

# Morehead City Council

*There are 9 candidates running for one of 6 seats on the Morehead City Council. The top 6 vote getters win a seat. Voters may vote for up to 6 candidates.*

*Candidates James Gould, Michael Kash, Jim Tom Trent and David Perkins shared their views in response to a KFTC candidate survey.*

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**We are currently experiencing a global pandemic, which has brought up a need for social distancing, more effective utilization of public space, and mask mandates both locally and statewide. Do you support mandatory mask requirements? Why or why not? How will you work with the local health department and other entities to encourage compliance with mask and social distancing mandates? What other actions should our city and members of the city council take to slow the spread of this disease in our community?**

**James R. Gould:** Generally supportive of mask mandates. Local authorities need the ability to impose greater restrictions than the state. Realize others will better ideas for certain situations.

**Michael Kash:** Yes I support a mask mandate. It's our responsibility to our fellow citizens to protect them. City council members should support the state guidelines and demonstrate by compliance

**Jim Tom Trent:** I support the current mandate to wear masks in public. Personally, I wear them at work and in public when social distancing is not enough.

**David Perkins:** I am respectfully declining the survey, several of the items you are promoting have already been accomplished in Morehead during my previous terms on Council and as Mayor. While I am not taking credit for them I was happy to be part of the process. I generally support the ideals of KFTC, but I am not going to allow myself to be boxed in to a specific agenda by any organization.

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**What is the role of the Morehead City Council in opposing white supremacy, addressing racial inequality and supporting racial justice for Black people, Indigenous people, Latinx people, immigrants, those who are undocumented, and all people of color in our city? Please identify at least two policy initiatives you would propose while in office to address racial and systemic inequalities.**

**James R. Gould:** Promote equal enforcement of the laws and regulations. (you will like) I am part Cherokee Indian and ethnically Jewish. The rest is mainly Scotch and German. Biggest problem I see is with search warrants. (you would like that) I want to discourage illegal immigration. (you will hate that)

**Michael Kash:** Diversity training for our law enforcement members. Funding initiatives to assist with mental health issues

**Jim Tom Trent:** I would enforce the laws that are currently on the book and be willing to enhance or add to our laws in areas where we fall short in protections for all.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**Once elected, will you support the creation of a local Human Rights Commission? Please explain.**

**James R. Gould:** Human Rights Commission needs to be at the state or regional level within the state. A Rights Commission needs to have outsiders that are independent. The local level one would have much greater problems achieving that goal.

**Michael Kash:** Yes. That will give our citizens a way to address human rights

**Jim Tom Trent:** Yes. During my time as mayor we participated in the national Human Rights Organization's annual checkup and grading process.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**How do you envision involving residents, specifically those impacted directly by decisions, in city decision making processes? How would you work with community groups like the newly formed Morehead/Rowan County Racial Justice Task Force?**

**James R. Gould:** Respondent skipped this question

**Michael Kash:** With our current situation we have held virtual meetings. This has allowed citizens to be a part of the process. We should continue this to allow citizens to view and be a part of the process

**Jim Tom Trent:** All members of a community have the right to have their voices heard. I always had an open door and direct phone line policy when I was mayor and I pledge to do the same as councilperson.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**As a city councilperson, will you vote to make all taxpayer funded jobs (such as city workers, county workers, police officers, assistant clerks, etc.) advertised to the public and open for all to apply? Why or why not? Would you support paying all city workers a living wage of at least \$15 an hour? Why or why not?**

**James R. Gould:** \$15 hr. No. Especially not for starting workers. I have worked as a temp and that would backfire. More open to raising pay for workers that have two years on the job.

**Michael Kash:** We as a city advertise to the public. Yes I believe that everyone deserves a \$15 an hour A living wage is important

**Jim Tom Trent:** I would make sure all job openings were posted and advertised for public consumption. I 100% am in favor of fair wages for City workers. As a matter of fact, when I first became mayor, we had employees working on the back of a garbage truck for barely \$8 an hour. I worked diligently with City Council and am proud to say that no City worker was making less than \$10 an hour when I left office. Paying all City workers \$15 an hour would be too much to bite off immediately without a significant raise in taxes but could be an achievable goal to shoot for over a 4-6 year period. I wouldn't be opposed to working toward such a goal.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**An increase in extreme weather has caused problems, especially in terms of recurrent flooding. What can the city do to prepare for adverse effects of climate changes? What can the city do to reduce its carbon footprint?**

**James R. Gould:** Encourage bicycles, scooters, and walking. My dad was a professor who was made fun of walking to teach classes and mowed with a push mower. I like apartments close to the hospital and the university.

**Michael Kash:** We are working on our storm drains to allow water to flow more efficiently. The use of electric vehicles would help with the carbon footprint

**Jim Tom Trent:** The last big flood that we had occurred during my 4th month in office. We immediately made it a major point of focus and have consistently taken action to mitigate an event like that again by using such measures as new construction requirements for buildings and parking lots that significantly reduce the amount of runoff from impervious surfaces. Regular maintenance of the small tributaries that feed Triplett Creek and the installation of modern tile and pipes have also helped tremendously.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**Would you vote to make financial data, including the city checkbook and credit card entries, available to the public through an online database? Would you vote to make all public city records available online? Please explain.**

**James R. Gould:** Encourage more records online.

**Michael Kash:** Yes. We already comply with all open records laws

**Jim Tom Trent:** With the exception of those files protected by privacy laws, i.e. personnel files of employees and city council closed session information, etc, are available via the FOIA and can be accessed by the public through a written Open Records Request made to City Hall.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**What is your vision for the city budget? Are there programs and departments you believe to be under-funded or over-funded? Are there budget changes you would propose once in office? Please explain.**

**James R. Gould:** Generally want stability in funding. Pensions is underfunded.

**Michael Kash:** We have put a great deal of effort into public safety. A new 911 center and police department is currently in process. I would propose to construct a new fire station. We put a tremendous effort into our budget

**Jim Tom Trent:** I have always believed that the following four areas are the most vital to a community our size when it comes to where to focus the most \$\$ in order to maintain, and even

raise, our level of "livability" and ensure longterm viability: 1. Safety and Security, i.e. fire, police, emergency services and support staff such as telecommunication personnel. 2. Infrastructure maintenance as well as updating or building new when needed, i.e. streets, bridges, culverts, ditches, sidewalks, strret lights, etc. 3. Essential services, i.e. garbage, water, sewer, electric and gas, etc. 4. Recreation and Wellness. 3.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**If you are not elected, what issues would you continue to work on for the good of the community, including through volunteering efforts?**

**James R. Gould:** Encourage community gardening. My dad was heavily involved in that. It gave low income people a chance to become more economically self sufficient and healthier.

**Michael Kash:** I have served on numerous boards before election to council. If not re-elected I would again seek out boards. I also would help with our rails to trails project

**Jim Tom Trent:** AI currently serve as Secretary for both Downtown Morehead Inc. and NewCity Morehead boards. I will serve to make my community better til the day I day, whether in public office or as a private citizen As a lifelong resident of Morehead and Rowan Co., I have served the community for almost 30 years in variois capacities in addition to serving 4 years as mayor, whether it was as Director of RCMS Youth Service Center, Programs Director at Morehead Parks and Rec (way before being mayor), Coalitions Coordinator for Operation UNITE or as Family Services Coordinator with the Administratice Office of the Courts with an emphasisof Foster Care Review Boards.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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**What is the city's most pressing infrastructure need? What specific steps could you take to make sure that this need is met?**

**James R. Gould:** Water related. Flooding, pipes, and sewage. etc.

**Michael Kash:** A new water treatment facility is my first priority. We have to increase our capacity in order to continue our growth

**Jim Tom Trent:** I believe continuing to work hand in hand with Morehead Utility Plant Board to upgrade our water and sewer infrastructure and equipment is vital. I would also push the City to continue the path toward municipal broadband with an eye toward eventually making it available to business owners and City residents.

**David Perkins:** Candidate skipped this question.

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Also on the ballot are: Jan Bishop, Beth Ousley, Glen Teager, Tom Carew and Alex Hill