



Carrollton Police Officer' Association

Candidate Questions

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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?

For starters....courage. Courage, sadly, is something I've seen missing on Carrollton City Council since I have been following it, and for the 2+ years that I have been serving. I have so very rarely seen Council members, or the mayor at the time, stand up for what they believed was right, and/or right for the city, when doing so meant they might end up in the uncomfortable position of being in the minority. I am proud that in my time on Council, I have registered more votes in the minority than any Council member in memory, and by a large margin. As Mayor, I would expect this level of autonomy and zealous advocacy from our residents' representatives on Council. I would make it safe to vote in opposition and would encourage Council members to vote their conscience. Unlike current and prior leadership, that seemed to believe the goal was for every vote to be unanimous, my belief is that is the sign of a broken system that is not failing to be the voice of their constituents. I encourage a robust, yet respectful debate, and would expect to see many more 6-1, 5-2, and 4-3 votes in the future.

I also bring a long history of actual service. No sitting around in some ivory tower here. I like being in trenches and learning firsthand about something versus looking at it from 30,000 feet. Plus, as was further instilled in me during my time in the military, I am all about service in pursuit of making this world a little bit better, even if that is just for one person on a particular day. After the 2019 tornado that cut through my childhood neighborhood in north Dallas, I pursued learning about disaster response, attended several trainings, and am now a member of the Denton County Community Emergency Response Team and the Carrollton Disaster Response Alliance. In 2020, when Metrocrest Services could not permit their older volunteers to serve, as they were at high risk of contracting and having a severe case of COVID, I stepped in and volunteered over a hundred hours at the food pantry. See a need, fill a need. In 2021, once vaccines were available, I joined Denton County's Medical Reserve Corp, and began volunteering at the large-scale vaccine clinic at Texas Motor Speedway. This, the service aspect, is a quality that residents and voters should require from their leaders. Those leaders should lead by example and inspire others to follow that example.

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

Combatting Fentanyl and drug overdoses has to be the top priority because that has caused more preventable deaths of Carrollton's youngest residents than anything else these past six months. While eliminating this scourge is all but impossible, we damn sure are going to try and do the best with the resources we can muster. This starts by getting CPD fully staffed to the 182 officer level, of which we are currently operating closer to 155. We will restart the drug taskforce, hire an actual PIO, and dedicate the resources required to attack this problem and make Carrollton a very unwelcome community for those that want to distribute drugs here. This has to include quarterly drug education and interdiction programs, both hosted by the city and the schools. CFBISD also has to address their truancy policies and enforcement. Carrollton also has to invest more in South Carrollton to help lift some of these neighborhoods up, and provide alternatives where these kids can spend time after school and on weekends participating in activities and in surroundings that help nurture them and help them build the self-esteem and tools to combat peer pressure that so often leads to drug use. Carrollton should also partner with organizations like the Recovery Resource Council's Overdose Response Team (ORT), to provide aftercare and services for those kids who do survive an overdose, so that they reenter the schools and community with the support and backing that can help prevent them from using again.

My next priority is addressing the concept that Carrollton is somehow doing more with less, compared to other cities around us. I'm of the belief that Carrollton is doing LESS with less. I believe that is shown in CPD's staffing, and our inability to cover any of the overlapping shifts. I believe it is evident in the pace with which we complete already funded projects, with some taking more than ten years to break ground and thus delaying any value that would be realized by the community. I also believe that we are doing less with less when some basic maintenance tasks go unfixed. For example, for a city of our size, I would expect us to have an HVAC trained tech on staff. It is my understanding that we don't. To address this we have to fight to create a new mindset, and have many serious discussions about Carrollton's value proposition and the contract that we have with our residents and business owners. We need to deliver more, we need to deliver in a timelier fashion, and we need to do so in such a way that it protects and where possible enhances the quality of life of our residents.

My third priority is that Carrollton MUST become competitive. Addressing this will require approaching it from many angles. We must modernize and present a more contemporary, energetic, and vibrant city. We must expand and become much more creative in our economic development efforts to create opportunities for Carrollton to stand out. We also must create DESTINATIONS in Carrollton that draw people to our city, instead of them simply passing through on our highways and streets on their way to somewhere else.

- 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 ?**

Having appropriate staffing levels is the starting point and getting us up to the approved level of 182 officers is where that begins. Also, utilizing technology as a force multiplier is another. The fact that we only have 13 Flock cameras deployed, and that our Street Crimes personnel are regularly having to spend their valuable time relocating them to hot spots, is baffling. For a city our size, roughly 37 square miles, with upwards of twenty major intersections, we should probably have between 30 and 40 of these in fixed installations so that we can more quickly track and respond to crimes in real-time and as an investigative tool. I previously mentioned the need to restart Carrollton's anti-drug taskforce. Additionally, with Chief Arredondo recently taking the helm, I'd like to hear what he believes is required for CPD to be successful in his mission. Despite spending time on Council, completing the Citizen's Police Academy, going for a ride-a-long, and asking lots of questions, I still have to defer to those that have decades of experience on the front lines to tell us what we need. I believe in a ground up philosophy, not top down.

- 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?**

Any crime that is killing our kids MUST be aggressively investigated. This, obviously, includes the illegal distribution of drugs such as Fentanyl, and should include any illicit drug use or distribution happening inside of our schools. Our centers for learning must be safe and free of this pestilence. All violent crimes should be aggressively pursued to deliver justice for the victim(s). I would also want any crimes that are deliberately targeting children or seniors to receive top priority as we must protect our most vulnerable. I would also want any suspected hate crime(s) to be vigorously pursued. We benefit from having a very diverse community, and we should have a very firm stance that we will not tolerate anyone being intimidated or attacked because of the color of their skin, their religious views, their gender, or sexual orientation.

Regarding crimes that we should not be proactively confronting, I believe this is mostly a function of resources and where time should be best spent. It is probably impractical to try and chase down isolated low-level property crimes. If someone shoplifts \$50 of food and diapers, there is no need to call out the fugitive task force. The same goes for most car break-ins or instances such as when a pressure washer was stolen out of my garage. Where my opinion on this changes is if these thefts are aggravated in any way, such as by the presence of a weapon. Also, if these crimes are part of a broader pattern, such as the recent catalytic converter thefts, we need to try and get to the bottom of that. Lastly, I believe it is mostly a waste of time for police resources to be used to prosecute low level marijuana possession by adults. If that's what folks want to do in the comfort of their own homes, to me that's their business. Plus, given that I want to change CPD's policy so that we will accept applicants who admit to prior marijuana use, pursuing low level marijuana possession feels hypocritical.

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?

Two officers per 1000 seems to be slightly on the high side for a city of 140K, but not by much. I have looked into this previously and have spoken to CPD leadership on this very topic. As it was explained to me, larger cities require a greater number of officers per capita than mid-size and smaller jurisdictions. Looking at the table below, compiled by the FBI using 2016 data, the average number of officers per 10K residents is 15.9 officers.

Assuming Carrollton has a population of 140K, if we were operating with the average number of officers per this table, we would employ 222 officers, which is a full 40 more officers than the currently approved 182 (176 + 6 overage), and that is about 65 more than we currently have in the field. I believe staffing up to a level that is closer to the mean is a more appropriate next step assuming a staffing study suggests it is warranted. Adding another 125 officers, to the 155 currently in the field, is too big a jump for me to support without more evidence to suggest it is needed.

SOURCE: *Governing* calculations of 2016 FBI UCR data.

Jurisdiction Population	Average Officers Per 10k Population	Average Total Personnel Per 10k Population	Number of Departments
25,000-50,000	17.0	21.2	773
50,000-100,000	16.1	20.7	433
100,000-200,000	15.9	20.9	171
200,000-500,000	18.7	24.5	76
500,000+	24.3	30.8	32
All over 25,000	16.8	21.4	1,485

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 consider 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 also believe facilities needs to be part of that study as I don't know that our current police station is equipped to support a significant increase in the number of officers, if that is the determination. Facility capacity should not factor into the final recommendation except as it might dictate the need for expansion of the facilities required to support CPD in its mission.

6. 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?

Current societal factors and recent events are making it increasingly difficult to attract young recruits to law enforcement. How we go about appealing to them requires greater emphasis on the technology behind policing and catching their attention earlier, in middle school and high school, and early in their college career. We need to foster a service mindset and make a career in law enforcement a very visible and viable option. There also need to be pathways provided. I know that there are some area CTECs that offer paramedic and firefighter training. When a student graduates from those high schools, they are either certified or ready to be certified, they are prepared to score well on the Civil Service exam, and they are lined up to join a local fire department in short order.

What I don't recall seeing is a similar program for law enforcement and criminology. Partnering with the school districts to create a law enforcement pathway would be another great avenue, coupled with expansion of the intern program. We cannot stop at high school. We need to also work with the community colleges and area 4yr colleges to promote a pathway to law enforcement, similar to the programs they have that help students start a career in nursing.

Regarding college, Carrollton needs to first and foremost start offering between \$6000-\$7500 in annual tuition reimbursement for employees, including law enforcement, that are pursuing approved degree plans. This is a standard part of most organizations' benefits packages, and one that Carrollton needs to adopt. Carrollton could also work in a student loan payment plan for new officers that commit to serving a minimum of five years at CPD.

There are more steps that need to be taken to help Carrollton and the many other agencies across the United States that are struggling to fill these openings. We regularly hear from state and federal politicians that they support law enforcement and first responders. We need both entities to authorize funds to create a statewide and/or nationwide marketing program that will help promote a career in law enforcement and create a different narrative about life as a police officer than the ones that are making headlines these days.

Lastly, we have to discuss retention, something that is currently a challenge at CPD. It is my understanding that it takes a CPD officer fifteen years to max out in their positions pay range. Supposedly it takes seven years to top out within Farmers Branch PD, and a mere five years to hit that ceiling at Irving PD. THAT has to change. We have no excuse for not being competitive with our neighbors when it comes to salary and the rate of increases. Achieve parity between our compensation and benefits packages and those of our neighbors, and our rate of attrition will drop significantly. And please give our officers more paid holidays!

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

Yes!

8. **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 do not know what an appropriate rhythm for scheduled meetings between CPOA and the City Manager should be, but I would anticipate a set quarterly conversation and other discussions as needed. I would also assume the City Manager has an open-door policy so long as that policy is not abused.

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

Public safety is the number #1 responsibility in the contract that city government has with its residents and other stakeholders. It is also our city's single largest budget item. Similarly, as we have seen elsewhere, because of the types of interactions law enforcement has with the community, the performance of law enforcement can help elevate a city's reputation, or with a single negative event...ruin it. Because of this extremely high importance and visibility, public safety in Carrollton should receive all of the resources reasonably required to complete the mission and protect our city, and should also welcome transparency and oversight as required to ensure that our police department is fulfilling its mission **to proactively protect our community while treating all we encounter with professionalism, dignity, and respect.**

Thank you for your consideration.

