

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: 10/04/2026

YOUR NAME: Brendan Trachsel

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ZIP: 86004

EMPLOYER: Northern Arizona University JOB TITLE: Student Development Coord. Sr.

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN FLAGSTAFF: 6 Years

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.***

B. Trachsel

Applicant Signature

Brendan Trachsel

(858)880-5962 | brendantrachsel@fastmail.com

October 4, 2026

Dear Flagstaff City Council,

It is my immense privilege to express my interest in the City Councilmember vacancy from Anthony Garcia's resignation. As a 25-year-old who has chosen Flagstaff as his home for six years, and hopefully much longer, I cannot think of a higher calling than serving the community I love. Ensuring that young people of present and future have the opportunity to call this place home is a vested interest of mine. After graduating with my bachelor's from NAU, I unfortunately was unable to obtain employment in my field locally and ended up traveling across the country for 11 months for work. The first chance I had I moved back for graduate school, where I graduated in May and thankfully secured full-time employment at the university. I believe similar circumstances affect many; how do we align opportunity with people's desires to stay here?

I've been reflecting recently about my interactions with Councilmember Garcia. The first time I met him was at an Arizona Board of Regents meeting at NAU after the encampment. It was a heated public comment with lots of accusations thrown around. One of the last to speak, he stressed the need for connection and community, emphasizing responsibility to give people a voice before it gets to the point of civil disobedience. During my Flock advocacy, we had a conversation of over an hour where we talked earnestly about the various perspectives around the system, misinformation and disinformation, and various potential responses. To me, he represented a thoughtful, considerate, and caring public servant who was rooted in the community and was in it for the right reasons. It is this behavior I hope I can emulate in life, and Anthony's replacement emulates in their role.

I understand I am not a traditional choice for a city councilmember, however I am prepared for the responsibility of the office and ready to learn whatever is needed. When young people look at government they do not see themselves in it; I see my application as an opportunity to begin changing that perspective. This is a City I love, and one that I've seen time and time again as incredibly responsive to community needs. I appreciate your consideration in allowing me to be part of the continued work of improving lives.

Sincerely,

Brendan Trachsel

Brendan Trachsel 2026 Council Application Question Responses

1. What makes a good Councilmember?
 - a. A councilmember ought to have certain fundamental intentions, beliefs, and practices in their work. Their intention, the fundamental reason for them being in this role, must be to serve their community and every person it consists of. If it entails any desire for greater titles or positions of power, the intention is wrong. A couple of short statements of belief that encompasses these intentions is that “The Noblest Motive is the Public Good”, and that the government is capable of, and has an obligation to, support the dignity and wellbeing of all people. Obligations lead us to practice. Council meetings & sessions should be treated like a college course - you are expected to do the reading beforehand and come with questions. Unlike a college course, you don’t do it for yourself; you do it for everyone else because it is what they deserve. Curiosity is the fuel that drives the vehicle of progress. This vehicle doesn’t just do laps around City Hall, but goes to the residents, city departments, and community organizations that are experiencing the conditions we create every day.
2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.
 - a. Despite some relief coming to the local rental market due to NAU’s enrollment, this is not being extended to the homebuying market. National policy is failing to alleviate foundational large-scale problems, seen through home prices not decreasing despite there being 58% more homes for sale than buyers for them nationally. This is largely due to sellers being comfortable sitting on a ~2% mortgage, but being unable to absorb a lower selling price and then paying a multitude-higher 7%+ mortgage on their next home. The result of this is that people are locked into their mortgages and others locked out of new opportunities. With such a widespread and foundational problem, what can a City do? I believe the solution is fundamentally new housing - not just rentals, but opportunities for people and families to build equity for their futures. Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Eric Wolverton first introduced this idea to me and I am fully bought in. These are investments in our future. Starter homes are just one piece.

Easing zoning regulations to allow home builders to diversify and adapt what they can build will give flexibility to lower costs. This is of the utmost importance because while homeowners cannot afford to lower their selling prices, for homebuilders it is an essential need due to the nature of homebuilder loans that are in the 15-20% range. This includes ending single family zoning. Flagstaff also needs to pass a source of income protection ordinance for renters and expand public housing.

3. What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?
 - a. My first priority, stemming from my Flock Camera advocacy in 2025, is enhancing the privacy rights of Flagstaff residents. Not just through administrative policy, but through binding ordinance. Respect for peoples' information, especially the collection and retention of such, is a fundamental part of recognizing the dignity of every person. It unfortunately has fallen to the wayside with recent advancements in technology. Flagstaff was early to the Flock issue and should be a shining example to the rest of the state to follow in this regard. My second priority is housing, to which I have spoken at length about in the previous question. To speak more about the public housing option, I am especially impressed by Montgomery County, Maryland's multi-income model that is financially sustainable, responsible, and includes a revolving fund to build more of it. Public housing should go beyond the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder because only then will it have the public buy-in and financial investment it needs to be successful. My third priority is transportation. If you live in the university-downtown core, it is relatively easy to get around without a car. Most people, especially long-term residents, do not live there. Flagstaff is making slow progress toward multimodal through investments in Mountain Line and some new bike infrastructure. We must quicken these investments along corridors that need them as well as ensure all residents benefit from our Mountain Line investments via going fare-free.
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?
 - a. Being connected to every single Flagstaff resident is simply not possible, and as a result we hear most from the particularly outspoken, retirees, organized groups,

and community leaders. Creating connections so that we can be no further than two degrees of separation from many community members is ideal, but still not enough. To reach individuals, I believe doorknocking isn't just for campaigning. Doorstep conversations with neighbors while doorknocking is when I have learned the most about issues affecting people's lives. The other side of that coin is creating bridges for people to reach out. This can look like being at the farmers' market, talking on Radio Sunnyside, or attending community meetings. Shutting up and listening is a primary responsibility of a councilmember. When a time comes where these means are not possible and a decision must be made, I believe it should be done through values-based consideration of the impacts of the decision, no matter the intention.

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?
 - a. The position of informal responsibility and leadership I found myself in during my Flock Camera advocacy was unique, particularly due to the extreme diversity of thought and opinion present in that coalition. It's not often that you find libertarians, anarchists, communists, conservatives, plain old privacy-minded people, and everyone in-between in one room. With that diversity came conflict about what to say, who to target, the importance of nonviolence, validity of information, and priorities. Being in defiant opposition - being loud and flashy - is easy; trying to create change is hard but courageous. At the core of all my actions and words was effectiveness toward goals. Trying to convince 4-7 people that the Flock contract should not be renewed was it. Cutting down cameras, publicly bashing officials, and spreading dubious information we saw online were consistently proposed by others and opposed by me. Even if we disagreed if it was morally right or not (it is fully wrong in my opinion), being able to get them to see it is wrong through their own lens was paramount. This is why understanding people is so important. I can't convince anyone of anything if I can't understand how they see and understand the world. As the Council and I both saw during that process it was not perfect; there were things we did not like seeing. Soft influence only goes so far, but unquestionably had an impact.

6. What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.
 - a. The leadership style I most resonate with is Servant Leadership, which I think is especially appropriate for public service. This particularly came about during my time at NAU. I spent 2.5 years as a part of the Associated Students of NAU, going from Supreme Court Justice to Student Body President during that time. During my presidency we restructured the entire organization, including a new constitution and org chart, as well as successfully advocating for increased transparency and services. Everything is done with the central question in mind: what would best serve students with the resources we have at hand? The end result was less bureaucracy, especially in funding student initiatives and organizations, expanding free menstrual products on campus, and for the first time having the university publish how fee money was allocated. Closer in time to my professional role at NAU, this looks like serving the student immediately in front of me. Just this past month, I was working on projects in my office where a student mentor came in with their mentee discussing their need to be assessed for dyslexia to unlock academic accommodations. This was outside of my wheelhouse, and the university did not have any dedicated resources for this sort of thing, but I knew there was a way to be the connector this student needs. After a few conversations, I was able to get the student \$35 discounted dyslexia testing. When people come to you as a last resort, we should take up the challenge.
7. What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?
 - a. Likely more than most people, but certainly lots more to learn - my background is in higher education. The Zoning Code is of course our guideline for the physical representation of our community. This includes the importance of cars through mandatory on-site parking, how people can build on land through setbacks, and of course our outdoor lighting standards. During my time in Flagstaff I've seen council give controversial exemptions to building height limits for structures, which I disagree with. What's the use of a purposeful zoning regulation if we give exemptions that circumvent the original purpose? I hope for the code to be simplified.

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?
 - a. I believe over years the City has impressively utilized federal funding opportunities to punch above our population's weight, especially in regards to infrastructure. Tough times will come, and federal funds are more volatile than ever, setting up a scene that we may have to rely on ourselves in the not-so-short future. I believe in these situations we must not give way to short-term thinking. Long-term planning prepares for these situations, such as the anticipated 2030 recession in the current budget, and will get us through them when they come. How do we maintain investments that have long-ranging effects such as education, deferred maintenance, infrastructure, and housing? When unemployment spikes, we need the scaffolding to keep people here, keep city services running, and avoid upping taxes when they are most damaging. Our focus must be what people need now as well as what will help them get back ahead. A keyword here is Resilience.

Brendan Trachsel

Flagstaff, Arizona

Education

Northern Arizona University

M.Ed. Counseling - Student Affairs - 2024-2026

Northern Arizona University

B.S. Parks and Recreation Management, Outdoor Education & Leadership - 2019-2023

Poway High School

2015-2019

Experience

Student Development Coordinator, Sr. - Mountain Jacks Mentoring

Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - May 2026 - Present

- Supervise 3 Graduate Assistants and oversee 40 student Peer Mentors
- Plan signature events with an emphasis on friendmaking opportunities
- Utilize assessment data and theory to determine best practices across mentoring program
- Develop workshops for and facilitate department, team, and committee meetings
- Represent department in divisional assessment team meetings, leading assessment strategies and execution
- Collaborate with campus partners to provide professional development and training opportunities

Graduate Assistant - Clubs, Organizations, Leadership Programs & Events

Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Jul 2025 - May 2026

- Support 350+ student organizations utilizing Anthology/Encoura Engage

- Collaborate with student leaders, advisors, and campus partners to promote engagement and leadership development
- Create and facilitate leadership workshops, officer trainings, and development programs
- Assist with hiring, training, and supervision of EDGE Leaders to enhance peer-led programming
- Co-coordinate large-scale campus events including Club Fairs, Lumberjack Welcome, and Flannels & Flapjacks
- Manage communication tools including Microsoft Teams, Outlook, Salesforce, Qualtrics, Canva, and Zoom
- Create content for social media channels to promote leadership and engagement opportunities
- Provide support to student organizations to enhance operations, governance, and member engagement
- Promote inclusive leadership initiatives aligned with values of belonging, equity, access, wellbeing, and service
- Analyze & report data from departmental assessment initiatives

Graduate Assistant - Graduate & Professional Studies

Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Aug 2024 - May 2025

- Compiled data, set up surveys, and shared results in Qualtrics to assess event & workshop outcomes
- Assisted in coordinating events, workshops, trainings, and scholarship awards
- Presented to and facilitated discussion with undergraduate student groups interested in graduate studies
- Monitored and co-managed departmental email accounts, responding to and directing student inquiries
- Created and published the OGPS newsletter every 3 weeks via MailChimp, increasing opens 250%
- Created & published static & video weekly content on Instagram, doubling view counts
- Managed OGPS WordPress website to effectively communicate processes and upcoming events
- Utilized Canva to create promotional materials and social media content

Chief of Staff

NAU Graduate Student Government - Flagstaff, AZ - May 2024 - Dec 2024

- Oversaw day-to-day GSG operations
- Monitored and managed GSG email and communications
- Reported and recommended appropriate policies to the executive committee
- Oversaw and met regularly with the executive committee
- Managed keeping of meeting minutes

Summer Fellow

Arizona Students' Association - Flagstaff, AZ - May 2024 - Aug 2024

- Registered community members to vote
- Door knocked utilizing the MiniVAN application
- Gathered signatures for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments
- Tabled at community events

Coordinator for Student Involvement

University of Maine - Orono, ME - Jun 2023 - May 2024

- Planned and executed 90 small-scale programs per year
- Planned and executed signature events such as Week of Welcome and Family & Friends Weekend
- Supervised and managed eSports Arena student staff and equipment
- Managed and approved groups, users, forms, and event submissions in Ready Education CampusGroups
- Assisted student organizations, including FSL, in planning events and practicing risk management
- Advised the Campus Activities Board and student government's entertainment committee
- Edited UMaine WordPress pages to effectively communicate events and information
- Managed Family & Friends Weekend participant registration payments in Touchnet
- Hired, approved time, and managed student employees in Oracle Peoplesoft
- Official liaison between the university and Town of Orono for election administration
- Wrote UMaine's 2024 Democratic Engagement Action Plan — the first time UMaine received ALL IN's Highly Established Action Plan seal
- Tracked departmental budget in Google Sheets for wages, supplies, and events
- Managed & set up professional audio equipment for live music & speaker events
- Performed CAS self-assessment for Campus Activities to compare against best practices

Student Body President

ASNAU: Associated Students of Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Apr 2022 - May 2023

- Led an organization of 38 employees across direct and distributed reporting structures
- Oversaw \$1 million+ annual department budget
- Served on the University Advisory, Budget Advisory, Strategic Planning Advisory, and Campus Master Planning Committees and Boards
- Met with diverse student organizations about their needs
- Served on search committees for executive university positions

- Met with university administrators, government officials, and community organizations about addressing student needs
- Conceptualized, planned, and executed an off-site retreat — the first in decades
- Opening speaker at NAU's Spring 2023 commencement

Senator

ASNAU: Associated Students of Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Dec 2021 - May 2022

- Focused on student civic engagement and on-campus housing rates. Served on housing rate-setting committee.

Student State Affairs Director

ASNAU: Associated Students of Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Jul 2021 - Dec 2021

- Registered students to vote and compiled elected official contact information for the NAU campus.

Associate Supreme Court Justice

ASNAU: Associated Students of Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Oct 2020 - Jul 2021

Outdoor Adventures Intern

Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - May 2022 - Jul 2022

- Researched funding sources for Campus Recreation
- Served on Campus Recreation Director search committee
- Created trip proposals for future programs, including costs and logistics
- Facilitated challenge course programming
- Rented equipment & processed payments through Fusion
- Attended to indoor and portable climbing wall

Peer Jacks Mentor

Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Aug 2021 - Nov 2021

- Assisted first-year students with their transition to NAU
- Met 1:1 in biweekly meetings with mentees
- Connected students to appropriate resources
- Managed cases and notes in Salesforce

Activity Head

Camp Agawam - Raymond, ME - Jun 2021 - Aug 2021

Led and facilitated activities such as Archery, Challenge Course, Baseball, and Outdoor Trips. Managed staff under the Archery program. Cabin counselor for campers.

Resident Assistant

Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff, AZ - Jul 2020 - May 2021

Substitute Program Aide - ESS

Poway Unified School District - Poway, CA - May 2018 - Oct 2020

Began as a High School Aide. Assisted in planning and leading activities including recreation, crafts, and science in a day-camp and after-school environment.

General Counselor

Pali Adventures - May 2020 - Jun 2020

Site Support Staff

Camp Cedar Glen - Julian, CA - Feb 2019 - Jul 2019

Junior Counselor

Pali Adventures - Running Springs, CA - Jun 2018 - Jul 2018

Volunteering

Transit Advisory Committee

Mountain Line Flagstaff - Apr 2022 - May 2023, Jul 2025 - April 2026

First served as NAU Student representative on the committee. Later appointed by Councilmember Spence in July 2025 as the Alternate Citizen Representative.

Junior Steward

Flagstaff Lodge No. 7 F&AM - Jan 2026 - Present

- Assist with meal, snack, and beverage inventory, procurement, preparation, and service
- Prepare & reset lodge spaces before & after use

Chairperson

Green Party of Coconino County - Apr 2025 - Present

Appointed by the Arizona Green Party. GPCC newly qualified as a county-level political party.

Certifications

- Technician Class Amateur Radio Operator, Federal Communications Commission
 - Master Educator, Leave No Trace
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Honors & Awards

- First Year Student of the Month, December 2019, National Association of College and University Residence Halls
- Student of the Year, March 2020, Residence Hall Association at NAU
- Outstanding Leadership Pin, March 2020, Residence Hall Association at NAU
- Student Organization Event of the Year, March 2022, Associated Students of Northern Arizona University
- Gold Axe Award, April 2023, Northern Arizona University
- Outstanding Senior, May 2023, NAU College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
- Program of the Year, April 2024, University of Maine Student Life