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## VOTERS GUIDE

**Nonpartisan**

MAY 1, 2021, LOCAL ELECTION

NEVADA CITY COUNCIL

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Early voting: April 19-27

Election Day Polls: May 1 – 7 am to 7 pm

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### ABOUT THIS VOTERS GUIDE

This Voters Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Collin County to help citizens prepare to cast an informed vote. The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

This guide is available online at [www.LWVCollin.org](http://www.LWVCollin.org), along with guides for other offices that include all or part of Collin County. Candidate responses for all races are also available at [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org), where you can enter an address and view a personalized ballot with races specific to that address.

Questionnaires were sent to all candidates for each office, whether or not the race is contested. Candidate replies were subject to a character limit and are printed without editing or verification. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response received" is printed. Candidates were asked to avoid references to their opponents. Photos are included for candidates who provided them.

This Voters Guide is organized by office sought, with candidates listed in alphabetical order.

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League of Women Voters is a Nonpartisan Organization

The LWV never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

**Nevada Mayor & City Council**

2-year term, elected citywide. Must be at least 18 years old, a United States citizen, a qualified voter, and a resident of the city. The City Council establishes city policy through ordinances and resolutions.

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**Question (Uncontested Races)**

**Priorities:** Even though your race is not contested, please share your priorities for the next term and how you will address them.

**Questions (Contested Races)**

**Strategic:** What actions should the City Council take to ensure a thriving community in the long-term?

**Economy:** What types of businesses would you like to attract to the city, if any, and what should be done to support existing businesses?

**Finance:** What would you like to change, if anything, about the city budget and taxation?

**Diversity:** What will you do to ensure that diverse populations feel welcome and safe in the city and have a voice in city government?

**Services:** What changes should be made, if any, to city services? What would it take to make these changes?

**Pandemic:** How should the City Council balance safety and the economy during the pandemic?

**Other issues:** What other important issues are facing the City Council, and how would you address them?

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**Benito Ponce**  
**Nevada Mayor (Unexpired Term)**  
**Uncontested**



**Education:** Community College – Electronics & IT technologies, Telecommunications Certifications, IWMS Application Certified

**Experience:** Thirty plus years of corporate experience distributed across IT, Telecommunications, Manufacturing and Corporate real estate; Thirteen years local SUD Board member (Pres., VP & Treasurer); Small Business owner; Volunteer firefighter; Bi-lingual

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**Priorities:** Fiscal Accountability: Implement policies that will govern strict adherence to state & federal statutes regarding financial audits and reporting. City Governance: Work with the Council to develop a comprehensive plan to address the issues that impact the community from within and without. Community Relations: Establish an open and amicable relationship with the citizens and local governing entities so that we can work together to build opportunities within the city for current and future generations of town folks.

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**Joe Cleveland**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 1 (Unexpired Term)**



**Education:** Southern Methodist University BA in Finance, 1992

**Experience:** I have owned and operated a business in the field of construction for over 30 years. Areas of expertise include the rehabilitation and preservation of historical properties, new home construction, and the finish out of restaurants.

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**Strategic:** So we as residents of Nevada know where the city stands financially, we should have an audit of the books so we can eliminate any misconceptions or rumor-based discussions about the city's financials. Only after we know where the city stands financially can we create a realistic annual budget, know where our taxes are going, and know what's left over for city improvements. I also think we should have more community events to bring people together to discuss what the public, private and business needs are in terms of development and building projects.

**Economy:** I'm a strong supporter and believe in locally-owned and operated businesses, such as neighborhood restaurants, retail and other forms of businesses that can build and create a

positive environment. These types of proprietors are owner-operated and the owners live within our community. I believe 100% in supporting and protecting this type of business. They understand the needs, desires and culture of the community, while also reinvesting their assets back into the community.

**Finance:** This is a hard question to answer because nobody in Nevada knows what the financial state of the city is. That's why we really need a financial audit – the last one was done fifteen years ago! We need to see what we have to work with. Other than that, I think the city's budget and tax policies should help create an environment that promotes, develops and maintains small business for the City of Nevada so that commercial activity can be used to help the city's tax base and help offset residential property tax increases.

**Diversity:** I'd like to propose a "Hi Neighbor Day" or a "Nevada Trade Days" – a once-a-year potluck/picnic so that all the people who live in Nevada can have a casual moment together to get to know each other, a chance to put names to faces, meet people you might have seen around town but never spoken too. Invite everybody, and make sure nobody is left out – it would be the ultimate inclusive event because the whole town would be invited. And while everybody is all together, maybe we can do a little recruiting to get more people involved in city government.

**Services:** Having a plan will let us use the influx of people and business to our benefit, whether it's better roads, our own police and fire department, whatever. The roads and drainage could use a lot of help around here, I think we would all agree on that. But, what we really need is a main public sewer and storm water drainage system. Without this public system, we can't attract businesses to help off-set our property taxes. There are several ways we could fund major improvements to our city, and I think we should consider all of them before we put that burden on the backs of the residents of Nevada.

**Pandemic:** Let's hope this question has been answered. Because the last thing we need around here is anymore social distancing rules that could effect business and life around here.

**Other issues:** I believe the City Council has to recognize that growth is happening all around us and there are going to be developers knocking on our door whether we want them or not. The most important thing the City Council can do is keep focus on the people who already live here in Nevada and what their needs and wants are because that's who they serve. At some point, we may want some new businesses and growth in here – and keeping our taxes low may depend on it – but that's something that we as residents should be able to decide together.

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**Mike Laye**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 1 (Unexpired Term)**



**Experience:** None

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**Strategic:** Mold strict development requirements with healthy growth as the objective.

Cleanup. We have many properties within the city that are in desperate need of fixing and or cleaning up. The city needs to enforce or develop rules/ codes to reduce or eliminate this. I'm all for helping those that want and or need help to do this as well. I believe anything is possible if we just try, lend a hand or say a prayer.

**Economy:** Business development can come later, when we have a better understanding of the residential structure of any future growth. I would rather build large expensive homes on large lots with parks and trails than have a large business within the city.

**Finance:** I know little about this presently but I will say it needs to be used wisely.

**Diversity:** This is the United States of America 2021. We welcome everyone. Ideas and efforts are what drives the voice of the city, not what "group" one is in. The mind is a wonderful thing no matter where it's owner comes from.

**Services:** The city council represents its citizens. The citizens should decide, if there are in fact, changes they believe are needed. Those voices of the citizens should be echoed through the council members and not vice versa. I believe we have a wonderful opportunity to develop Nevadas growth and structure starting today.

**Pandemic:** Smartly. Virtual meetings until Fall 2021. ( personally I believe these type meetings are well received and allow many many more residents to participate than onsite meetings mainly due to the amount of people that can fit in the City Hall building itself). As far as balancing safety and economy now, during the later stages of this pandemic, this should be done with a forward thinking mindset and not one of fear.

**Other issues:** The pandemic has taken a toll on the city and its citizens but together we can overcome its blanket of devastation and fear. We now have growth coming to our city. That growth must be developed in a way that insures the cities beautification, not its demise. I would love to live in our little country town of Nevada without growth forever but we know it's coming. It's time to build the molds this growth will fit into. I want everyone to be proud of how we develop the city and not mad or unsure about it. My interest is in the citizens wants not the developers. Make Nevada Great Again.

**Paul Breitzman**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 3**



**Education:** B.S. Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Mississippi, 1975.

**Experience:** Ten plus years in the natural gas business, Twenty plus years in several phases of the electric utility business. Retired as operations manager for Garland Power & Light.

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**Strategic:** Communities thrive when citizens are comfortable in their homes and lifestyles, when they have access to the services they need, and when their local Council listens at least as much as they dictate and control. Our Council needs to reach out and become more engaged with our citizens. It should also encourage policies that make possible homes for younger families. It should act to promote, as well as eliminate obstacles to, the addition of small business and services that enhance the small town feel that brought us to this town.

**Economy:** Business that generate sales tax revenue to the City obviously provide services that our citizens desire. Those that built these businesses did so by following their own vision of how to enhance the community, not by following a Council decision as to what should be built. I believe we should meet with the owners of these businesses, learn what needless obstacles they had to overcome, and what actions the City could take to enhance small business growth. Let's become more successful by listening to those that have succeeded.

**Finance:** This is currently the single most important issue facing the City. For at least the last five years the City has not produced audited financial statements. Without these, answers to budget spending and taxation questions can only remain guesswork. Further, with several consecutive years of audited financial statements, it then becomes possible to explore a bond proposal to fully address the myriad of street issues facing the City. This is also an issue of compliance with State law. It is time the City adopts a rigorous process of budget control.

**Diversity:** This question about diverse populations is much the same as the issue of Pluralism addressed by James Madison two centuries ago: people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs can fully live their lives in their communities only by knowing that the whole of the community will preserve the independence of each and every member. The City can promote feelings of welcome and safety by being open and accessible to each and every citizen, and by never taking or permitting actions that favor one faction over another.

**Services:** This question is of necessity secondary to the preceding question regarding finance. Without a firm grasp of both necessary and avoidable spending, as well as actual and

uncaptured revenue, you cannot know what additional services the City can afford at this time. Given that, if in time it can be determined that the City is in a financial position to do so, initial steps should be taken to develop a police department that can be grown as the City grows.

**Pandemic:** After a year of lockdowns, we now have vaccines, therapies, and observational data from various states as to what works without hollowing out society. Individuals should again be allowed to decide their own levels of participation and precaution. I support Governor Abbott in lifting mask mandates and capacity limitations. I believe City Hall and the City Council should again be open to in-person civic engagement, while equally making provision for citizens unwilling or unable to directly participate.

**Other issues:** In the same way that a business prospers when its staff and customers feel engaged and empowered, our community will be energized and improved when citizen questions routinely are promptly and accurately answered, when City Hall is again normally open, when citizen comments and ideas are not just tolerated but sought out, and when our leaders are elected rather than appointed. I do not acquiesce to the notion that citizens of Nevada are not really interested in civic matters: I instead believe that citizens only turn away when they feel they are not heard. It is their town: we need to listen.

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**Kerrie Longoria**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 3**



**Experience:** With over 37 years of insurance industry experience, I have a wide range of knowledge in employee benefit administration. Primary responsibilities have included strategic planning, financial reporting, contract review and vendor management.

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**Strategic:** Implement an active Economic Development and Planning and Zoning Committee. An economic development and comprehensive plan created with citizens involvement is critical. Being a small community we need to know that citizens will take pride in the growth direction as well as support businesses investing in our community.. The council should hold builders to our ordinances, not modify just to fit more houses in an area at an investor request. If we have high standards and hold them, it will be much easier to maintain those throughout the years.

**Economy:** It would be nice to attract some restaurants. The current sewer system provides some barriers, but certainly not impossible. Services such as dental office, veterinary and an

additional day care could be a need with future residential development. We have the space for an industrial area. With the artery of State Hwy 6 there is plenty of traffic from neighboring towns to support goods and services. Would encourage events to promote and introduce citizens to our existing businesses and any new business.

**Finance:** We currently have the lowest city tax rate in the area. Would encourage business development to help with tax burden that is primarily on residents today.

**Diversity:** Nevada is a diverse population. This is a low crime, safe, family and child friendly community. Everyone should be encouraged to have their voice heard. Would recommend that the city committees are filled to include a diverse group, assuming people apply. I have and will continue to ask for involvement in our city from anyone who expresses an interest.

**Services:** The City website needs to be maintained and up to date to allow citizens to have current city information. In order to encourage citizen involvement they have to know about what's going on. A new website was recently created. There need to be timelines for updating information.

**Pandemic:** The city employees two individuals. They have been able to securely and safely control how many enter City Hall at a time. There may be minimal tax impact since there are few businesses in Nevada. According to the local discount store, business has been positively impacted because of so many working from home staying in the community during the day instead of working in another town.

**Other issues:** We often have needs for services that we do not employee staff to take care of. It is often difficult to find vendors willing to take on small projects. Would like to see communication and community involvement to solve these issues. This could be with a community work day or even a referral on smaller jobs.

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**Karl Fisher**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 4**  
**Uncontested**

No response received

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**Elisabeth Garlington D.C.**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 5**

No response received

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**Gary Killian**  
**Nevada City Council, Place 5**



**Education:** Bachelor Degree Interdisciplinary Studies From The University of Texas Arlington

**Experience:** 4 Years Military Service (US Army Military Police) 14 Years High School Science Teacher 1 Year Owner Landscaping Business

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**Strategic:** The city needs to encourage residential and business development that increases the tax base and at the same time allows the city to keep a small town feel. We need to encourage small local businesses to capture outside dollars and cycle them through the local economy. We also need to take steps to improve the look of the city and make it a place that people want to live in and raise their family. It also needs to be a place where people want to engage with their community.

**Economy:** We need small service businesses, restaurants, and shops. Businesses that cater to both local citizens and the traffic that passes through town. We also need to remove any road blocks that can be to allow businesses that we want as long as it doesn't adversely effect the health and safety of the town. We need to help current businesses grow and network to increase their business and in that way increase the towns finances.

**Finance:** The first order of business is to find out the state of the cities finances by having a current audit so we know what the budget is. Until that is done there is no way to plan for the future of the city.

**Diversity:** All people should feel safe in the city and that they have a voice. I would like to see more public forums for the citizens to interact with council members and committees of council members and stake holders to help direct and plans for future development in the city.

**Services:** As the city currently offers very little in the way of services any change would be welcome. The many problem we have with increasing city services is the lack of a tax base so a lack of funding. For the city to increase the tax base we need to encourage new businesses and development that make sense.

**Pandemic:** As the governor has said that Texas is open for business then I feel that we should also be. Businesses should set their own policies and precautions and is people want to take additional precautions then they should. I believe that it is now up to the people to decide how they want to protect themselves and their families and government needs to get out of the way of businesses.

**Other issues:** Currently it is very hard to find out what the city ordnances are and which ones are current or expired. I think the ordnances need to be reviewed and collected in one location

on the website and a hardcopy should be kept at city hall. The ordinances also need to be review to make sure they make sense for our community. We also need to organize with local volunteer groups to help clean up the city and improve the appearance of the city.

<p>You may bring this <i>Voters Guide</i> into the voting booth! In 1995, the Texas law prohibiting use of printed materials, such as this <i>Voters Guide</i>, in the polling place was ruled unconstitutional (<i>Texas Election Code, Section 61.011</i>)</p>
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**Your vote is your voice. Be heard.**