

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The City Council may consider applicant qualifications for the Council vacancy in executive sessions which are closed to the public, and then make the appointment in a public meeting. You have the right, however, to have your application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.

**CITY OF FLAGSTAFF
APPLICATION TO SERVE ON THE CITY COUNCIL**

RETURN TO: CITY CLERK VIA EMAIL AT STACY.SALTZBURG@FLAGSTAFFAZ.GOV

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT APPLICATION: MONDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 5:00 P.M.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PUBLIC INFORMATION
(personal identifying information will not be released)

DATE: 10/10/2026

YOUR NAME: Austin Kerr

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ZIP: 86004

EMPLOYER: Northland Preparatory Academy JOB TITLE: Teacher

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN FLAGSTAFF: 13

Using additional pages, please answer the following questions in 250 words or less, per question:

1. What makes a good Councilmember?
2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.
3. What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?
4. What method do you expect to use to make a decision when you believe that there is a segment of the Flagstaff population not being heard on a particular issue?
5. Please give an example of when you were in a position of responsibility and others disagreed with you on how an important matter should be handled. How did you help resolve the issue?
6. What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.
7. What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?
8. A key role of the Flagstaff City Council is to adopt the city's budget; how would you balance the seven key community priorities and the realities of the city's financial position with the Council's role of policy development?

I certify that I meet the statutory requirements of living within the corporate limits of the City of Flagstaff for at least one year, that I am over the age of 18 years, that I am a registered voter of the City of Flagstaff, ***and that I have read and understand the right to have my application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.***


Applicant Signature

Mayor and City Council,

My name is Austin Kerr and I have been a resident of Flagstaff for 13 years. I am seeking appointment to the vacated spot on City Council and appreciate having the opportunity to share about my qualifications and passion for local government. I currently teach 11th grade US History at Northland Preparatory Academy. I believe that my experience as a teacher makes me an excellent candidate for the position.

I have a lot of historical and contemporary knowledge about Flagstaff and the surrounding area. I have completed historical research about the Flagstaff area as part of my masters degree. As a part of my curriculum in my class, I guide students through local history and end the year on a tour of the Southside neighborhood. I served on the city's Parks and Recreation Commission for two terms and graduated from the Flagstaff Leadership Program, my "degree in Flagstaff," providing me with contemporary knowledge on how the city functions.

I am an inquisitive person by nature and a life-long learner. I take my job as an educator seriously by guiding students in curious inquiry and relationship building and because of this I am a team player who works well with others. I am passionate about ensuring that all voices are heard and will strive to bring these voices to the table as I make decisions on Council as I do in the classroom. These traits will serve the Council well.

My professional and personal qualifications make me an excellent candidate for appointment. Serving in government is a civic duty that I believe is incredibly serious and as I seek to fulfill the final two years of this term, I am dedicated to humbly serving my community in this capacity.

Thank you for your time,

Austin Kerr

1. What makes a good Councilmember?

There are many similarities between being a good council member and being a good teacher. I've learned over the years as a social studies teacher that to be the best you need to be ready to learn and ready to inquire. I believe the best council member is one that is prepared. Prepared to ask questions, prepared on the meeting rules, laws, and functions and prepared to have dynamic and engaging conversations. A good council member is curious, inquisitive and engaged with their peers and staff. Inquiry is the basis for my teaching and so students are encouraged to be bold in their questioning. This means knowing what we don't know and being unafraid to ask to seek clarification. Preparation is key but thinking on your feet and being adaptive is also essential. In teaching we have to be prepared for the unknown and council members need to be focused but also dynamic. A good council member can equally engage on liquor licenses as they do controversial rezoning cases. My many years in the classroom has given me the experience to do this on the dais. A good council member also knows to admit when they're wrong. Owning up to a mistake in the classroom shows students you are human. If you don't acknowledge when you were wrong it can create an environment that is unproductive. Being ok with being wrong, owning up, and then fixing those mistakes are what makes a good council member.

2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.

Affordability is the biggest threat. Flagstaff is in danger of turning into a community without ordinary people who live and work within city limits. I want Flagstaff to be a place for people to work, live, and thrive. The fact that my wife and I are able to make living here work as two educators is becoming more and more anomalous. It should be viable for anyone to live here! The adage of Flagstaff being 'poverty with a view' is something we need to leave behind and strive towards becoming a town that is livable and affordable for all. I don't want to see this town start to lose local businesses, historic character, and long-standing community members. A new generation of the Flagstaff community needs to be cultivated to ensure that future challenges are met with wisdom, collaboration, and care. But in order for that to happen, Flagstaff needs to be affordable. It is young professionals and families that are the future of our city, and we should be doing everything possible to make it easier for more people to buy homes and afford rent.

3. What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?

- a. Housing in Flagstaff has only gotten more expensive. My wife and I want to buy a house and start a family, like many other young professionals, but have been priced out of typical first time homes. Housing affordability is the first step in keeping our workers, residents, and professionals in Flagstaff for future generations. We need to have creative and flexible solutions that change city code, partner with companies and non-profits to help our residents, and get developers to create these affordable units.
- b. Climate change is ravaging our community and it is essential that our city government work towards resilience by encouraging residents to meet the

challenge of combating this threat. We must adapt to these changing conditions and must create dynamic opportunities for the city to be flexible in its ability to keep our community safe, especially from wildfire and flooding. It is imperative to achieve the goals of resilience and adaption as laid out in the Regional Plan.

- c. It's most likely the case that we will not run out of water in Flagstaff, but that our water will be exorbitantly more expensive. It is imperative we keep our water as safe and as cheap as possible. Maintaining our water supply and creating new opportunities for water must be prioritized. In a place once known for being without water, we need to focus on preserving the sources we have and embrace technological improvement like advanced water treatment.

4. What method do you expect to use to make a decision when you believe that there is a segment of the Flagstaff population not being heard on a particular issue?

Teachers collect data about our classrooms through assessment. We test what the students know (or don't) and then engage them in formative data collection by constantly checking their understanding. I see something like this happening in our community, especially with residents whose voices are not heard. The problem is we tend to expect residents to come to us when most people don't even have any clue who we are and only a few constituents even know where to begin and these tend to be the loudest voices. As a teacher, it's not always easy to balance the voices of the most loud and the especially quiet but it is essential to running a fully functioning classroom. This is why addressing each student as an individual in the classroom is so crucial and this can be applied similarly at the city level. Flagstaff residents deserve to be heard and I want to meet them where they are. For the remainder of my term, I plan on being out in the neighborhoods knocking on doors to introduce myself. I will create a 'pre-assessment' of sorts, really an opportunity for me to check in with residents, where people can read about me, fill out a quick survey on their needs, have a place to express their views, and also have my contact information. Putting a name to a face is incredibly important for those who are not particularly loud, and gives them an opportunity for civic engagement.

5. Please give an example of when you were in a position of responsibility and others disagreed with you on how an important matter should be handled. How did you help resolve the issue?

I often tend to find myself in the middle personally and professionally, and this prompts me to always begin with listening. This is drilled into us as social studies educators. I emphasize this with my current NAU undergrads who are learning to be social studies teachers. I utilize this skill in my own classroom. It is important to keep an open mind and hear from each other's perspectives about the topics we are learning about and discussing. I can't push my opinions on students, so I teach how to ask questions and express our views civilly. This has translated to many of my own civic engagements in the community. On the Parks and Recreation Commission, we handled the conflicting interests of the pickleball community and the residents around Bushmaster Park. As a commissioner, I had the opportunity to sit and listen to all

constituencies involved with this particular issue. Many pickleball players were advocating for an expansion of the courts and I tended to agree with them. It wasn't until I heard from the residential area where the issue became more complicated. It was amazing to see how the two parties, despite their differences, compromised, and as commissioners we got to be curious and ask about the impacts for these different stakeholders. In the end, it made one of our biggest parks even better and everyone was able to, through compromise, be heard, get what they wanted, and ultimately create a better space for our community.

6. What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.

Everyday I'm with students, I lead by showing students how to build relationships, engage in inquiry, and examine tough situations. Teachers have to avoid the 'sage on the stage' type of top-down leadership and lean into the 'guide on the side' approach to be effective. I have spent the last 10 years developing these skills in the classroom and believe this can be applied to other aspects of professional life. Taking this approach working in community and civic organizations with other adults has enabled me to decenter myself, listen, learn, and take a collaborative approach so that everyone benefits. From my experience with the Flagstaff Leadership Program, I learned how to facilitate better meetings that engaged the community, created space for conversation, and allowed for us to organize effectively. For my time with FLP, creating programming for our Leadership Education Days, we took our meetings and transitioned from a solely lecture-style or panel forum and moved into creating collaborative groups with rotation stations and even created an interactive walking tour of the Southside neighborhood. A huge part of leadership is setting goals, acting on them, and collaborating to achieve them. With students, challenging them to rise to the occasion and step up is some of the best lessons I'm able to teach. I hope as a council member I can be a 'guide on the side' and help move our community forward through ever-changing circumstances.

7. What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?

Flagstaff zoning code is going through a pretty dramatic change as we speak. I have been following the recent developments closely. If on council, I would have voted 'yes' on the proposed change to the zoning code to create the special 'Planned Community' category. While the flexibility in the code can be useful for developers to get the types of housing needs met in our community, I do hope for positive incentives and potential accountability to ensure that developers are actually using this land and space efficiently and effectively for our community to create more opportunities for affordable housing.

8. A key role of the Flagstaff City Council is to adopt the city's budget; how would you balance the seven key community priorities and the realities of the city's financial position with the Council's role of policy development?

The categories for our priority-based budgeting are fantastic, but were created in 2019. I would like to see how these categories could be updated, transformed, and maybe help prioritize other needs of the community as we approach nearly a decade of this process. We've seen the amazing services the city provides and asking residents about what kinds of services for this

budget process they would *like* to have can be a useful exercise that could expand how we budget services and offer new ones for our residents. The general fund is the only flexible part of the budget and figuring out a way to bring the budget process to members of the community as opposed to staying within groups of people that are familiar with the process is key to unlocking community participation. Getting community input on these budgetary issues is so crucial. The PBB priorities and objectives are amazing tools to help councilmembers get a sense of what we should be shooting for in our budget talks and I'm excited to engage community members in these discussions and see about ways in which we can expand these even further.

Austin Kerr

Flagstaff, AZ 86004

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 9+ years of classroom instruction, lesson planning, and curriculum development, specifically as a certified teacher in grades 6-12 in various subject and topic areas within social studies including but not limited to AP US history, US History, speech and debate, and Arizona history. I am an expert in designing social studies and history classroom curriculum that follow educational theories of critical thinking, inquiry, research, and analysis
- 9+ years of formal education and professional programming focused on effective communication of complex historical, political, and cultural material
- 7+ years as a member of various governing boards and committees with responsibilities regarding project approval, budget, and cross-departmental consultation.

EDUCATION

Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

- *Social Studies Secondary Education, BS*
- *History, MA*

Graduated: May 2017
Graduated: December 2023

WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Northland Preparatory Academy, Flagstaff, AZ

August 2017 - PRESENT

- Instructor of Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment US History, US History, AP Seminar, Speech and Debate (High School and Middle School)
- Creates engaging presentations of material to teach primary and secondary source analysis skills and critical and historical thinking skills
- Contacts and hosts elected officials and community leaders to facilitate conversations with students about important civic issues
- Implements classroom systems utilizing concepts of universal design and restorative practices

- Engages students in the basics of academic research, analysis skills, and complex questioning through quick reading strategies, teamwork development, and presentation skills
- Supervises, trains, and mentors Northern Arizona University student teacher placements since the spring of 2022
- Supervises, trains, and mentors Northern Arizona University practicum student observers since the fall of 2019
- Actively participates in school community and fulfills various additional responsibilities as assigned by school administrators

Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

August 2025 - PRESENT

- Instructor of HIS-429 Teaching and Learning History and Geography
- Engages undergraduates in historical and geographical educational methodology focusing primarily on how to help undergraduates
- Grades lesson plans, yearlong curriculum maps, and unit plans

Parks and Recreation Commission, Flagstaff, AZ

October 2020 - August 2026

- Made recommendations to the Flagstaff City Council regarding city parks and recreational programs and facilities, annual budgets, and capital improvements for the Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces, and Events Department
- Attended commission meetings monthly and remains open and available to communication over phone and email regarding matters related to the commission
- Served as Vice Chair from January 2024 until end of term

Other Civic and Local Engagements, Flagstaff, AZ

January 2019 - Present

- Graduated from the Flagstaff Leadership Program Class of 2025 and participated in the program creation of sLeadership Education Days of "Community, Diversity, and Culture" and "Education"
- Served on the Bond Committee in 2022 to put on the ballot Propositions 441 & 442
- Served in many capacities of the Coconino County Democratic Party ranging as a Precinct Committeeperson since 2022 to 1st Vice Chair in 2025
- Developed meeting agendas, facilitated monthly meetings, and organized community guest appearances in the Coconino County Democratic Party
- Advised and worked on several local campaigns on strategy, looking at neighborhood voting data, and targeting certain precincts for optimal vote getting
- Served as one of the youngest Vestry members at Episcopal Church of the Epiphany from 2019-2021 charged with fiduciary responsibilities and personnel decisions

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

- Wilderness First Responder Certification - May 2026
- Completion of professional development seminars:
 - College Board *Summers 2017, 2022, & 2024*
 - The Bill of Rights Institute *Fall 2018*
 - Freedom Foundation *Summer 2019*
 - Learning For Justice *Fall 2019*
 - National Constitution Center *Summer 2020*
 - Street Law *Summer 2021*
 - National Endowment for the Humanities *Summer 2023*
 - National Council for Social Studies *Fall 2023*