



## **Carrollton Police Officer' Association**

### **Candidate Questions**

### **Mike Dooling**

Below are a list of questions that the Carrollton Police Officers' Association (CPOA) believes your answers will be important for both the citizens of Carrollton and the CPOA's membership to know.

1. **What do you bring to the table that qualifies you to be a member of the Carrollton City Council?**

Experience. I have been attending most council meetings and working sessions since 2017. I'm not talking about watching the videos, I've been there, in the conference room and chambers. I download the full agenda in advance and review them to see if I may want to speak during public comment. I've attended the Citizens Police Academy in 2019 and the Citizens Fire Academy in 2018 and am a current member of the mayors Advisory Council and the Carrollton Disaster Response Alliance. I have the experience, and the desire to keep our city safe and a desired destination for residents.

- I had the opportunity to serve on the Dallas Grand Jury for 6 months during the pandemic. It was an amazing experience considering the circumstances, but an exceptionally enlightening experience. I saw the Fentanyl and catalytic converter problems two years ago, and here they are, larger than life in Carrollton now.

2. **List and briefly explain your top three priorities for the City of Carrollton, and how you plan to accomplish these priorities.**

- Public safety: Our police and fire have done a spectacular job, although they're increasingly asked to do more with less. We need to do better and have the conversation now, before the risk starts to seriously manifest in officers and citizens' lives. We are short 25 officers at last count and have had several tenured officers' leave. I don't blame these officers for leaving, they have to do what's best for themselves, but with this level of attrition, as a citizen I have to wonder what could have been done to keep them here? I do recognize normal churn in

manpower, working in the private/corporate sector in IT & InfoSec for 30+ years, but 25 is a LOT of vacancies for a department our size. I am concerned not only for maintaining the PDs culture of community involvement, but also the organizational knowledge and culture and most importantly, the safety of our officers having to cover for all these vacancies. As a 20+ year resident of Carrollton, I have wondered what various options are being considered. Does the city need to reconsider benefits and compensation in order to address turnover? Or are there institutional or culture issues causing officers to leave? I recognize that Carrollton continues to grow, even though our growth is now in-fill and redevelopment, the city is destined to become denser as we grow. Manpower, facilities, processes, training, and equipment need to be maintained, upgraded, and replaced.

- Infrastructure: No brainer, we have older parts of the city that require updates and maintenance. Streets, sewer, lighting to address immediate needs. Apparently, there are areas that were supposedly provided for by bond election 10 years ago – that still haven't completed. I understand that delays happen, but when they do, the people of Carrollton deserve updates. This requires transparency by the city. Perhaps more easily accessible online project information for the citizens of Carrollton?

**3. Considering that the City of Carrollton has almost been built out and is land locked, how do you plan on managing and increasing the abilities of the Police Department to safely and efficiently service the citizens of Carrollton ?**

Carrollton will continue to grow, albeit with in-fill and redevelopment the city will likely become denser with more multi-use developments to expand our tax base and population. I understand the use of technology is often one of the first options reviewed, but I'd also like to consider more public outreach and volunteer opportunities for outreach and support. The Citizens On Patrol (COP) program with the CCPAAA, of which I'm a member, does provide some manpower relief for non-critical services and I believe that this continues to be a great way to involve the residents with our city and law enforcement and would love to see it expanded as part of an even greater community awareness and outreach program. Lets consider how we can expand this to awareness on key issues such as the fentanyl crisis.

4. **What are your thoughts on the types of crimes that should be aggressively investigated and what crimes should the Carrollton Police Department not be proactive in confronting?**

This is an interesting question. We are a nation of laws, but I truly believe that there are laws that are just archaic or never fulfilled their intended purpose, and our LEOs are tasked with enforcing all of them. This means that more and more discretion have to be used in determining who to arrest for what, and the tradeoffs associated, including possible negative consequences of MISSED opportunities. Our legal system is so broad, I have a hard time starting, but let's start with violent crimes, nonviolent crimes, versus victimless crimes. I would obviously want us to prioritize violent crimes and then nonviolent crimes, simply because they directly impact the safety of the people in our community and our officers. I'm not even sure council has any impact or say in these priorities, but as mentioned previously I am concerned about the safety of our officers and community, being understaffed with excessive priorities, it's only a matter of time for mistakes and unforced errors to occur. I don't want any more victims like my fellow Marine, Officer Steve Nothem. He needs to be our last lost in the line of duty.

5. **Do you believe that 2 police officers per 1000 citizens should be the standard that you would like to set to staff the Carrollton Police Department? If not, what should be the staffing level?**

Isn't this about a half person short? I mentioned earlier my concerns about current staffing levels. This is unsatisfactory and will not do. I don't know why we are in this position, but I hope to find out. It's not likely going to be one single reason, nor one answer to get us out, but we MUST have this conversation. What is/are the problems, and how do we correct them and KEEP them fixed? I suspect that we can't just hire a bunch of new officers, so how do we recruit experienced officers that will fit within our Carrollton culture or otherwise enhance our culture?

6. **In light of the above question, do you believe that City Management, the Police Chief, and the CPOA need to work together and select an outside organization that can conduct a full staffing study that will take into account call volume, call duration, investigative needs, community involvement, relief factors, training requirements and other factors to determine what the staffing level should be?**

ABSOLUTELY – I believe I've already raised this prospect in previous responses. A full staffing study should be just the jump-off point for all of the city's turnover issues.

7. **What would be your strategy to recruit in a very competitive job market? Not only in the competitive field of Law Enforcement, but also in the highly challenging North Texas market? What standards, if any, would you support lowering to obtain more applications?**

First of all, do we need to relax standards? As a citizen of Carrollton, I am extremely proud of our police department, particularly in light of all the negative media that's out there today. Media is a separate, vicious beast that I worry will continue to keep humanity divided in their constant drive for profits, but I do have concerns about a relaxing of standards that may drop our department from our current position of NOT being a media target whenever we are in the news. I don't have any evidence that this IS happening, I'm just concerned that it MAY. I would hope that a staffing study mentioned above would not only address possible retention solutions but hiring solutions as well. I'd be very open to hearing such recommendations. This isn't my career, so there's no way I can have all those answers, but we MUST start having such conversations to address this BEFORE it becomes a huge problem. These standards are something I'd like to know more about so I could speak more intelligently to before committing to changing them – but I wouldn't be opposed to relaxing or eliminating frivolous or otherwise useless or marginal standards. This conversation should include City Management, PD leadership as well as the CPOA, because such decisions will very likely have an impact on public and officer safety.

**8. Do you support holding city management, at all levels, accountable for the cities' recruitment and retention issues, employee morale challenges and equipment difficulties?**

They are ABSOLUTELY part of this equation, and therefore should also be accountable.

- Aside from the budget every year, I've often heard various equipment contracts come across at council, and there's usually very little talk about other bids or alternatives, and I don't recall hearing about a contract review process within the city. Non-competitive contracts without review too often leads to inconsistent fulfillment of those contracts. I may be wrong, but this is something that responsible organizations do.
- Policies should be reviewed regarding recruitment and retention, including those regarding external hiring versus internal promotion.

**9. How often do you believe the City Manager should meet with the CPOA? Should there only be meetings when issues come up, or should there be an open dialogue between them?**

I am a firm believer of ongoing communications between management and representation. Too often, by the time a problem has arisen, it's too late for somebody, and in this line of work that too late may be tragic and terminal. Weekly or biweekly may be too frequent, but I don't think quarterly would be enough.

- The Civil Service Commission, which I've applied for appointment to for years, meets monthly. This should be a fine frequency for a CPOA/City Manager standup meeting.

- Has anybody considered a committee of appointed residents as an extension of our current public outreach efforts? This would be a great opportunity for city and PD leadership, as well as CPOA to ensure transparency between city staff, public safety, and our citizens? This may be a great way to brainstorm possible approaches to crises like our current fentanyl problem

**10. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us that would be important for us to consider for an endorsement?**

My dedication to service, as a Marine and disaster response team member, through activism at my state and federal government legislatures and years of attending city council sessions, coupled with my professional experience in business and information security; Gathering the information needed from various sources to identify potential solutions and collaborating toward compromise to deliver effective solutions.

Public safety is a keystone for any municipality, and Carrollton has been a continuous beacon in what can often be a bleak media horizon. I want Carrollton to continue to lead in public outreach and acceptance and safety, but it all starts with our people, their training, policies and equipment.

Thank you for your consideration.