



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Candidate Name:	Ian Baltutis
Position/Office on the Ballot:	City Council - City of Burlington, NC
Party Affiliation:	Democrat (Non-partisan election)

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE + MATERNAL HEALTH:

1. As federal policies threaten to widen health and economic disparities – particularly through cuts to Medicaid and SNAP – what strategies would you advance at the local level to build a more equitable and cost-effective system of care that ensures all residents can access the services they need, regardless of income or insurance status?

While the City Council does not control federal benefits, it has a moral and fiscal responsibility to build a resilient local safety net. My strategy is to strengthen the organizations on the front lines. I will champion predictable city funding for our community health partners and food security non-profits. Further, I will use my planning expertise to ensure our transit system is designed to connect residents to grocery stores and clinics, and I will push to co-locate services at accessible city-owned properties like community centers. We will build a local ecosystem of care that is resilient to the failures of federal policy.

2. With rural hospitals in North Carolina already under threat of closure due to rising uncompensated care resulting from cuts to Medicaid, what investments or partnerships would you support at the local level to expand access to primary care, mental health services, and maternal and child health – especially in underserved areas within your municipality?

We must be proactive in bringing healthcare to our residents. My first priority is to leverage the city's powers over zoning and transportation. I will work to streamline our ordinances to make it easier to establish community health clinics in underserved neighborhoods. Second, my plan to create a hybrid transit system, blending on-demand service with high-frequency fixed routes, is fundamentally a public health initiative, designed to eliminate transportation as a barrier to care. Finally, I will be a proactive partner, seeking out collaborations with the Alamance County Health Department and local providers to secure grants and establish satellite services for mental and maternal health.

3. How would you ensure that community voices – particularly those most impacted by health disparities and barriers to care – are meaningfully included and elevated in shaping local policies and programs aimed at expanding access to healthcare and addressing systemic inequities?

This work must be done with the community, not for it. My commitment to "making City Hall listen again" means a structural overhaul of our engagement process. I will advocate for a community health advisory board with paid stipends to ensure those with lived experience can afford to participate. We will move city-sponsored health discussions out of City Hall and into trusted community spaces, with bilingual services provided. True equity means sharing power, and I am committed to a co-governance model where residents are genuine partners in designing the solutions for their own neighborhoods.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1. Do you support ordinances that penalize people for sleeping in public spaces, panhandling, or living in their vehicles? Why or why not?

I do not support these ordinances. They are morally wrong, fiscally irresponsible, and they do not solve the underlying problem. Criminalizing poverty is a cruel and expensive policy failure. It creates cycles of debt and incarceration that make it harder for individuals to achieve stability, and it drains public resources that should be spent on proven solutions like housing and support services. Our focus should be on compassion and effective strategies, not punishment.

2. What is your plan to address homelessness without resorting to criminalization or displacement?

My plan is to champion a "Housing First" approach, which is the proven, evidence-based model for addressing homelessness. The city's primary role is to be a stable partner. I will work to secure dedicated funding for our local homeless service providers and shelter. Crucially, I will use my expertise as a city planner to reform our zoning code to make it easier to build supportive housing and a wider variety of affordable housing options. We must address the root causes of homelessness, which starts with ensuring a safe, stable place to live.

3. What policies will you support to ensure law enforcement officers in our town are held accountable for the use of deadly force, especially when it results in the injury or death of unarmed individuals?

Accountability is the bedrock of trust between law enforcement and the community. I support policies that mandate transparency, including the swift public release of body camera footage. I also believe in strong civilian oversight to ensure that accountability is not left solely within the department. However, my vision for public safety is broader than just accountability; it's about proactive investment. We must invest in robust de-escalation training and community-based alternatives for mental health crises. At my bookstore, Persnickety Books, our mission is "Giving Books and People a Second Chance." That philosophy, investing in people and preventative solutions, is the most effective long-term public safety strategy.

DEMOCRACY

1. How will you address underrepresentation in North Carolina's voters—especially among Black communities and young voters ages 18-29?

Underrepresentation is a direct result of systemic barriers, and I will lead the fight to dismantle them here in Burlington. First and most urgently, I will work to establish an early voting site within Burlington city limits and on a public transit route. The current situation, which forces our residents to travel to Graham, is a functional poll tax that disproportionately harms Black voters, students, and working families. Second, I will champion the expansion of our City Council from 5 to 7 seats, creating 3 district-based seats to ensure that every neighborhood, particularly our historically underrepresented Black communities, has a dedicated voice on the council who is directly accountable to them.

2. How will you ensure that state and local district maps reflect fair representation across party, race, and geography?

While the City Council does not draw state or federal maps, I will be a relentless advocate for fair maps at every level. Should my proposal to create city-level districts succeed, I pledge to champion a fully transparent, non-partisan process for drawing those local maps, with robust public input and clear, fair criteria. For state and federal maps, I will use my platform as a city leader to demand an end to partisan and racial gerrymandering, which dilutes the power of our communities and erodes faith in democracy.

3. Would you support legislation to establish a truly independent, non-partisan commission for redistricting, free from legislative influence?

Yes, unequivocally. A system where politicians choose their voters is fundamentally broken. I fully support establishing an independent, nonpartisan commission for all state and federal redistricting. It is the single most important structural reform we can make to restore fairness, competition, and accountability to our political system.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

1. What policies will you support to foster innovation and encourage an equitable entrepreneurial environment in the state?

As an entrepreneur myself, I know the barriers to entry can be immense, especially for Black and Brown founders. I will support policies that level the playing field. At the city level, this means reforming our procurement process to ensure equitable access to city contracts for minority-owned businesses. It means creating a "small business navigator" service at City Hall to help entrepreneurs cut through red tape. And it means using my planning expertise to reform zoning to allow for more small-scale, neighborhood-based commercial activity, which lowers the barrier to entry for new businesses.

2. The NC workforce is dealing with cooling hiring markets and ongoing labor shortages across education, transit, health care, public service and more. What specific initiatives – such as apprenticeships, skills-based hiring, or public-sector retention programs would you support?

As a city council member, my most direct impact is on the public sector workforce. I will support competitive wages and benefits to ensure we can recruit and retain the talented public servants our residents rely on. For the broader community, the city must be an active partner. I will champion partnerships between the city, Alamance Chamber of Commerce, and Alamance Community College to expand our existing apprenticeship

programs in critical fields. I will also use my platform to advocate for a shift toward skills-based hiring, which opens up opportunities for talented individuals who may not have a traditional four-year degree.

3. Current state legislative budget proposals aim to reduce personal and corporate income tax rates tremendously by 2030. Do you believe such cuts are fiscally responsible given projected revenue shortfalls, or would you oppose accelerating them?

From my perspective as a local government leader, I believe accelerating these tax cuts is fiscally irresponsible. While I am a strong supporter of a competitive business climate, cities like Burlington rely on state partnership and investment for critical infrastructure, education, and shared revenue. Drastic, accelerated cuts threaten the state's ability to be a reliable partner, which would ultimately shift the tax burden to local property owners or force cuts to the essential services our residents depend on. Long-term fiscal health requires a balanced and responsible approach, not a race to the bottom.

EDUCATION:

1. Considering the consistent defunding of public education that we have seen over the past several years as a result of poor policy decisions, what is your plan of action to ensure that you are coordinating with the school board to provide the best quality education feasible for students?

While the city is not directly responsible for school funding, a great city and a great school system are inseparable. My plan is to be an active, committed partner to the ABSS school board. This means regular, formal coordination to ensure city infrastructure planning, like new sidewalks and traffic safety measures, directly supports our schools. It means aligning our Parks and Recreation department's after-school and summer programs with the school system's needs. And it means using my platform as a city leader to be a fierce, unwavering advocate at the county and state level for the funding our students and teachers deserve.

2. Do you support increasing educator pay to meet the national average and reinstating master's and related advanced degree pay?

Yes, absolutely. It is a moral and economic imperative. Paying our educators a professional, competitive wage is the single most important investment we can make in our children's future and our state's long-term prosperity. Failing to do so is a failure of leadership.

3. What is your stance on private school vouchers? Do you support using public funds to fund private school voucher programs?

I am strongly opposed to the use of public funds for private school voucher programs. Public dollars should be used to strengthen our public schools, which are open to every child and accountable to every taxpayer. Vouchers drain desperately needed resources from our public system, lack accountability, and often fail to deliver on their promises.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1. North Carolina faces various water quality challenges, including contamination caused by PFAS, CAFOs, and other forms of industrial and commercial pollution. How do you plan to ensure communities across the state, particularly yours, will have access to clean, safe drinking water?

As a city council member, ensuring the safety of our municipal water supply is a non-negotiable, core responsibility. My plan includes proactive investment in the maintenance and modernization of our water treatment infrastructure to meet and exceed all safety standards. I support aggressive, transparent testing for contaminants like PFAS. For pollution sources outside our direct control, I will be a strong advocate, working with our state (NCDEQ) and federal (EPA) partners to hold polluters accountable and prevent contamination from reaching our water sources in the first place.

2. With recent federal limitations of the IRA and the continual removal of environmentally sound initiatives, as well as the impacts of defunding Medicare and Medicaid, how do you plan to ensure readily and equitable access to healthcare and other resources to ensure community needs are met?

This question highlights the critical need for local resilience. When federal support wavers, the strength of our local community becomes paramount. As I mentioned earlier, my plan is to fortify our local safety net by being a stable funding partner for our community health clinics and non-profits. We will leverage every tool at the city's disposal, from our transit system that connects people to care, to our zoning that allows clinics in accessible locations, to our partnerships with the county health department, to ensure that no matter what happens at the federal level, our residents have a local system they can rely on for their essential needs.

3. Greensboro: What is your stance on the toxic waste site, Bingham Park, located in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Greensboro? Do you support the community's request for full remediation?

NA