

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: 10/11/2026

YOUR NAME: Samuel Ray Ogden

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ZIP: 86005

EMPLOYER: Self - Clear Path Technical Documentat JOB TITLE: Technical Writer

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN FLAGSTAFF: 2 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.***

Samuel R Ogden Digitally signed by Samuel R Ogden
Date: 2026.10.11 11:43:45 -07'00'
Applicant Signature

Samuel Ray Ogden

Flagstaff Resident

Contact

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<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sam-ogden-b232488/>

To the City of Flagstaff:
City Councilmembers

To the Flagstaff City Councilmembers:

I am writing this letter to express my interest in being considered for appointment to the City Councilmember seat recently vacated by Anthony Garcia.

After visiting on a couple of occasions, my wife and I fell in love with Flagstaff and moved here permanently in 2024.

We were fortunate to have been working as professionals in the tech industry (both in a remote capacity), which allowed us to make the move and retain our jobs. However, in January of this year, due to paradigm shifts in the industry caused by the advent of AI, I was let go from my position in an enterprise-wide reduction in force.

Rather than see that as a setback, I have viewed it as an opportunity to transition to a role in which I work in and serve the community directly, instead of for a company located in another city or state. In that pursuit, I have even researched and applied for a handful of City and county jobs where I thought I could have a positive and important impact.

While the bulk of my background is rooted in technology, and while the tech industry has provided me with a good career, I have always been a student of government and local politics. I was raised in a family that saw my father involved in local politics as an elected official, and the importance of helping and serving our neighbors was instilled in me and my siblings from an early age. I was a political science major at the University of Texas, and I worked in the Texas State Senate while a student.

I am a strong proponent of committed and incisive public servants. And to be one for the city that has accepted me into its fold would be an honor. I am deeply motivated to take advantage of this opportunity and to contribute directly to my community.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story. I look forward to the possibility of discussing how my skills, knowledge, and passion for public service can benefit the City of Flagstaff.

At your convenience, please contact me at [REDACTED], or email me at [REDACTED].

Samuel R Ogden

Answers to Application Questions

1. What makes a good Councilmember?

A strong city councilmember balances the community's long-term vision with practical governance by setting clear policy, collaborating effectively, and protecting Flagstaff residents' quality of life.

They should understand residents' views on specific issues and craft solutions consistent with the community's prevailing values.

In the current climate, I believe it is also important to recognize how emerging trends, such as AI-driven industry changes, could affect the city and act early to prepare for downstream impacts.

In short, effective councilmembers lead with vision, sound judgment, integrity, and teamwork.

Key Traits and Habits

- **Community-Focused:** Puts Flagstaff's long-term well-being ahead of personal agendas and considers impacts across the city.
- **Prepared and Informed:** Reviews materials, budgets, and local pressures, including housing, tourism, NAU, water, snow operations, wildfire, flooding, and high-elevation infrastructure.
- **Open-Minded:** Listens respectfully to residents, staff, businesses, neighborhoods, and colleagues.
On contentious issues, they should remain respectful and reconsider positions when new facts or perspectives emerge.
- **Collaborative:** Builds agreement within the council and with regional governments, NAU, Tribal Nations, agencies, and community groups.
- **Ethical and Respectful:** Follows legal requirements, avoids conflicts, and treats others courteously.
Trust requires transparency about how and why decisions are made.
- **Constituent Communication:** Responds promptly, explains city responsibilities, and connects residents with the appropriate department.

Samuel R Ogden

Respect for Roles: In Flagstaff's council-manager government, elected officials set policy, budgets, and direction; the city manager and staff manage operations. Councilmembers should demand accountability without directing employees or projects.

2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff?

(Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.)

Flagstaff's most consequential municipal challenge is the shortage of affordable housing available to year-round residents. My wife and I saw the problem firsthand when moving to Flagstaff from Houston. Although we could afford to buy here, home prices clearly exclude many households and threaten the long-term health of the community. Flagstaff declared a housing emergency in 2020 and set a goal of creating or preserving 7,976 homes by 2031, with at least 10% affordable.

Recent figures underscore the urgency: the median home sold for about \$701,000 in June 2026; only 27.1% of homes were below \$500,000; median household income was about \$71,512; average rent was roughly \$2,300 per month; and housing costs were 50.4% above the national average. These conditions hinder recruitment of teachers, public-safety personnel, healthcare workers, and city employees, while increasing commuting, displacement, homelessness, and workforce shortages.

The problem is difficult because developable land is limited, construction and infrastructure are costly, and demand from tourism, second homes, and Northern Arizona University competes with resident needs. Legitimate environmental, design, and contractor concerns also complicate projects.

The City Council should combine increased supply with lasting affordability, allow more missing-middle housing, focus density near transit and jobs, use city-owned land through long-term leases; streamline affordable-project reviews, preserve lower-cost properties, expand land trusts and deed restrictions, coordinate workforce housing with major employers, and publish a quarterly progress dashboard.

Housing should be treated as essential infrastructure, balancing growth with protections for local workers and lower-income residents.

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

- Housing Affordability and Cost of Living
- Infrastructure, Core Services, and Public Safety
- Climate Action, Environmental Stewardship, and Sustainability

Note: Having already gone on record as saying the affordable housing issue is the most important issue facing the council, I'll also list it as my top priority.

Housing Affordability and Cost of Living

Every councilmember's continuing priority should be addressing Flagstaff's affordability crisis, including the broader cost of living.

Affordable housing enables lower-income workers to live, work, and contribute locally. A healthy city needs residents across the income spectrum, from retirees and professionals to teachers, first responders, service workers, and sanitation staff. Without that balance, employers cannot fill essential roles, businesses struggle, and schools risk losing talented educators and funding.

Left unaddressed, these pressures could turn Flagstaff into an enclave for the affluent and undermine its long-term vitality.

Relevant Action Items to consider: Implement the city's 10-Year Housing Plan; pursue workforce housing on city-owned land; streamline development and permitting; and balance water and sewer rates with infrastructure needs and household affordability.

Infrastructure, Core Services, and Public Safety

Reliable infrastructure and adaptation to Flagstaff's mountain environment are core municipal responsibilities. Councilmembers should ensure taxpayer dollars deliver high-quality essential services.

Relevant Action Items to consider: Support first responders; reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health; advance flood mitigation; protect water resources; and complete transportation and street improvements consistent with the Flagstaff Regional Land Use Plan 2045.

Climate Action, Environmental Stewardship, and Sustainability

Flagstaff's environmental leadership—including protection of its dark skies and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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?

The first thing is to not only make every attempt to hear all segments of the population on all issues, but also to ensure their positions are well understood before making decisions that could affect them.

But if for some reason that is not possible, I would consider holding off on any decision until all voices can be heard, if possible. I would make an attempt to meet with the leading voices of that segment, whether in a formal council setting or by going out and talking to them in person, and then making the decision fully informed of all positions.

However, I understand there may be circumstances where time is of the essence. There may be emergency situations, and a decision must be made immediately on a particular issue. Or there may be circumstances where we simply receive no input from a segment of the population. In such cases, I would make a concerted effort to determine and understand what the unheard segment of the population's position would be on my own and act accordingly. And I would seek to leave options open (procedurally) for updates on the council's actions as soon as those important voices can be heard.

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?

During a major service disruption while working at a mobile payments company, I became the unexpected point person. Our eastern processing region failed while the network operations lead was offline, putting hundreds of thousands of dollars in transactions at risk. I had just recently documented the team's failover plan, though it was yet unpublished, and was the only person onsite who knew the full process.

As transactions timed out, the operations lead asked me by phone to coordinate with the lead network engineer and guide the team through the existing plan.

Engineers split into two camps: switch immediately to limit declined payments, or wait for recovery to avoid duplicate transactions and difficult cleanup.

I redirected the debate to the runbook. I asked the database engineer to measure backup lag, the payments analyst to estimate in-progress transactions, and infrastructure to confirm the western region was healthy.

Based on those checks, I recommended a gradual switch; route a small amount of lower-risk traffic west, pause retries for active transactions, and increase traffic only after five clean minutes.

This balanced speed and safety. Test traffic succeeded, the systems synchronized, and we completed the failover without duplicate charges or lost transactions. After stabilization, I documented our decisions and added the gradual approach's pros and cons to the runbook.

The experience taught me that being the point person is not about insisting on my own answer. It is about helping people with different views use their shared preparation to make a safe decision together.

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

My leadership style, shaped by corporate team-lead roles and years of athletics coaching, is grounded in calm judgment, fairness, and respect. I seek the facts, consider different perspectives, and create an environment where people can share ideas, concerns, and honest feedback. Kindness and humor help me build trust, ease tension, and keep teams connected.

Leadership also requires courage. I make difficult decisions when necessary, explain them clearly, and apply them consistently. My goal is to balance empathy with accountability by supporting people, setting clear expectations, and acting decisively in the team's or organization's best interests.

A recent family experience illustrates these qualities. As my father has aged and developed serious health problems, my three siblings and I have faced emotionally difficult decisions about his care and future.

Although I am the second-oldest, I have become the primary point person for those decisions.

When some siblings considered filing malpractice claims over care preceding his cancer diagnosis, I reviewed each case objectively and promised action if evidence supported it. None did. That measured approach reduced conflict and allowed us to focus on his treatment.

After he broke his hip, some siblings wanted to manage his rehabilitation themselves. I researched providers' experience and quality, helping the family trust qualified experts. His rehabilitation was successful.

We are now evaluating long-term care options. Emotions still rise, but we largely approach the task calmly and thoughtfully, knowing that disciplined, compassionate decisions will serve him best.

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

I became more familiar with the City of Flagstaff Land Development Code after moving here, although I reviewed it briefly while researching our home purchase.

Like many residents, most of my current understanding comes from news coverage and City Council records.

At its core, the Zoning Code implements the city's Regional Plan and Specific Plans through rules governing land use, growth, environmental protection, conservation, housing, sustainability, public safety, and water resources.

In practice, it regulates lot sizes, building placement, landscaping, outdoor lighting, and signage.

It also protects Flagstaff's ponderosa pine forest and mountain setting while reducing conflicts between incompatible development.

The code divides the city into standard and transect zones and addresses housing and climate needs by supporting affordable housing, middle-housing options, and flexible master-planned communities.

I am still studying the details, but its "Place-Based Approach to Zoning" captures what I see as a forward-looking framework.

Transect zones, for example, organize development along a spectrum from rural to urban intensity rather than strictly separating uses, as traditional zoning often does.

This place-based, fine-grained approach allows a location to reflect multiple transect characteristics and be developed or regulated accordingly.

To me, it offers a more comprehensive approach to land use.

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 see the budget as one of the Council's most important policy tools. It turns Flagstaff's long-term vision into action. To balance the seven community priorities with financial realities, I would use four principles.

1. Set clear priorities

The Council should define measurable outcomes for each priority and require every budget request to identify the community priority and Council policy it advances. The city manager and staff should retain responsibility for implementation.

2. Use sustainable funding

Ongoing commitments should rely on dependable recurring revenue, not temporary surpluses or one-time grants. Multi-year forecasts should guide decisions, while strong reserves and core services remain protected.

3. Fund needs in a clear order

- First, meet legal obligations and fund essential infrastructure, safety, and services.
- Next, phase in established strategic priorities as sustainable revenue becomes available.
- Finally, test emerging ideas through pilots, grants, one-time funds, and partnerships.

4. Make trade-offs transparent

Residents should be able to understand competing costs and weigh in on choices. Public forums and clear budget tools can align expectations with available resources. The Council should also review results regularly and redirect money from underperforming programs to higher-priority needs.

Samuel R. Ogden

PRINCIPAL TECHNICAL WRITER | TECHNICAL EDITOR | CONTENT STRATEGIST

Flagstaff, AZ 86005 | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [linkedin.com/in/sam-ogden-b232488](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sam-ogden-b232488)

Professional Summary

Technical content leader with deep experience in enterprise software, API integrations, mobile payment platforms, and banking technology. Partners effectively with product, engineering, marketing, and subject-matter experts to set documentation standards, align cross-functional teams, mentor writers, and deliver clear, high-visibility content throughout the software development lifecycle.

Core Expertise

Content leadership: Documentation strategy, editorial standards, templates, team leadership, mentoring, compliance awareness

Delivery: SDLC integration, milestone tracking, Agile (Scrum, Kanban, Scrumban), Waterfall, cross-functional collaboration

Authoring and design: MadCap Flare, FrameMaker, RoboHelp, Captivate, Author-it, Snagit, Camtasia, HTML, XHTML, CSS

Platforms and tools: Microsoft 365, SharePoint, ServiceNow, Jira, Confluence, TFS, Git, Swagger, Postman

Professional Experience

PDI Technologies, Inc. | Alpharetta, GA | April 2025–January 2026

Principal Technical Writer

- Continued ownership of documentation for P97 legacy systems and established PDI platforms following PDI Technologies' acquisition of P97 Networks.

P97 Networks, LLC | Houston, TX | September 2022–April 2025

Senior Technical Writer

- Built, maintained, and edited an enterprise-wide technical documentation library for mobile payment applications spanning retail fueling, EV charging, car wash, subscriptions, loyalty, and pay-ahead services.
- Produced Help systems, installation guides, API and SDK integration guides, developer guides, and internal and client-facing documentation covering applications, message schemas, administrative portals, and cloud databases.
- Created data center failover procedures, POS installation and configuration guides, and Help Desk guidebooks.
- Partnered with product marketing and sales on website content, brochures, end-to-end demo materials, and video narration scripts.
- Collaborated with SMEs, developers, and stakeholders to deliver documentation on schedule from proof of concept through General Availability.
- Established reusable templates and layouts and migrated Word-based documentation to dynamic, interactive online formats.

Fiserv, Inc. | Brookfield, WI | October 1999–July 2022

Senior Technical Writer

- Produced Help systems, installation guides, release notes, client communications, developer guides, and other documentation for core banking, API, teller, and back-office software.
- Collaborated with SMEs, development teams, and stakeholders to deliver product documentation on schedule from inception through General Availability.
- Built complete documentation suites and standardized templates for user guides, installation guides, and Help systems.
- Led migrations from FrameMaker and Word to WebWorks ePublisher and MadCap Flare, enabling single-source HTML5, PDF, Word, and DITA outputs with Git-based source control.
- Served as the team's MadCap Flare subject-matter expert and contributed to the organization's online style guide.

Houston Texans NFL Franchise | Houston, TX | August 2006–January 2025

Game Day Production Staff / Spotter for Public Address Announcer

- Monitored live games and relayed relevant on-field information to the stadium public address announcer for accurate, timely delivery to the in-stadium audience.

Additional Experience

Freelance Website Design | Houston, TX — Manager / Designer

Freelance Journalism | Houston, TX — Contract Contributor

Compaq Computer Corp. | Houston, TX — Manufacturing Debugger / Technical Writer

Education

University of Texas at Austin

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science (Pre-Law) and English