

# MODESTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 6

## Question 1) What are your Qualifications?

### Austin Grant – Candidate

From childhood, I have been enamored with the way that people can achieve lasting change through political engagement. I carried this interest with me to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee where I garnered my bachelor's degree in political science. After immersing myself in American politics and African American history at Fisk, I interned with the San Francisco Public Defender's office and the City of Modesto's Former Mayor Ted Brandvold. After attaining these invaluable experiences, I attended Humphreys University where I received a master's degree in legal studies.

As a twenty-nine year-old man, I often reflect on my early encounters with community engagement, which occurred when I was nine years old. I have long been involved in supporting local organizations such as the Men's group, Women's Auxiliary, Y.E.P, project uplift, and myriad others. I also have been blessed to receive various awards such as: The Leadership Modesto Class of 2018, Community and police relations Class by Legacy Alliance, and recognition from the NAACP for obtaining a master's in legal studies. These awards are imbued with meaning as a proud resident of Modesto. I have a love and commitment to the city of Modesto and Stanislaus County, which has been forged by my experiences in and outside California. My city and state have their challenges, but both ignite a fierce pride within me to want to run for office.

### David Wright – Incumbent

As a council member, we are responsible for our finances, city departments, and quality of life issues working efficiently to make Modesto a great place to live. Being a successful business owner in Modesto for the past 39 years has given me the experience I needed to be your council member for the past 4 years. Before being elected to Modesto City Council in 2020, I served 12 years on different city committees in Modesto. I chaired the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Homelessness, served on the Comprehensive Fee Task Force on two other occasions, and served on the Modesto Housing and Rehabilitation Loan Committee and the Citizens Housing and Community Development Committee. This experience has given me the necessary knowledge to serve another for years as your council member for the citizens in District 6.



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## Question 2) What Would be your top priorities?

### Austin Grant – Candidate

My top three Priorities are Affordable Housing, Public Health, and Public Trust

### David Wright – Incumbent

My top priorities will be to continue making sure our general funds are being spent to make Modesto a safer and great city that stands out from other valley cities. Continuing to increase our Downtown Street Teams, adding more Park Rangers and CHAT Teams. Continuing to work with our council and police department in making our streets and neighborhoods safer for all. Continuing to improve our downtown area to make it a place for Families to enjoy. Working with the council and our general manager to look at other entertainment opportunities such as a long-term lease with the Modesto Nuts and stadium improvements and exploring adding a professional soccer team. Making sure the programs that we support are doing their best to help our homeless citizens and seeing what other funds we can leverage to increase housing for this population.



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## Question 3) How do you evaluate the impact to business when making voting decisions?

### Austin Grant – Candidate

Evaluating the impact of policies on businesses is essential, but it requires a balanced approach. Business growth is important for job creation and economic stability, but it must align with values like social justice, sustainability, and workers' rights.

When making voting decisions, I consider how policies will promote a fair and equitable business environment. I support businesses that prioritize the well-being of their employees, contribute positively to the community, and adopt environmentally responsible practices. Policies that raise the minimum wage, and improve worker protections.

Small and local businesses are also vital to consider. They are the backbone of our communities and often face greater challenges compared to large corporations. I support policies that provide them with resources to innovate, compete, and grow sustainably.

Ultimately, business success should not come at the expense of marginalized communities or our environment. My decisions aim to create a thriving economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthiest. This perspective ensures businesses can succeed while advancing a fairer and more inclusive society.

### David Wright – Incumbent

Being a business owner and having many business owners as customers I am always looking at how my voting on different items will impact our business community.

Adding my insight to council members on the impact of voting as a business owner has made a difference in past voting on motions that might have hurt our business community. I will continue to make in the future to vote on items that will help our business community.



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## Question 4) What are your plans to make government more transparent, responsive, and effective?

### Austin Grant – Candidate

I believe that government must be transparent, responsive, and effective to truly serve the people. My plans focus on creating systems that promote accountability, increase public engagement, and legislative breakdowns.

To enhance transparency, I will push for open access to government data and decision-making processes. This includes expanding digital platforms where residents can easily access information about budgets, contracts, and policies in real-time. I also support public forums that allow citizens to ask questions directly to officials and provide feedback on proposed policies. Responsiveness comes from actively listening to the community. I will create channels for constant, two-way communication between government and the public, such as interactive social media platforms, regular town halls, and online portals for submitting concerns and tracking their resolution. This approach ensures the government is tuned in to the needs of its citizens.

Legislative breakdowns are crucial because they provide a clear understanding of how laws are made and who is responsible for key decisions. By breaking down legislation, citizens can see the impact of policies, hold elected officials accountable, and engage more effectively in the political process. This transparency builds trust and ensures that government actions are aligned with public needs, fostering a more informed and empowered community that can advocate for meaningful change.

My goal is to build a government that is open, listens to its people, and works efficiently to deliver real change.

### David Wright – Incumbent

For the last 4 years, we have made great progress in making our city government more transparent and responsive to our citizens. All city council meetings are open to the public and can be viewed on Zoom and YouTube the night of the meeting and the days after on YouTube. Also, all committee meetings are open to the public and are available to view online at the time of the meeting. Emails are sent out to the public days before a committee meeting so the public can see what is on the agenda. They can sign up for emails online with the city to make sure they are getting the information sent to them.



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**Question 5) Is the organization for which you seek office operating with a balanced budget? If not, what are your plans to make the organization more sustainable?**

## Austin Grant – Candidate

Yes, the organization for which I seek office is currently operating with a balanced budget. However, maintaining fiscal balance is just the starting point for creating a sustainable and thriving community. While it's essential that we remain fiscally responsible, we also need to invest in long-term sustainability, equity, and innovation.

If elected, my focus would be on ensuring that our budget reflects the values of our community. This means prioritizing investments in affordable housing, public transportation, and education. By doing so, we not only address immediate needs but also create a foundation for future economic and social resilience.

I also plan to implement strategies to diversify revenue streams, reducing reliance on outdated methods such as over-taxation of working families or cuts to essential services like we've done in the past. We should look for ways to boost local business growth, attract green industries, and leverage state and federal grants for infrastructure improvements.

By making smart, forward-thinking investments, we can ensure that the organization not only operates with a balanced budget but also addresses long-term challenges like inequality and economic sustainability. This approach will make our community more resilient and prosperous for future generations.

## David Wright – Incumbent

With the passage of Measure H, this has helped us to make sure our budget is balanced and that we are doing what we told voters we would do. Our General Fund is broken down into two different budgets. The regular general fund budget and our measure H budget. We use our measure H funds to help offset increases in the general fund on items that we committed to with measure H. This has helped to add police, additional tree maintenance, sidewalk repair, and other services that were needed in our city and balance our general fund.

