

# Jay D. Downs

My name is Jay Downs. I have lived in Smithfield all my life. I have seen Smithfield grow from a town of a few 1000 People to the city it is today. I have a passion for our community and its citizens. I am proud to have served the citizens for 28 years as Fire Chief and over 38 years in the fire service. Retiring in 2023. During my tenure as Fire Chief, with the assistance of past mayors, city councils, and members of the fire department, the department evolved from a volunteer organization to a fully staffed fire and paramedic program. During my time as Fire Chief, I acquired the operational skills and knowledge in fire and EMS operations, fire, building, electrical, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), zoning codes, fiscal and budget management, public safety management, emergency management, tax procedures, city and county management, grant application and administration, and the overall operations of the city. These experiences, skills, and knowledge make me a unique candidate for a city council position.



During my tenure as Fire Chief, I would attend planning and zoning meetings, assisting with development decisions as needed. I regularly attend city council meetings, witnessing the operations and functions of the various city councils over the years. These experiences will help me to make informed decisions as a city councilperson.

One of the reasons I am running for City Council is to ensure that the city's infrastructure keeps pace with its current rapid growth and development. As a Fire Chief, this became and continues to be a critical issue to me. Part of this issue is the current negotiations occurring, discussing the possibility of creating funding through the tax assessment of a county-wide fire district. My firsthand knowledge and experience of city and county government operations, grant acquisition, and budgeting will be invaluable in addressing these issues.

Another reason for running is to promote and support proper notification and communication to the neighborhoods and their citizens in the community. I want to work on establishing methods, either in an open forum or other ways, for the citizens to communicate with the mayor and council. Methods of communication and interaction would enhance the understanding of citizens of developments in their neighborhoods. This can be achieved through neighborhood meetings, social media, text message notifications, and the streaming of city council meetings.

Over the past few years, I have noticed that the State threatens what I feel is overreach, and on items that I feel are under local control. One of these items is a committee that would have the power to oversee and tell a city how to manage its individual growth.

I have been a lifelong resident of Smithfield. My wife and I have raised our family of five here in Smithfield, and we are pleased to say that our children, their spouses, and their grandchildren are still living either here in Smithfield or in the surrounding valley. I have a passion for our community and its citizens. I feel we have a cherished small-town atmosphere that we need to protect.

My goal in being on the city council is to continue my service to the citizens of Smithfield by using my previous knowledge and experience for the betterment of the city and my fellow citizens. As Fire Chief, I was available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. I know what it means to be available for the citizens and their needs. As a city council person, I would continue this commitment to the community and its citizens.