7

- 1. Please provide us with some basic information. Tell us briefly about:**
 - a. Your family: Married to Steve Grant, 2 sons: David and Cameron, both at MO State**
 - b. How long you've lived in Edwardsville: since 1993**
 - c. Your education: M.A. in Speech Communication from EIU '91**
 - d. Your employment: Lewis and Clark Community College Professor**

2. Why are you seeking this office? to be a voice for Ward 7

3. What education, skills and experiences have prepared you to deal with the complex financial, technical and legal issues that regularly come before city council? I teach public speaking and small group communication, both skills which are used in civic engagement. I spent the first 16 years teaching at SIUE and then moved to Lewis and Clark Community College where I coordinate the speech department, advise Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and serve on the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Committee. I believe that we are accountable to the district we serve as we receive your tax dollars. We take that commitment very seriously and stay close to the needs of our immediate community.

For the City, I have served on the Finance Committee and am getting familiar with our spending. I rely on the experts in all offices, for which the City has attracted high quality professionals. They will explain the technical, legal, and financial questions that I have and are always accessible. I feel like I am curious and ask good questions to elicit understanding in these areas. I also serve on the Administrative and Community Services Committee which has given me a great overview of planning and zoning.

I have lived in Edwardsville since 1993 and think of it as my hometown. I have involved myself in the community, first through our solid schools, serving on the YES committee to build Goshen/Cassens and founding their PTO's, and then in

things such as Friends of the Wildey Theater, Main Street Community Center, Faith in Action Driving Angels, the YMCA board, and my church. I feel that the experience of leading the YMCA Board as President of the board during the first year of Covid gave me a wealth of experience that is useful in city government as we are also confronted with rising healthcare expenses, increasing minimum wage, etc. Serving there has also educated me on the childcare crisis we have in America and I am passionate about the high quality options the Y provides our community.

4. What, if anything, should the city of Edwardsville do to retain, expand and attract 'head of household' jobs? I believe that our Economic Development Director James Arnold excels at attracting and retaining such jobs. We need to be an attractive place to locate a business by offering a safe and thriving community with good schools and amenities such as an excellent YMCA (like we DO), trails, parks, higher education options, restaurants, and services. We need to be a community where people want to work and live.

5. Identify and prioritize the three most important 'large capital' projects in the city of Edwardsville. Please justify your prioritization. How do you propose to pay for these projects?

While it's not as fun to think about, we can't neglect that our infrastructure is in need of repair and our water is getting to capacity. This will take some prioritization of funding. We do have that ¼ cent tax that is earmarked for this.

I'm prioritizing this way because I believe that parts are in motion to get these three initiatives moving...

143 North—working with the developer to make sure this happens with possible incentives. This connects with the expansion of Plummer Park—seeking a major investor, donors, and sponsors and being able to show a revenue source in order to bond for the remainder.

Revitalization of North Edwardsville—using Station on Main to catapult more development of the north entrance into our downtown.

Parking in downtown Edwardsville—using available TIF funds which will allow us to bond if needed.

(oops that's four)

6. What are your thoughts on city finances?

a. Are there opportunities to cut expenses? The Finance Dept. is lean and cuts where possible. We look for “offsets” every year. We make difficult decisions to reduce expenses. We don’t deficit spend, rest assured. This indeed requires some difficult decisions.

Specifically, where are those opportunities? We must look for the lesser need at the time to table for the next year.

b. Is there a need for new or additional revenue? Specifically, where would it come from? I think we could use more hotels on 143 North, not impacting our residents. There is so much that can be generated from the 9% hotel/motel tax.

c. Are there areas where spending needs to be increased? Infrastructure/water is a concern due to the age of these services. Capacity is getting to its limits. We must keep an eye on the full -funding of pensions, without making risky investments.

Specifically, where does spending need to increase?

Specifically, where would the money come from? We budget for these expenses; we seek grants when available and when they fit in the comprehensive plan; there was a 1/4% sales tax approved for pensions and infrastructure that was passed before my tenure.

7. What do you believe is the role of a city council member in the city administrator form of government? I believe our job is to advocate for the interests in our ward for the betterment of our community. I believe that the city administrator model allows us to hire an administrator who has these management skills that can be an anchor when elected officials may come and go. This allows consistency in the daily management of needs of our municipality. Everything that we do has long-term impact, that may very well outlive the service of an alderman, but a city administrator can be that steady hand.

8. If you're the incumbent, what have been your significant accomplishments during your term? If you're the challenger, what do you believe have been the significant disappointments of the incumbents, and how would your term in office be different?

As a two-year incumbent, I feel that I am just getting my feet wet. I have served on the finance committee during the second highest investment year in Edwardsville’s history. This service has been eye-opening as I get to check invoices and see the City’s expenditures monthly. I am happy to have expanded the Campus to Community Committee to include our great community college, Lewis and Clark. I feel like we have a better eye on our tourism plan by the creation of the Tourism Advisory Committee and am excited

to have attracted a high quality team to serve on that. I am proud that Edwardsville is positioned to celebrate the Route 66 birthday in 2026 with some recent monuments, a mural, and West End Station. Larger initiatives include the finishing of The RP Lumber Center, for which I wrote the initial PARC grant...and I'd love to see more programs support those with special needs Shine on Ice program and Challenger Baseball. This RPL Center is so impressive as it is a 12 million dollar project for which we only borrowed 5 million. We are projected to pay this debt within 12 years and are looking at a profit this year on that project of \$100,000...that's its FIRST YEAR.

I think that we have prioritized green space, in response to our constituents' concerns. We currently have a funding source coming from the some of the hotel/motel tax for community redevelopment fund.

I believe that we have a responsibility to grow in a controlled way that does not negatively impact residents by attending to our traffic flow and safety. That's why 143 North is so promising...the thought is that 80% of the users will enter and exit off I-55 and not impact my residents driving on Goshen. I'm super excited about Station on Main as it might catapult the revitalization of the north end of town.

One thing that I am unhappy about is that I have served during the closure of the community pool.

9. Will you commit to not raising the city's property tax levy? I have been on the committee that was able to accomplish this the past 2 years and I will prioritize no increase in the future.

10. If elected, what would be your top three priorities? promoting/maintaining a healthy, safe, family-friendly community for all ages; responsible growth including improvement of downtown parking by using money in TIF 2 and management of traffic concerns including a focus on roundabouts; a focus on improving our aging infrastructure

11. At the end of your term in office, how will you know if you've been successful? If Edwardsville remains a thriving community that takes care of its residents and visitors.

12. Are there any changes you would like to see regarding:

a. how city council functions? I don't think unanimity is important in our votes. I would like to see all of us voting independently, in line with the wards we represent. I believe that we have an environment that is committed to the betterment of Edwardsville through civil discourse.

b. how committees function? I think residents should know that committees are where the important conversations need to happen regarding issues of concern. Show up at our OPEN committee meetings that are posted on the City website.

c. how departments function? I think we have a well-oiled machine in City Hall. Our depts work independently, but cooperatively, so that we can make each other better, and this is a good check and balance structure. From a fiduciary standpoint, we run a balanced budget which is difficult this year...with utilities 17% higher, rising health insurance, and increasing minimum wage. The mayor's budget will be balanced with revenue = expenditures...without increasing property taxes and sales tax. That's impressive.