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A Vision for Liberty

Fourteen Governing Principles for a Stronger, Freer City

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Introduction

I want to be straightforward about what this document is. It is not a campaign platform full of promises. It is a description of how I think about governing, grounded in what I have actually done during my two terms on the Liberty City Council.

Before I vote on anything, I ask a few basic questions. Does this serve the people who are paying for it? Is it something government genuinely needs to do, or is it something that sounds useful but falls outside what city hall should be taking on? Is the cost honest and the justification real? Those questions do not always produce popular answers. But they are the ones I have tried to apply consistently.

Fiscal discipline makes it possible to focus on core services.

Transparency makes accountability real.

Staying humble about what government should do protects the freedoms residents and businesses depend on. Taken together, they describe a simple approach: do the essential things well, spend money carefully, keep people informed, and remember who you work for.

Fourteen Governing Principles

1. Limited Government

Government should do what only government can do, and then get out of the way. That is easy to say and harder to live by, because there is always a reason to expand a program, add a regulation, or create a new structure that sounds helpful. The discipline is in asking whether it is actually necessary.

Government should do what only government can do, and then get out of the way.

During my time on the Council, I voted against the Unified Development Ordinance, which would have imposed comprehensive land use controls across Liberty. This city has historically operated without full zoning, and I think that has been a real asset. It gives property owners the ability to make decisions about their own land. It keeps Liberty accessible to people and businesses that would get squeezed out under a heavier regulatory environment. My opposition was not about blocking progress. It was about asking whether that level of government control was something Liberty's residents actually wanted. I did not think it was.

I have applied the same thinking to other proposals that would expand government's footprint in ways that are hard to reverse. The burden of proof belongs on those seeking to grow what government does, not on those asking why it is necessary. That is a line I intend to hold as mayor.

2. Fiscal Responsibility

Every dollar that flows through city government was earned by a resident or a business. I genuinely believe that, and it shapes how I approach every budget decision. The people funding this city have every right to expect it is being run with their interests as the priority.

I have voted against budget proposals and tax rate increases when I was not convinced the spending was justified. I have raised concerns publicly when I believed the process lacked adequate transparency or public engagement. I have opposed fee increases and contract changes when the rationale was not sufficient. These were not knee-jerk positions. They were considered ones. Simply put, the people asking whether public money is well spent should not have to argue harder than the people wanting to spend it.

Fiscal responsibility does not mean opposing everything. It means being honest about what things cost and what they are worth.

That said, I have supported spending readily when the case was clear. Streets, fire equipment, school safety, infrastructure maintenance. Those investments serve residents directly, and I voted for them without hesitation. I run a small business. My wife and I manage a household budget. The discipline is the same whether it is personal money or public money: spend on what matters, and be honest about the rest.

3. Government Transparency

Trust between a city and its residents is not automatic. It is built slowly, through consistent behavior over time. Open books, accessible meetings, clear explanations of decisions, and a willingness to answer hard questions even when the answers are inconvenient.

When the question of live-streaming council meetings came before us, I supported moving forward even though staff recommended delay. The concerns they raised were legitimate, and I did not dismiss them. But the case for openness was stronger. Residents who cannot attend meetings in person still have a stake in what happens there. They deserve access. That is a basic part of accountable governance.

I have also raised questions in open session about whether public information, including data from public safety technology, is actually reaching the residents who need it. These are not dramatic gestures. They are the small, routine things that add up to either a transparent government or one that operates mostly behind closed doors. As mayor, the default will be openness. If a resident reasonably expects to know something about how their city is functioning, they should be able to find it.

4. Public Safety First

Keeping residents safe is the most basic obligation of a city government. Full stop. It is not optional, and it is not something to trade away when the budget gets tight. The people serving in our police department, fire department, and emergency services take on real risk every day on behalf of this community. They deserve leadership that takes that seriously, not just in speeches, but in how resources are allocated.

My council record includes consistent support for public safety investments. I supported the agreement with Liberty ISD to put School Resource Officers on campus. I supported equipment updates for the fire department, including radios that had outlasted their useful life. I have voted for infrastructure improvements that directly affect emergency response times, because streets and basic infrastructure are not separate from public safety. They are part of it.

A community that trusts its public safety infrastructure is a safer community.

I also believe that when the city deploys new technology for public safety purposes, residents have a right to understand how it works and how it is being governed. Safety and accountability are not competing values. As mayor, I will support our personnel fully and keep residents informed about how their safety is being protected.

5. Infrastructure and Roads

When I talk to residents about what they want from city government, the answers are usually pretty concrete. Fix the streets in my neighborhood. Keep the utilities reliable. Make sure the basics are maintained. Do not let things deteriorate while chasing bigger projects. That is not a low bar. That is the job. And it has to come first.

I have supported street rehabilitation programs and infrastructure investments throughout my council service. I have asked about the status of ongoing projects in open session because voting yes and then moving on is not enough. Infrastructure decisions have long tails. A choice to defer maintenance today becomes a much larger cost five years from now. I have seen that pattern in city budgets, and I have seen it in my own business. The discipline is the same: stay ahead of the problem or pay more to catch up later.

As mayor, infrastructure will not be managed around other priorities. It will be the foundation everything else is built on.

6. Small Business Liberty

My mother built a business in this community. I built one too. I know what it takes, and I know what gets in the way. Small business owners are not looking for handouts from city government. They are looking for a city hall that processes their applications in a reasonable amount of time, communicates clearly, and does not pile on requirements that exist by habit rather than by purpose.

Every unnecessary regulatory barrier, every slow approval process, every fee that is hard to justify adds friction. That friction falls hardest on the smallest operators, not large developers with legal teams and compliance staff, but the individual owner trying to get something off the ground on their own. My skepticism toward heavy land use regulation has been grounded, in part, in that reality.

A city that is straightforward to do business in tends to attract the right kind of growth: people who have genuinely chosen to invest here, not developers chasing government-engineered incentives. That is the environment I want to help build. As mayor, a responsive, practical city hall is not an aspiration. It is an expectation.

7. Responsible Growth

Liberty is growing, and that brings real opportunities. A broader tax base, new businesses, new families choosing to put down roots here. I am not anti-growth. But I do think the job of city leadership is to make sure growth makes Liberty genuinely better, not just larger. Those are not always the same thing.

I have been cautious about development finance mechanisms that create long-term financial obligations before the community has had a real chance to weigh the tradeoffs. My view is that Liberty's growth should be shaped by market conditions and community values, not by government-engineered structures that are hard to undo once they are in place. When I have voted no on those proposals, it has been because I was not convinced the risk was justified.

Responsible growth also means protecting what already exists. The residents who are here today, paying taxes and maintaining their properties, are owed that. I have supported code enforcement efforts to hold property owners accountable when neglect creates real costs for everyone nearby. As mayor, my first responsibility is to the people of Liberty today, not to a projected growth scenario ten years out.

8. Respect for Taxpayers

I think of taxpayers as the shareholder-investors of their city. They fund it. They depend on it. They have every right to expect that the people running it are making decisions with that relationship in mind.

When I have voted against spending proposals, it has not been obstruction. It has been a judgment that the expenditure did not meet the standard those investor-shareholders would recognize as responsible stewardship. The question I ask is simple: if the people paying for this could see exactly how it was justified, would they agree it was worth it? When the answer is clearly yes, I vote yes. When it is not, I say so.

Respect for taxpayers also means not hiding difficult decisions in consent agendas when they deserve more discussion. It means showing up to budget hearings with real questions, not rubber-stamping what is presented. It means treating the budget process as the accountability exercise it actually is, not as a formality. That is the standard I have tried to hold on the Council, and it is the one I will hold as mayor.

9. Focus on Core Services

City government has a defined set of responsibilities. Streets, utilities, public safety, and the basic infrastructure that supports them, along with the administrative work that keeps those things running. When a city stays focused on those functions and does them well, residents trust it. When it starts taking on things that belong to the private sector or to the community itself, it usually does those things worse, and it uses public money to do it.

Before I support a new program or initiative, I ask a few things. Is this something only government can do? Does it serve residents directly in a way the private sector cannot? Is there a clear funding source and a clear outcome? If those answers are not yes, I slow down. That is not ideology. It is just how I evaluate risk, whether I am making a decision for my business or for the city. Government should not chase ideas that sound good. It should do its actual job well.

Liberty needs city government that is focused, accountable, and efficient with public resources. That is what I intend to deliver.

10. Prepared Leadership

Good decisions do not happen by accident. They come from doing the work ahead of time.

During my time on the Council, I have made it a priority to be prepared. That means reviewing agenda packets thoroughly, asking questions before meetings when possible, and taking the time to understand the details behind each issue.

That preparation leads to better decisions. It allows the Council to move forward with clarity, reduces confusion during meetings, and helps ensure that issues are addressed the right way the first time.

The people of Liberty deserve leaders who take their responsibilities seriously enough to be ready. That is a standard I have tried to uphold, and it is one I will continue to bring as mayor.

11. Accountability in Office

Accountability means being willing to be measured. Not just on your intentions, but on your actual decisions and their outcomes. It means owning results. It means being honest when things do not go as planned, and not looking for someone else to explain why.

My council record is public. Every vote, every position, every question I have raised in open session is in the minutes. I have voted against budgets I disagreed with and explained why. I have supported spending I believed was justified and explained that too. I have asked questions on the record about infrastructure progress, budget transparency, and public information, in open session, where any resident can read them.

That record is the most direct accountability I can offer. Not a promise about the future, but a demonstration of how I have already acted when it mattered.

As mayor, I will set clear priorities, report honestly on where we stand, and not deflect when things fall short. The credit for good outcomes belongs to the staff and community that make them possible. The responsibility for bad ones starts with the person in charge.

12. Liberty's Heritage

Liberty has a character worth taking seriously. This community was built by families who chose to put down roots here, by people of faith who invested in their neighbors, by individuals who started things from scratch and made them work over generations. That is not just history. It is part of what makes this place worth governing well.

I think about that heritage when decisions come before the Council. Liberty's relative freedom from heavy land use regulation has historically allowed individual initiative to thrive in ways that more tightly controlled communities cannot replicate. That is worth protecting, not because change is bad, but because the things that define Liberty should not be traded away without a clear and compelling reason.

Protecting heritage also means protecting the physical fabric of the community: the neighborhoods where families have invested, the streets they depend on, the blocks that define the character of this city. I have supported efforts to address dangerous and substandard structures because letting things decline without a response is a choice, and it has consequences for every resident nearby. As mayor, I will govern with both eyes open: what we are building, and what we are working to preserve.

13. A Family-Friendly Community

The real measure of a city is whether families choose to raise their children there. Not whether it has impressive projects or good press coverage, but whether ordinary people working hard and trying to build a life look at Liberty and decide this is home.

My wife Whitney and I are raising our three children, Matthias, Joanna, and Arthur, in this community. That context shows up in how I make decisions. When I have supported school safety agreements and infrastructure investments, I have been thinking about the families who depend on those things, including mine. When I have voted against spending I considered unjustified, I have been thinking about the families trying to make their budgets work on what they earn. The stakes are not abstract to me.

A family-friendly Liberty requires safety, well-maintained roads and utilities, and a tax environment that does not push working families out. None of that happens automatically. It requires steady attention to the basics, year after year, without a lot of fanfare. That is what I intend to provide.

14. Principled Leadership

All of this comes down to one question. Do these values actually shape how I make decisions when it is inconvenient? Principles that only hold when they are easy are not principles. They are preferences. The test is what happens when a vote is hard, when the room is uncomfortable, when the path of least resistance points in a different direction.

I have been willing to stand apart when I believed the consensus was wrong. I have opposed regulatory expansions that had institutional momentum behind them. I have slowed down decisions that I felt were moving too fast without adequate public input. I have supported spending on roads, safety, and core services consistently because I believe those are what city government is actually for. That record exists. It is documented. Residents can read it.

None of that has always been comfortable. Principled positions are not always popular ones, and I have never thought they needed to be. I would rather leave office with a record that holds up under scrutiny than one that sounded good at the time and falls apart later. The principles in this document have shaped my service across two terms on the Liberty City Council. The public record is there. Residents can judge for themselves. That is exactly how it should work.

A Final Word

Liberty is a real place with real challenges. Roads that need work. Infrastructure that requires sustained investment. A tax burden that families feel. Businesses that need a city hall that actually functions as a partner. None of that gets better through words alone. It gets better through consistent, unglamorous work done over time by people who understand what local government is for and are committed to doing it.

That is what I am asking for the chance to do. My record on the Council is public. The votes are in the minutes. I am not asking anyone to take my word for who I am. I am asking them to look at what I have done, and decide.

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