

# WHERE THEY STAND

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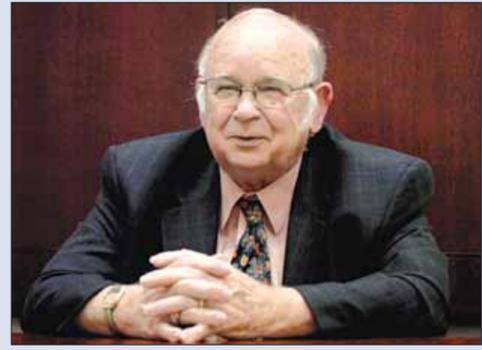
## Franklin City Council, Ward 3

**Election Day:** Nov. 6 ■ **Voting hours:** 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■ **Web extra:** Expanded answers and more questions at thejournalnet.com



CARL BREWSTER, Democrat

On Nov. 6, voters in Franklin Ward 3 will pick a member of the Franklin City Council. Reporter Katy Yeiser interviewed the candidates on a wide range of issues. Voters have a right to know where the candidates stand. Use these pages as a guide to help you make your voting decision.



WILLIAM "TED" MURPHY, Republican, incumbent

**Brewster**

First is property taxes. Would monitor that by watching what we spend. Go line by line in budget and make sure we don't spend what we don't have. Second is fire department. Need to make sure money spent isn't over or under needs. Third is keeping Franklin beautiful. Doing a great job already, but there's always room for improvement.



What are the top three issues facing the city? How would you address them?

**Murphy**

Top three are public protection (police and fire), budget and taxation, and representing needs of residents. Need to continue studying the demographics of city to see where we are growing to see where we can add safety. Tax problem relates to that. Have to watch budget, and can't spend money like it's unlimited. Can't raise budget too much, but can't create safety without costs. Also, need to listen to people.

**Brewster**

Does not know what Open Door Law is. Wouldn't meet with council in private.



Will you follow the letter and spirit of the Open Door Law? What if an attorney or other elected official makes a recommendation that goes against what you know the law is? What if someone requests to meet with the council in private?

**Murphy**

Have to understand the law and abide by it. As elected official, you need to abide by it. Can discuss only personnel issues in private.

**Brewster**

Does not know what tax abatement is.



What is a tax abatement? When are they appropriate? When are they not appropriate?

**Murphy**

Is a means by which we are able to attract new industry for community by forgiving some taxes. Three issues to consider: Is it beneficial to community? Is it beneficial to existing business? Does it give us employment that is beneficial to city and residents? Have to do it case-by-case.

**Brewster**

Does not know what tax-increment financing district is.



What is a tax-increment financing district? Do you favor creating or expanding a TIF district? Why or why not?

**Murphy**

Set aside district to determine what certain types of development needs to be done in those districts. Have to look at use of land. Don't want to put something in a TIF district that would be valuable for some other type of development, so you have to do it case-by-case to determine what is best for the community.

**Brewster**

Yes. Would use our police department to enforce rules and solve problem, but try to make the residents want to make the city more beautiful. Private properties would stay clean if the city enforced ordinances, but residents should want to keep their yards and homes beautiful.



Is the cleanup of Franklin a top priority? What should the city do to make sure private properties are cleaned up, zoning rules are enforced and eyesores are removed?

**Murphy**

Yes. Cleanup has been going on for several administrations, and it will continue. Need to have residents call attention to eyesores. Would call police department and try to remedy under the law. Have to watch private property rights, but enforce law as you can. Would encourage private properties to clean up.

**Brewster**

I would do it line by line to make sure budget is fair and equal. No overspending. Alter budget process to make sure spending where it should be spent.



The annual budget can be considered the single most important tool the city council has. What steps would you take individually to review the budget? What process should the council use to publicly review the budget? How would you alter the city's budget process?

**Murphy**

Each council member manages an assigned part of budget. He was assigned to police department budget. Sat with police chief and went line by line to see if increases were justified by need. Budget review process needs to start earlier.

**Brewster**

Yes. Goals are to attract new residents and businesses. Do it by getting residents' input, which can help change issues. Leadership role is helping community with its needs.



Is it city government's job to do more than just provide roads and police and fire protection? Is it government's job to improve the quality of life so that the city can attract new residents and businesses? How does city government do this? What is your role?

**Murphy**

It is important for both elected officials and public to make city attractive to new residents and businesses. Role is to have ordinances in place to help Franklin be a beautiful city. Do it through administration. Listen to anything brought before council. Look at the needs we see and report them. "It's our responsibility to be sensitive and aware of the community we live in and the needs of people."

<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>Go door-to-door after elected and ask residents what they need.</p>	 <p>How can you get more public involvement in government?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Wants to have public forums. Does have chance to visit people in the district, but wants to have forums for all districts. Better to do it at a scheduled date.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>No. Can't hire more employees or cut positions.</p>	 <p>Should the city hire any more employees? If so, for what department? Should any positions be cut?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Difficult question to answer. Need more firefighters or civilian paramedics. Wouldn't cut positions.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>Hope there would be none. "Accepting someone's invitations that would have bad intentions for the city" is a conflict of interest. Avoid conflicts by serving people.</p>	 <p>What is a conflict of interest for a city council member? How would you avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Anything you have a financial or controlling interest in. Need to be aware of anything that might be a conflict of interest. Would remove himself from voting or discussion with any conflict of interest.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>None until we find a better way to lower some of our taxes. Any city service that could should decrease spending.</p>	 <p>What city services should have increased spending or decreased spending?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>"We are at our optimum, efficient best." No increases or decreases are needed. We have tried to fix budget for 2008 to meet needs for most cost effective ways.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>Not until we have handle on property taxes. Won't raise taxes. "If I did raise taxes, I would only raise taxes with the permission of the people in my district."</p>	 <p>Would you raise any tax, including property, sales or income taxes?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Need to be considerate of real estate taxes, but in shifting from real estate to other areas, need to be sensitive of how it will skew the local economy and community. "If you lower property taxes and increase sales taxes, how will that relate to other communities around us? If we price ourselves out of the field, people will go to other communities for goods."</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>Yes. We should take pride in our community, and one way is to make it beautiful. Taxpayer dollars shouldn't be used. Should have enough support to take care of it. Every resident should take part in revitalization. Proposes the city plant more flowers and mow common areas more often.</p>	 <p>Is revitalization of downtown Franklin a top priority? Why? Should taxpayer dollars be used? What do you propose be done?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Any city would want to revitalize downtown. Will have to use some tax dollars but limit use. Need to attract businesses to open downtown. Through privatization, you can upgrade buildings. City needs to control downtown, and private businesses need to upgrade buildings.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>Welcomes any advice to better our community. People would be more than welcome to come to meetings and share feelings.</p>	 <p>With the city growing and bringing in more and more people with professional and managerial backgrounds, as well as numerous nationalities and ethnicities, how would you promote government taking best advantage of the talents, ideas and willingness of residents wanting to participate in public-policy matters?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Need to be sensitive and employ diversity to leadership roles in community. Council can do that by knowing different people to suggest for positions.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>No. Top priority is easing tax burden. Should put freeze on any new things. Doesn't know the number of fire stations in Franklin. Should be closed only if it wasn't efficient with new station.</p>	 <p>Does the city need another fire station? If so, where should it be built, how would you pay for it, and when should this happen? Should any of the existing fire stations be closed if a new one is built?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>"I have long advocated a restudy of fire protection for the city of Franklin, and I don't think we can really answer that question until we've done the study." Probably a third station needs to be added, but where it needs to be has to be studied. Need to look at population needs of the city. Need to study hospitals, Franklin College, Indiana Masonic Home and Franklin United Methodist Community, where people are in greater danger and look at that population growth. Also look at potential growth, which could determine where another one should be located. Need to look at industry. How close does one need to be to concentration of industries, such as the northeast part of town? Studied it before, but study is out of date now. One of the problems we have to face with a third station is a \$1 million increase in taxes.</p>
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<p><b>Brewster</b></p> <p>If we could afford best for our firefighters, they deserve it. In times economy isn't good, we have to cut back. Would be in favor of hiring only if we can cut the overtime. Would support longevity pay if budget allows it.</p>	 <p>The fire department spent \$397,780 in overtime pay in 2006 and is on track to pay \$288,000 this year. And firefighters and police officers want the city to reinstate a longevity pay plan. How can the city be most efficient in public safety expenses? If the answer is to hire more workers, would you support that? Why or why not? Do you support reinstating the longevity pay? Why or why not?</p>	<p><b>Murphy</b></p> <p>Overtime has been a problem. When a person retires, the department has to wait to replace them until retirement is up even though the person can take time off before that. Need to hire a new person a month or two before retirement date to cut down on overtime, but doesn't cut down expenses. Do have to have minimum staffing in police and fire department to meet needs of Franklin. "We simply need that and have to pay for it." Have added four new police officers, which should cut down overtime. Hired civilian paramedics, which also should help overtime. Need to have police and fire look at staffing pattern to see what is causing overtime. Needs to look at longevity pay, but won't commit to supporting or not supporting it. The issue in fire department is that longevity pay affects retirement. Other part is it's expensive. "When you're trying to keep the budget within control and taxes within control, you've got to be careful."</p>
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**Brewster**

Couldn't name three. Feel we should look at bigger picture and where can we cut spending throughout the whole government process.



Name three areas of city government where spending could be cut.

**Murphy**

Take-home cars. "Only thing I can think of. I think we have a bare-bones budget. I don't think there are three places I could find to cut."

**Brewster**

Doesn't know what a TIF district is, but said it would be his job to re-evaluate all the projects.



Should TIF districts be re-evaluated if they're running up unused surpluses? What projects need to be completed in the districts?

**Murphy**

Need to be re-evaluated each year. As to particular one, couldn't say. Those who get tax abatements come before council each year and council recommends if they should continue with abatements. Each one has to be done case-by-case.

**Brewster**

Yes. Income tax would be a good replacement, but that would have to be decision for residents. Would back what they choose.



Are you in favor of the elimination of property taxes? What other revenue source would you support to replace or reduce property taxes? Why?

**Murphy**

Favor reducing property taxes. Willing to increase income and sales tax by 1 to 2 percentage points.

**Brewster**

"As much as I can do." Unsure of what exactly to do.



Franklin taxpayers already are preparing for a tax hike next year because of school projects. What will you do from the city's side to lessen the impact on their tax bills?

**Murphy**

Continue to monitor city's part of tax budget and keep it to a minimum increase. Can't control school spending.

**Brewster**

City has done good job replacing businesses that left. Work at state level to help bring in business.



What can the city do to boost the growth in area business parks and attract more employers to the city?

**Murphy**

Will work with anyone who expresses interest to show viability of city. Would do whatever is needed to help infrastructure. Would give tax breaks as needed and convince businesses that Franklin is a good place for them.

**Brewster**

"I feel like that's the mayor's job." Is against the tax advisory board, but would work with the mayor. Board should play no part.



How would you work with the mayor's tax advisory council? What role should that group play?

**Murphy**

Should play informational role. Would listen to anything they might have to offer.

**Brewster**

Always welcomes development if it benefits residents of Franklin. Doesn't know what kind of development or where it should go.



Does Franklin need more residential development? If so, what kind and where? If not, why not?

**Murphy**

"Can't bring it in just because it's development." Have to be very careful of future development. Development needs to be equal to city and give good tax base for any service that needs to be rendered to that particular development. Need to be sure development is proper type.

**Brewster**

Yes if it saves us money. Couldn't answer how to make cuts and consolidate areas of government.



One suggestion state officials have made to save money is to make cuts and consolidate areas of government. Is this an option in Franklin? If so, how?

**Murphy**

If state legislation allows it, we can do it. Wouldn't turn down ideas without looking at them. We're not like Indianapolis, which can do a great deal of that. If it's practical, I'm open to listening.

**Brewster**

Absolutely not. "We already have I-65, and there's no reason to destroy our farm lands."



Did you support the governor's plan to build a toll road south of Franklin and lease it to a private company? Why or why not?

**Murphy**

Yes. State was losing money every year on toll road. By privatizing it, could save that money and give it for other projects in the state.